



**AGENDA**  
**CITY OF LAKE WORTH BEACH**  
**SPECIAL CITY COMMISSION MEETING**  
**CITY HALL COMMISSION CHAMBER**  
**TUESDAY, AUGUST 24, 2021 - 6:00 PM**

**ROLL CALL:**

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** led by Commissioner Kimberly Stokes

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

A. [Discussion to short list the candidates for the City Manager position](#)

**ADJOURNMENT:**

The City Commission has adopted Rules of Decorum for Citizen Participation (See Resolution No. 25-2021). The Rules of Decorum are posted within the City Hall Chambers, City Hall Conference Room, posted online at: <https://lakeworthbeachfl.gov/government/virtual-meetings/>, and available through the City Clerk's office. Compliance with the Rules of Decorum is expected and appreciated.

If a person decides to appeal any decision made by the board, agency or commission with respect to any matter considered at such meeting or hearing, he or she will need a record of the proceedings, and that, for such purpose, he or she may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based. (F.S. 286.0105)

# EXECUTIVE BRIEF SPECIAL MEETING

**AGENDA DATE:** August 24, 2021

**DEPARTMENT:** Commission

**TITLE:**

Discussion to short list the candidates for the City Manager position

**SUMMARY:**

Colin Baenziger, Head of Colin Baenziger & Associates, the outside recruiting firm hired to assist in the City Manager search, recommended that the City Commission select up to eleven (11) candidates whose backgrounds, experience and apparent competency appeared to correspond to the needs of the City, and complete a straw preference poll to submit to Mr. Baenziger. At the August 3, 2021 meeting, a discussion was held and Mr. Baenziger suggested that the Commissioners finalize the short listing of candidates to interview.

**BACKGROUND AND JUSTIFICATION:**

City Manager Michael Bornstein submitted his letter of resignation on April 6, 2021 and at that time stated that he was resigning under the terms of his contract (60 days) from date of resignation. The City needs to find a City Manager who can achieve the priorities identified by the Mayor and Commissioners. The Manager must have municipal leadership experience with a high value on customer service. As this is a difficult and important position to fill, the Commission must decide how they wish to proceed with this search. The Commission selected Juan Ruiz as the Interim City Manager while the search is taking place.

Through the polling process, there is no discussion between or among the Commissioners regarding any of the candidates. At this meeting the Commissioners will discuss the final short list of candidates. It is requested that the Commission review these candidates and select those they wish to interview for the City Manager position. Subsequent to the identification of candidate pool applicants, those who are not selected to be considered for interview at this time will be notified and their interest in the City of Lake Worth Beach as the place to apply their skills will be appreciatively acknowledged.

**MOTION:**

TBD

**ATTACHMENT(S):**

Fiscal Impact – N/A

List of Finalists

Report on each candidate

**City of Lake Worth Beach, FL**  
**City Manager Candidates**

August 24, 2021

**Please place a check mark next to your top 5 choices to interview  
to become the next City Manager.**

	<b>Candidate</b>	<b>Select</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Bulthuis, Brian</b>	
<b>2</b>	<b>Cohen, Thaddeus</b>	
<b>3</b>	<b>Davis, Carmen</b>	
<b>4</b>	<b>Hopkins, Willie</b>	
<b>5</b>	<b>Hutka, Tom</b>	
<b>6</b>	<b>Lynk, Gregg</b>	
<b>7</b>	<b>Niemeyer, Dave</b>	
<b>8</b>	<b>Sossamon, Len</b>	
<b>9</b>	<b>Jordan, Patrick S.</b>	
<b>10</b>	<b>Shang, Jane K.</b>	
<b>11</b>	<b>Trias, Ramon</b>	

Submitted by:

Malega     McVoy     Resch     Robinson     Stokes

COLIN BAENZIGER  ASSOCIATES

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EXECUTIVE RECRUITING

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*Section 4*

*Brian M. Bulthuis*

*Lake Worth Beach City Manager  
Candidate Report*

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*Cover Letter and Resume*

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## Section 4

BRIAN M BULTHUIS  
3783 PING COURT  
ACWORTH, GA 30101  
770-652-9928  
brianbulthuis@gmail.com

June 18, 2021

The Honorable Mayor Resch and City Commission,

It is with great interest that I submit my application for the position of City Manager. As you consider my credentials, that includes considerable experience in leadership, business, and finance, I am confident you will find me to be an excellent candidate to serve the City of Lake Worth Beach.

When reviewing my resume, you will see that I am a leader with maturity, professionalism and expertise. I possess a strong work ethic and believe firmly in fostering team unity, mentoring, and helping the Community, Mayor & Commission, and Staff identify and achieve goals and objectives.

You will note in my resume I am not an individual that uses one community as a steppingstone to move on to "bigger and better things". This is evident in that I have served the City of Acworth Georgia as City Manager for the past 25 years. Due to my longevity, I have taken the opportunity to take an early retirement which affords me the opportunity to look for a new incredible opportunity where I can settle down, become part of the community, and help that community reach its highest potential.

I attribute my success and longevity in Acworth to my ability to be a critical thinker always looking for new ways to address issues. When I arrived in Acworth it was a community of 6,000 with a deserted downtown, no community events, bad reputation, and low employee morale. Today it is a vibrant community of 24,000 with a thriving and expanding downtown, commercial centers on our borders, events and activities that draw thousands and employee morale as at an all time high. In 2010 Acworth was name an All America City by the National Civic League, in 2019 Acworth was recognized by the State as an Exceptional Main Street Community, in 2020 we were named the healthiest employer in the Metro Area by the Atlanta Business Chronicle and just this month we were named to the National Civic League All America City Hall of Fame. In addition, our Parks & Recreation Department and Police Department have received numerous awards for their activities and programs.

I attribute our success in Acworth not because of what I have done, but because we have been able to foster a "team" approach in tackling issues. I believe the Manager needs to be a partner with the Mayor and City Commission sharing ideas and being able to listen. I hate surprises as I know elected officials do. I strive hard to make sure an organization is always trying to anticipate issues before they become problems. One of my favorite aspects of being a manager is being able to get out from behind a desk and see what is going on and becoming part of a community.

Over the past several years Acworth has seen a boom in new and redevelopment. I understand the complexities of dealing with the issues that come with development. Acworth has a historic downtown and making sure we have protected that historic character while fostering the needed development has been important. We have implemented façade grants to help businesses and created a Tax Allocation District to foster the development of a phenomenally successful commercial development.

## Section 4

Working in Acworth which is in the Metro Atlanta Region has given me the opportunity to deal with and handle many complex issues. In addition, Acworth is one of 6 cities in Cobb County. Acworth contracts with Cobb for fire, water & sewer services and there are many county, regional and state issues that the City Manager is called upon to address on behalf of the city. I have been able to forge great working relationships with other city managers in the area as well as county staff and elected officials to make sure Acworth's concerns are addressed.

Acworth is in one of the best financial positions it has ever been in. Even with the growth we have seen there comes new expenses that must be accounted for. We have been incredibly careful and deliberate to anticipate long term costs of projects and developments and budget conservatively to make sure our budgets are sustainable. Today, we have grown our general fund reserves to equal 4.2 months of operating expenses, the best practice guideline set by GFOA is 3 months reserves.

Investing in our infrastructure has been a high priority in the city. We have been able to invest over \$160,000,000 in infrastructure projects (roads, bridges, sidewalk, stormwater, parks, city facilities). This infrastructure investment has been the catalyst for much of the new and redevelopment the city is experiencing. In addition, the State of Georgia is currently widening a two-lane highway in the city to four lanes and building a new vehicular and pedestrian bridge over Lake Allatoona, with a total cost of \$65,000,000. This has been a 10–15-year project that I have worked on with State Legislative Leaders and the State Department of Transportation to get funded completely by the state.

Since the early 1900's Acworth has had its own power department. In order to meet power supply needs for the community the city purchased power from Georgia Power and the market. In 2002 I was able to negotiate an agreement that had the city join MEAG Power. MEAG Power is a non-profit joint action agency made up of 49 public power communities. By joining MEAG Power the city has been able to steady its power reliability and be less susceptible to market fluctuations. Acworth Power has just over 7,000 customers.

I am extremely proud of the success we have had in Acworth. It is a wonderful community. I would encourage anyone to visit its website at [www.acworth.org](http://www.acworth.org) to find out what we have been able to accomplish and what is going on. Under the Visitors tab you can find links to the city's State of the City and town hall videos, you can also find residents' oral histories (mine included).

After reviewing information about Lake Worth Beach from your job advertisement and website I feel it would be a great fit for me and the community. I believe my record of being someone that gets things done while also being someone that is a motivator and creates a culture of family would allow me to be extremely successful.

I would love the opportunity to meet with you and go over my qualifications.

Sincerely,

*Brian M. Bulthuis*

Brian M. Bulthuis

**BRIAN M. BULTHUIS**

3783 Ping Court  
Acworth, GA 30101  
(770) 652-9928  
brianmbulthuis@gmail.com

*A dedicated professional in Public Administration with extensive experience in public sector management. Experienced in business creation, finance, economic development, strategic planning for municipal innovation, contract negotiation/compliance, growth management and land use.*

**CITY MANAGER, CITY OF ACWORTH GA, October 1996 – July 2021**

24,000 Population    165 Full Time Employees 30 Part-time Employees

**Departments/Operations Managed**

Finance	Human Resources	Technology Support
Police	Solid Waste	Building Inspections & Code Enforcement
Public Works	City Cemetery	Economic Development
Stormwater	Power Utility	Utility Billing
Municipal Court	Community Center	Parks & Recreation

- Full-Service City With \$18 Million General Fund, \$14 Million Power Fund, \$2 Million Sanitation Fund And Varies Other Internal Service Funds
- City Awarded Excellence In Financial Reporting For Past 21 Years
- 2010 All America City, 2021 All America City Hall of Fame
- Constructed New City Hall, Jail & Court Facility, Police Headquarters, 48,000 sq/ft Community Center, Sports Complex For Baseball And Youth Football, 120-Acre Park In Center of the Community
- Completely Transformed Downtown Business District, 90% Occupancy Rate, New Roads, Streetscape And Pedestrian Connectivity
- City Designated Georgia Main Street City, National Main Street City, Georgia GEM City
- City Has Seen Commercial Corridor On South Side of City Develop Into A Major Retail Hub With Almost All National Retailers And Restaurants Locate In City
- Over Past 20 Years City Has Transformed From Just A Parks Department To A Parks, Recreation And Community Resource Department Offering Programs For All Ages And Abilities, Has Community Events For All Seasons Attracting Thousands Of People To The Community.
- Managed Millions In Road Improvements Including Construction Of Railroad Underpass, Downtown Street Streetscape Projects
- Police Department Recognized As One Of Top Departments In State, Leader In Community Policing
- City Electric Utility - Over 7,000 Customers
- Sanitation Department -

## Section 4

### **CITY MANAGER, CITY OF MT. MORRIS MI, November 1990 - October 1996:**

3,292 Population      16 Full Time Employees 40 Part-time Employees

- Responsible For Preparation Of Annual City Budget With 5 Major Independent Funds Totaling \$2.015 Million And 4 Minor Funds
- Increased City's General Fund Reserve Balance 35%
- Established Annual Goal Setting Exercises For City Council, Departments, And Community
- Negotiated Labor Contracts With AFSCME And Police Officers Labor Council
- Planned And Oversaw Water Main Construction Projects
- Updated City's Comprehensive Community Master Plan
- Developed Job Descriptions For All City Employees
- Updated City Personnel Policy and Fire Department Rules and Regulations
- Helped Write New City Charter
- Implemented Community Policing Program

### **Administrative Assistant to the City Manager/City Clerk, City of Whitehall, MI**

December 1987 - November 1990    3,027 Population    22 Full Time Employees 25 Part-time

- Assisted City Manager With Day To Day Running Of City, Served As City Clerk, Zoning Administrator, Tax Increment Finance Authority And Local Development Finance Authority Secretary, Served As City Representative To Solid Waste Authority
- Oversaw Planning Process To Implement Downtown Redevelopment Program
- Updated City's Tax Increment Finance Authority Plans
- Assisted City Manager In Developing City's Industrial Park And Attracting Major Manufacturing Firm To Locate \$8 Million Dollar Plant In The City
- Prepared Coastal Management Grants for City
- Served As Acting City Manager From 3/88 - 9/88 While City Council Searched For Permanent Manager

### **INTERN TO CITY MANAGER, JACKSON, MI August 1987 - December 1987**

Worked On Special Projects As Directed By The City Manager; Financial Evaluation Of The City, Comparison Of Human Relation Commissions From Around The State And Creation Of A New Historical District.

### **VOLUNTEER, ALL-AMERICA CITY COMMITTEE, JACKSON, MI Summer 1986**

Worked On The Committee To Help Plan And Develop Activities For Community In Conjunction With Jackson Being Named All America City.



## Section 4

### **INTERN TO CITY MANAGER, JACKSON, MI May 1985 - August 1985**

Worked For City Manager In Absence Of An Assistant. In Charge Of Drawing Up Transition Plan For City To Comply With Section 504, Federal Handicapped Requirements, Planned And Supervised City Wide Cleanup Day, Established Task Force To Write Up All-America City Award.

### **INTERN TO CITY MANAGER, JACKSON, MI May 1984 - August 1984**

Worked On Special Projects For The City Manager, Conducted Surveys And Worked Throughout City With Various Departments To Learn Scope Of City Services.

### EDUCATION

MASTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION April 1992  
Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, MI

BACHELOR OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION April 1986  
Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, MI

Major: Public Administration  
Minors: Political Science  
General Business

### MEMBERSHIPS

International City/County Management Association (ICMA)  
Georgia City/County Management Association (GCCMA)  
Leadership Cobb Alumni Association  
Honorary Commanders Alumni Association  
Acworth Business Association

### OTHER

Cobb Chamber Community Impact Award - 2013  
Volunteer Coach Acworth Youth Football Association 20 Years  
President Acworth Youth Football Association 4 Years  
Volunteer Acworth Special Needs Program Coaching Baseball & Kickball 15 Years  
Volunteer Coach Kennesaw Girls Softball – 4 Years  
Interests - Golf

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*Candidate Introduction*

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**Brian M. Bulthuis**

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**EDUCATION**

Master Public Administration, Western Michigan University  
Bachelor of Business Administration, Western Michigan University

**EXPERIENCE**

City Manager, City of Acworth GA	Oct. 1996-July 2021
City Manager, City of Mt. Morris MI	Nov. 1990-Oct. 1996
Assistant to the City Manager/City Clerk, City of Whitehall MI	Dec. 1987-Nov. 1990
Intern, City Manager's Office City of Jackson MI	Summer, 84, 85, 87

**BACKGROUND**

Acworth GA is located on I-75 just 30 miles north of Atlanta Georgia. It is in the Atlanta Metro Region. Acworth has been a rapidly growing community, in 1996 when I arrived it had a population of about 6,000, today the city's population is about 24,000. City services have had to expand over the past 25 years and today the city has about 165 full time employees and 30 part time employees. I as City Manager directly supervised the 9 department heads which were Police, Power/Public Works, Park/Recreation/Community Services, City Clerk, Human Resources, Information Systems, Economic Development, Building Department, Finance, and the Assistant to the City Manager.

The City's budget has been balanced every year I have been City Manager; we have received the Excellence in Financial Reporting for the past 21 years. The city has been careful with expenditures and we exceed the GFOA recommended reserves in the General Fund. The adopted general fund budget for 2021/22 is just over \$18,000,000. The city has many funds such as Power, Sanitation and Special Local Option Sales Tax which brings the entire budget around \$40,000,000.

Over the past several years Acworth has seen growth through annexation and new development. However, that is slowing down and one main issue facing the community today is the redevelopment of older/undeveloped areas of town. Especially some of the old, abandoned retail centers that have closed. Another issue facing the community is stormwater. For years, the city has discussed the idea of a stormwater impact fee, but the mayor and board of aldermen have been reluctant to implement such a fee. A third issues that Acworth is facing is the ever-increasing costs of employee's benefits. The city has a history of exceptionally good health insurance with the city paying almost 90% of the cost. With health insurance cost increasing every year the city is going to have to wrestle with the decision as to how much should the city vs the employees contribute.

**GENERAL, MANAGEMENT STYLE AND EXPERIENCE**

This past year with the pandemic has been difficult for everyone and I believe made people reevaluate what they are doing and how they do it. I have been blessed to be in Acworth for 25 years. I have been able to see it grow and become the wonderful community that it is. I believe that my department heads would tell you that I am someone that helps the city, and their departments figure out a path that will lead to success and then let those departments move in that direction. I really enjoy collaboration and letting everyone at the table, so everyone feels part of a decision. We may not all agree, but if someone feels they had input, they are more likely to go with a final decision. As a manager I care that an organization has a clear direction and is moving forward. We have been able to accomplish a lot in Acworth and personally I was able to take an early retirement. Not because I am finished in city management, but the time was right for me to turn the reins over to someone that I had mentored and prepared for the position. I would love to find that next community that is looking for a fresh start and is the right “fit” for me where I can help it create a great quality of life for its citizens.

I have been able to make a great relationship with all the elected officials I have worked with over the years. I believe they would tell anyone that I am one of the most dedicated, honest, committed people they have worked with. They know they can trust me, and I will always be a straight shooter when I tell them something.

I believe that you always tell the truth in everything you do. I have high moral standards and believe that you need to hold people accountable for what they do. I am good at seeing the big picture and being able to figure out how an organization needs to get things done in order to accomplish its goals. I also enjoy working with people. I am a very trusting person and sometimes that gets me in trouble because I really believe in people and get frustrated when people do not come through with what they say and their commitments.

I believe in meeting regularly with department heads, weekly staff meetings, and no less than once a month individually with department heads to discuss issues they and their departments are facing. I have an open-door policy. The city manager’s job is to make sure that departments have a clear understanding of what the priorities are of the Mayor and Council. By doing so department heads can be held accountable for the progress and accomplishments of their departments. One of the results of holding people accountable is that sometimes you must let people go when they do not meet up to the standards you have laid out. Firing someone is not a pleasant experience. However, I have found that if you are working with people and clearly lay out expectations, meeting with them and letting them know issues where they are not meeting expectations, by the time it comes to let someone go, they know and understand that the time has come to part ways.

I am proud what we have been able to accomplish in Acworth. The city has experienced unprecedented growth and development. When I arrived, the beaches were closed, and the downtown was empty. It did not have a good reputation and was not thought of a great place to

### **Brian M. Bulthuis**

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live or visit. Today Acworth has become a tourist/recreation destination with a thriving downtown filled with unique chef driven restaurants and small businesses. A hard lesson we did learn along the way was what that government needs to stay in its lane and let private business do what it does best. Around 2000 the city felt it needed to get in the cable tv business because we had a power department. We soon learned that trying to compete with a private business in a competitive industry was not a good idea for a small government.

Knowing that there has been some change in leadership with both the elected and administrative leadership positions in Lake Worth Beach makes for some challenging but exciting possibilities. A new city manager must get to know the community and staff and help the council set reasonable priorities for the community. People want to see results and see government working positively for them. An issue that will immediately face the new manager and city council is appropriate use of the \$16 million that Lake Worth Beach is receiving in American Rescue Plan Funds. Other issues will be how to revitalize the downtown and how to manage the redevelop and new development in the community. Lake Worth Beach is in a very advantageous location and the possibilities are endless with the correct strategy.

It will be important for the new manager to get to know as many people and community groups as possible as soon as he or she arrives. Sitting down first with elected leaders to get their impression of what is going on and what needs to be accomplished will be a priority. Getting around to meet the employees and hear what they have to say is important. Employees are really the ones delivering the services and they usually have a great feel for what is really going on. I also believe just having some listening sessions with community groups and business leaders will be important. As I am hearing things and making my own impressions it will be important to communicate that back to the Mayor and Council to see how my impressions match theirs.

Working with local media and with social media has become a must for government. It can be the most effective way for leaders to let busy residents know what is going on in the community. Over the years, I have learned to get to know local media people and let them know are jobs are dependent on each other. Government wants the correct information out, they want “the story”. By building a relationship based on trust we can both win. It is important to respond to their requests as a story will always run, it is important for government to get the truth out, so people know what is going on.

The use of social media has become a valuable tool to get the word out. That does not just mean having an effective web site, but sites like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc. can be ways to quickly let people get updates on events or issues that are going on. We have used these methods in Acworth to keep people informed especially when we are trying to get people to events or if something happens and we want to get the word out.

Working in the public eye, I have always made it a practice to be careful of what I post on social media and what I do when I go out. I understand the city manager position is a public trust so no one will ever find anything in my background, there is nothing there. I have loved being a

**Brian M. Bulthuis**

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football coach for 20 years for kids aged 6-10, coaching kids with special needs in kickball and baseball for 15 years and going out golfing or just taking a walk. The most exciting thing I have ever done that surprised people is when I bought a Slingshot Auto Cycle last year.

**SIX ADJECTIVES OR PHRASES YOU WOULD USE TO DESCRIBE YOURSELF**

Hard Worker  
Trustworthy  
Accessible  
Dedicated  
Someone with Perseverance  
Fun

**REASON FOR WANTING TO LEAVE CURRENT JOB**

I have been in the position of City Manager of Acworth for 25 years. In 2020 I became eligible for retirement through the city's retirement system. After careful consideration I decided we had accomplished many great projects and successfully made it through the pandemic. It was just a good time to take a break as I had mentored my replacement and the city was in great shape. I am looking for a new opportunity to work with a dedicated group of elected officials in a growing community. I am in a position to find the "right fit". Lake Worth Beach seems to meet all the opportunities I am looking for.

**CURRENT/MOST RECENT OR RELEVANT SALARY**

As City Manager in Acworth my salary was \$175,000 + \$500/month car allowance. Having retired I am beginning to draw a pension from Acworth.

## **Section 4**

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*CB&A Background Checks*

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**Background Check Summary for  
BRIAN M. BULTHUIS**

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**Criminal Records Checks:**

Nationwide Criminal Records Search	No Records Found
County Cobb County, GA	No Records Found
State Georgia	No Records Found

**Civil Records Checks:**

County Cobb County, GA	No Records Found
Federal Georgia	No Records Found

**Motor Vehicle**

Georgia	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  
BRIAN M. BULTHUIS**

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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  
BRIAN M. BULTHUIS  
Personal Disclosure**

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**Personal Disclosure Questionnaire**

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Name of Applicant: Brian M. Bulthuis

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?  
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 Brian Bulthuis, Instagram bmbge  
Twitter Brian Bulthuis @ bmbulthuis
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: B. M. B.  
Signature of Applicant

Please email this form via PDF DOCUMENT to [Lynelle@cb-asso.com](mailto:Lynelle@cb-asso.com) or via fax to (561) 621-5965 no later than 5:00 PM PST 06/28/2021.  
(Note: Please be sure to sign the form with your actual signature if you are sending Fax or PDF Document)

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*CB&A Reference Notes*

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Reference Notes  
Brian Bulthuis

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**Tim Richardson - Alderman, City of Acworth, GA 770-318-8987**

Mr. Richardson has known Mr. Bulthuis since 1996 when Mr. Bulthuis moved to Acworth to become the city manager. In Mr. Bulthuis' 25 year tenure as city manager, the city of Acworth grew from an estimated population of 4,000 to a population of 24,000. This was largely due to Mr. Bulthuis' innovative nature and ability to adapt.

Mr. Bulthuis knows government inside and out, and is well versed in the intricacies of how municipal government interacts with both the state and federal government. Mr. Bulthuis has a knack for building contracts that will serve the community. He is highly skilled at hiring people that work well together and have also had long tenures in their positions. Some people he hired have worked for the city of Acworth the entire 25 years Mr. Bulthuis has been the city manager. Mr. Bulthuis and his team adjusted as needed while the city grew.

The mayor and city council were responsible for the hiring of department heads but this was a task they entrusted to Mr. Bulthuis. He interviewed the candidates and made his recommendations to the mayor and city council, to which they almost always went with his recommendations because he knew people and could see how they would work together and lead those already in the department; he takes his time in making decisions to weigh all outcomes. He and the city council were in agreement over 90% of the time and he is always open to advice and feedback.

One of Mr. Bulthuis' biggest strengths is growth. He is proficient in finding new, innovative ways to improve the city. As the city grew, some processes had to be done differently and new procedures were necessary; they could not have done so without Mr. Bulthuis and his ability to adapt to changing circumstances.

Mr. Bulthuis is someone who leads from the front and gets involved with being proactive in the community. He makes sure all department heads are also at community meetings so that they can have all the information needed. He also coached youth football and was involved in their special needs sports program.

Mr. Bulthuis is an effective communicator and has experience with the public both in group settings and one on one. If there was a difficult situation he would be sure to set up a meeting with the citizens so they could find a resolution.

When it comes to communication between Mr. Bulthuis and the members of the city council it was done in three ways. They had briefings every two weeks where they could bring up projects they were working on or if something was needed. If an important problem came up they communicated through text message or emails if they could not meet in person.

A situation in which Mr. Bulthuis solved the problem was when there was a zoning issue with a developer wanting to develop on a piece of land that was in Acworth but would affect those in the county and they were concerned about the effect it would have on the county as a whole. Mr.

Reference Notes  
Brian Bulthuis

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Bulthuis put together a meeting between the developer and the county citizens that were concerned, and led them to a compromise.

Another strength of Mr. Bulthuis is that he is particularly skilled with financial forecasting. Mr. Bulthuis and the treasurer were responsible for the yearly budget and they were always very thorough in allocating the funds where they would be most needed throughout the upcoming year. Mr. Bulthuis could forecast both the expenditures and oncoming funds through the year.

When difficult personnel situations or irate citizens come forward, Mr. Bulthuis was skilled in taking a moment to assess the situation and develop a plan, or delegate to the appropriate department head.

The only misstep Mr. Richardson remembers Mr. Bulthuis making in his 25 year tenure as city manager was a situation where the county wanted to provide services to the areas adjacent to Acworth, and Mr. Bulthuis thought this was a worthwhile project so they began moving forward. Soon after the process began, the citizens of those adjacent areas came forward stating they did not want the services provided because it was going to change their taxes. The project only went on a couple of weeks before this happened and as soon as the citizens came forward with this information, Mr. Bulthuis listened to what they wanted and ended the project.

Mr. Bulthuis is an upfront, conscientious public figure with a good image, he is a well known name in their community. During his time as city manager, Mr. Bulthuis worked with the family county services, which led to him fostering a child and then adopting his son through their program.

**Words or phrases used to describe Brian Bulthuis:**

- Studious,
- Diplomatic,
- Assertive,
- Laid-back,
- Knowledgeable, and
- Trustworthy.

**Strengths:** Knowledge, forecasting, budgeting.

**Weaknesses:** Can be slow to communicate.

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**Thomas Allegood - Mayor, City of Acworth, GA 770-402-6294**

Mr. Allegood has known Mr. Bulthuis since 1999 when he ran for Mayor, and Mr. Bulthuis has been the city manager for a few years prior. Mr. Allegood was very impressed with Mr. Bulthuis' work ethic and strength in finance. The confidence the city council had in Mr. Bulthuis

Reference Notes  
Brian Bulthuis

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to be responsible for the budget never waivered. The city is in an excellent position for the future due to the diligence of Mr. Bulthuis the past 25 years.

Along with ensuring the finances were always a top priority, Mr. Bulthuis is an idea man. Mr. Bulthuis thinks of creative ideas to maximize the worth of a dollar. Cobb County has what is called a Special Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST), which is a consumption tax, in which 1 penny goes to each city in the county. Mr. Bulthuis has been instrumental in allocating these funds to new infrastructure such as the library, police department, and community center. Mr. Bulthuis' strong suit in allocating these funds is to ensure each SPLOST cycle connected to the one before, and led into the project the next year. One year they would build a park, and then the next year a walking trail, and then the final year a new community center that was connected to the park through the walking trail. Mr. Bulthuis always has an overarching plan and sees the big picture.

Mr. Bulthuis and Mr. Allegood often worked side by side when making hiring decisions, and his intuition during interviews is unparalleled. Mr. Bulthuis has been mentoring the new city manager of Acworth since early on in his tenure, and was the first one to see the potential within him as a new hire. Mr. Bulthuis has built a city hall where department heads are free to create the culture of the workplace, and make it somewhere people want to work.

Mr. Bulthuis is the type of manager that comes up with the ideas and will rally people behind them, but often Mr. Allegood was the face of these projects, with Mr. Bulthuis always knowing when to step up front. Mr. Allegood was incredibly impressed with Mr. Bulthuis' ability to think outside of the box. Mr. Bulthuis comes up with solutions where others would struggle. He is skilled at utilizing all department heads and getting their input on projects that are within their scope.

Mr. Allegood has been the mayor for 20 years, or five election cycles. In his time as the mayor, he has never been opposed, and this is a testament to Mr. Bulthuis' capability as the city manager. If the citizens of Acworth had any major complaints or a want for someone different in Mr. Bulthuis' position, someone would have opposed Mr. Allegood as Mayor so they could make any changes they deemed necessary. As it is, there has never been opposition to Mr. Allegood, and by extension, to Mr. Bulthuis.

Mr. Bulthuis has also always had a strong connection to the community. Mr. Bulthuis coached youth football and was involved in their horizon league for special needs children which speaks highly of his character. The biggest testament to Mr. Bulthuis' character is that he fostered a child who needed special attention until he could adopt him, and gave his son a chance at life that he would not have had otherwise.

Reference Notes  
Brian Bulthuis

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**Words or phrases used to describe Brian Bulthuis:**

- Trustworthy,
- Affable,
- Creative,
- Friendly,
- Honest, and
- Adaptable.

**Strengths:** Creativity, finances, ability to connect financial cycles with city projects.

**Weaknesses:** None identified.

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**Regina Russell - City Clerk, City of Acworth, GA 404-388-1913**

Ms. Russell has known Mr. Bulthuis since he hired her as city clerk in 2004. Mr. Bulthuis combines his extraordinary leadership abilities and progressive ideas to create an ideal workplace, he is the best boss she has ever worked for. Mr. Bulthuis is particularly determined to ensure the workplace is family oriented and the employees feel they are supported in work and through their lives. During the 2009 recession, Mr. Bulthuis prioritized keeping city hall open with the maximum number of employees they could keep on board.

Mr. Bulthuis is more than capable of budgeting appropriately and ensuring the employees are well taken care of. Mr. Bulthuis reminds the staff to be mindful of the budget and forecasted expenses for upcoming projects. When creating the budget, Mr. Bulthuis collects input from department heads and communicate clearly between the county and the city.

Mr. Bulthuis is always willing to listen and is a great resource to share ideas with and get direction from. Mr. Bulthuis makes it a priority to listen not only to his employees but to the community so that he can bring about the necessary changes, and he sees these projects through to the end. Mr. Bulthuis is proactive in creating a plan and involving the necessary parties, who he kept well informed and involved with the decision making process.

Mr. Bulthuis is active in the community, being present at ribbon cuttings as well as other events. A great deal of his personal time is spent out engaging the community and he brought anything he found to the employees and elected officials so they could get started right away on solving any problems that arose. Mr. Bulthuis ensures that the community needs are met, both by holding meetings with large groups as well as meeting individuals one on one. There was no public issue that Mr. Bulthuis deemed too big or too small. He took any matter brought to him seriously and if it was an issue outside of his scope, he arranged for the individual to be connected with the right people, so their needs were properly addressed.

Reference Notes  
Brian Bulthuis

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When Mr. Bulthuis begins a project, he rallies those in city hall behind it, gathering the appropriate department heads and employees to develop a solid plan with research and clear reasoning before taking it to the city council for approval. Mr. Bulthuis acted as a mediator between the staff in city hall and the city council. He will be a great benefit to any local government he works in.

**Words or phrases used to describe Brian Bulthuis:**

- Leadership,
- Management,
- Great rapport,
- Knowledgeable,
- Friendly,
- Hands-on, and
- Available 24/7.

**Strengths:** Proactivity, leadership, resourcefulness, knowledge.

**Weaknesses:** None identified.

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**Jason Ellsworth - Community Activist, City of Acworth, GA 770-329-9560**

Mr. Ellsworth has known Mr. Bulthuis since 2000 when they started coaching youth football together. Mr. Ellsworth was afterwards employed in the department of Parks and Recreation for the city of Acworth. At the time the city had lost the Parks and Recreation director, and Mr. Bulthuis stepped in to act as a leader and mentor to Mr. Ellsworth. Mr. Bulthuis is an exceptional leader, combining his aptitude for looking into the future with adapting to changes as they come.

As a coach of the high school football team, Mr. Bulthuis was instrumental in player development as well as communicating needs and working with the booster club 365 days a year. When coaching, there are some calls that will not be agreed with, and parents will sometimes take issue with coaching methods. Mr. Bulthuis implemented a 24 hour window after every game in which the parents had to wait to talk to the coaches. This ensured that when discussions did take place, all parties involved had time to rationalize and be in a better state of mind.

Mr. Bulthuis has been a mentor to Mr. Ellsworth both personally and professionally. They rarely had a disagreement but if one ever arose, Mr. Ellsworth knows he can still call Mr. Bulthuis with any issue and Mr. Bulthuis will meet him with understanding and advice, but Mr. Bulthuis also knows when not to impose on people.

Within the Parks and Recreation department, Mr. Bulthuis had a 5 to 10 year plan, and when it was first introduced, Mr. Ellsworth believed some of the ideas to be too grand for their small

Reference Notes  
Brian Bulthuis

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town, but as the years went on the growth outlined for the Parks and Recreation department lined up with the growth that took place throughout the city.

Mr. Bulthuis can take an idea and see how it would grow and affect the city as a whole, as well as how to support that growth. Mr. Bulthuis does not simply make changes for the sake of change itself, but instead because he can see how changes will benefit the community in the long run.

In both coaching football and as city manager, Mr. Bulthuis handled finances extremely well, he was the steward of the people's money. He always made savvy financial decisions, and adjusts immediately if needed. There was a situation in which funds for the youth football team had been put into a mentorship program through a third party. Unfortunately the head of this third party was not showing up for their meetings, so Mr. Bulthuis adjusted the allocation of funds to go directly to the high school itself to support the mentorship of the football team.

Mr. Bulthuis is a born problem solver, just as he resolved the funding issue for the mentorship program, he has been fundamental in community gatherings such as the 4th of July fireworks show. There was a year where a storm came in and flooded what would have been the 4th of July celebration, and Mr. Bulthuis had his boots on the ground, managing cleanup and then afterwards putting together a team to brainstorm ways they could be better prepared in the future.

Mr. Bulthuis is an ethical, overall good man that any city would benefit from having as their city manager.

**Words or phrases used to describe Brian Bulthuis:**

- Calculated,
- Very aware,
- Connected,
- Fair, and
- Exceptional.

**Strengths:** Finance, leadership, problem solving, growth.

**Weaknesses:** None identified

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**Tammy Galvis - Audit partner; Nichols, Cauley & Associates 770-422-0598**

Ms. Galvis has known Mr. Bulthuis since he became city manager in 1996. From her perspective as the auditor, Mr. Bulthuis is a very conscious and involved city manager. Mr. Bulthuis is well respected by staff, and stays involved in any and all necessary ventures.



Reference Notes  
Brian Bulthuis

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Mr. Bulthuis asks the audit partner if they discovered any problems, and if they had he took it under his umbrella to find a solution. Mr. Bulthuis was involved in inventory checks, applying for grants, and hiring personnel.

A situation in which Mr. Bulthuis was asked to collaborate was when an employee of an inventory warehouse passed away, and they decided to restructure the department. Mr. Bulthuis implemented changes to the staffing and procedures.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the city received CARES act funding, and Mr. Bulthuis assembled the audit firm, and department heads to examine the uses for the funds. He then gave everyone involved some time to analyze the options and then held a follow-up meeting to finalize their plans.

During their audits, Ms. Galvis and her team never encountered any complaints from personnel in regard to Mr. Bulthuis. He is capable of being professional while also introducing humor and fun into the workplace. Mr. Bulthuis is not afraid to be upfront and start necessary discussions. When acting as liaison between the county and city, Mr. Bulthuis is a strong advocate for the interests of the city.

**Words or phrases used to describe Brian Bulthuis:**

- Leader,
- Supportive,
- Involves others,
- Professional,
- Assertive, and
- Friendly.

**Strengths:** Allocation of funds, keeping morale high.

**Weaknesses:** None identified.

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**Bob Weatherford - County Commissioner, Cobb County, GA 770-335-2993**

Mr. Weatherford has known Mr. Bulthuis since 1996 when Mr. Bulthuis became the city manager. Mr. Weatherford has worked with Mr. Bulthuis as both the Mayor Pro-Tem and then as the County Commissioner. Mr. Bulthuis is an outstanding city manager, combining his vast knowledge of municipal government and excitement for commercial growth. When Mr. Bulthuis began his time as city manager, Acworth was a small town with not much in the way of activities or businesses. Acworth now boasts of being the restaurant mecca in Cobb County.

Mr. Bulthuis planned and executed many community activities throughout the years, one being a 4th of July concert that now draws 10,000 to 12,000 people every year. Mr. Bulthuis is known as

Reference Notes  
Brian Bulthuis

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the person to go to when you want something done, he will not relax until a task is seen through. He has mellowed throughout the years but still has a hard-nosed work ethic second to none and will be involved in all projects he oversees. When it comes to the budget and financing, Mr. Bulthuis presents this information with spreadsheets and reports that are easy to understand. In municipal government, there are projects that can take upwards of 10 years or more to complete, and Mr. Bulthuis was well prepared for these projects every year.

Mr. Bulthuis has hired and groomed many department heads and other government employees throughout the years, and many of them have stayed with him the past 20 to 25 years since their hiring. Mr. Bulthuis and Mr. Weatherford were responsible for the hiring of a new Police Chief, and there was some controversy over their choice because he had a background more so in business and became an Officer later in life. Mr. Bulthuis could see that the needs of the city would be in line with having a Police Chief with a business background, and this has proved to be the correct decision.

The city of Acworth has their own electric utility and at one point tried to implement their own cable company as well. This is the only misstep Mr. Weatherford can recall of Mr. Bulthuis for the entirety of his 25 years as city manager. Unfortunately, this idea did not pan out, as they could not keep up with the mega cable companies that have significantly more funding.

When it comes to community relations, Mr. Bulthuis is energetic, always being involved in activities and ensuring others participate as well. Mr. Bulthuis will do the leg work behind the scenes as well as step out front to bring the vision to fruition. It is his forte to meet with the public both in group setting and in one on one meetings, and to be involved in community events.

The city of Acworth was a mess before Mr. Bulthuis took the position of city manager, and in his 25 years there, he has led the city into a position where the future is bright. He will be missed.

**Words or phrases used to describe Brian Bulthuis:**

- Driven,
- Knowledgeable,
- Experienced,
- Visionary,
- Ethical, and
- Hard-nosed.

**Strengths:** Budgeting, community engagement, work ethic, knowledge of matrix management.

**Weaknesses:** Will not rest until a job is done.

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Reference Notes  
Brian Bulthuis

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**Rachelle Ballard - Human Resources Director, City of Acworth, GA 404-423-0053**

Ms. Ballard has known Mr. Bulthuis since he hired her in 2017. Mr. Bulthuis has always been available to offer advice and help when it is asked of him. Ms. Ballard was hired on as the first Human Resources Director for the city, before that it was a task under Mr. Bulthuis' umbrella within the city government.

Before her move to the city of Acworth, Ms. Ballard worked in human resources for another county and then in a different city. Although it was difficult for Mr. Bulthuis to hand over the responsibility for the human resources department, Mr. Ballard credits him with being the best city manager she has ever had the pleasure of working with, largely due to him being the most supportive city manager she has encountered.

When Ms. Ballard was considering taking a position in the city of Acworth, the city manager she worked with at the time encouraged her to take any position in which she would get to work with Mr. Bulthuis. He makes municipal work easier than most and creates a positive workplace environment that is almost too good to be true. Mr. Bulthuis ensures there is a family oriented work environment, and employees know they can put family first before anything else.

Mr. Bulthuis is a leader who does not project his own stress upon his employees, they most often do not even realize there may be a reason for stress. He will seek the support of any department heads or city counselors needed to guide him or confirm the path he is on.

Mr. Bulthuis is dedicated to making changes proactively, and is supportive when others have ideas they believe in. Mr. Bulthuis always kept current with legal matters, technology, and the needs of their growing city. He made all of the necessary information easily accessible to each department, and their individual responsibilities are always very clear. They have a department head meeting every Friday where they could ask any questions and get guidance from Mr. Bulthuis directly.

During Mr. Bulthuis time as city manager, there was a project to build a pedestrian bridge, and they ran into a delay when the elevator had ventilation issues. Mr. Bulthuis cooperated with the contractor, Fire Marshall, and police department to get the ventilation running and the project finished in a timely manner.

Mr. Bulthuis is very supportive not only of those he employs, but of community events. Mr. Bulthuis participates in the city wide wellness program, where he is part of the 5k and gets many in the community excited for the race. This is in addition to coaching both in the horizons league for special needs children, and high school football. Everybody in the community knows Mr. Bulthuis because of his position as city manager, as well as his zeal to participate in community events.

Reference Notes  
Brian Bulthuis

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**Words or phrases used to describe Brian Bulthuis:**

- Dedicated,
- Dependable,
- Loyal,
- Hard working,
- Caring,
- Positive, and
- Supportive.

**Strengths:** Decision making, budgeting, knowledge.

**Weaknesses:** Not being able to let go of control, and does not like to delegate.

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**Albert Price - Alderman, City of Acworth, GA 678-525-9617**

Mr. Price has known Mr. Bulthuis since 1995 and was part of hiring Mr. Bulthuis for the position as city manager of Acworth. Mr. Price has been a city councilman for six terms and only one of those terms did they have a city manager other than Mr. Bulthuis. For a city manager to stay in that position for such a long time says a great deal about Mr. Bulthuis' character, as many city managers last only a few years in one place. Mr. Bulthuis has a desire to see things through and is an excellent city manager.

Mr. Price credits Mr. Bulthuis as being the agent of change that brought their small town from roughly 4,000 people to a population of an estimated 25,000 people. In the 25 years Mr. Bulthuis was the city manager he went from being the newest city manager in the county to being the one that the mayors and city managers of other cities reached out to for guidance and advice. He has been this source of knowledge and guidance for the past 10 to 15 years within Cobb County.

Mr. Bulthuis became the go to in Cobb County due to his excellence in change and forecasting what will be needed as progression comes. Mr. Bulthuis is extremely knowledgeable about municipal laws and constantly studied to ensure he is staying current on city, state and federal laws. Throughout his tenure as city manager, the city council has gained and lost members, which has created a change in vision throughout the years. Mr. Bulthuis has adapted well to any elected official that has come and gone.

Mr. Bulthuis is wonderful at managing finances as well as he manages his team. When Mr. Bulthuis presents a budget, he knows where every penny is going. If the council sees a need that is not already addressed, Mr. Bulthuis is skilled at finding a way to make sure it can be handled. Mr. Bulthuis also made the hiring decision for their new finance department head and she has been a very solid hire, who is trusted to take them into the future.

**Reference Notes  
Brian Bulthuis**

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Mr. Bulthuis is strong in community outreach, and one thing he would do is go to the schools in Acworth to offer help to their administration. He offered to help offset costs of projects needed, such as a new scoreboard for their football team. Mr. Bulthuis also coached youth sports in Acworth and is well known among the population not only as the city manager but as a friend. Mr. Bulthuis does not push his agenda on the community but listens to them and does what is best for the city he is serving. If there was an issue, Mr. Bulthuis was the first on the scene, giving directions and finding solutions.

Once a project was assigned to Mr. Bulthuis, the city council never had to remind him or tell him twice. Once Mr. Bulthuis was on the case, they knew it would be done in a timely manner, and done above and beyond what they had originally planned.

**Words or phrases used to describe Brian Bulthuis:**

- Youth-oriented,
- Engaging,
- Competent,
- Knowledgeable,
- Solid, and
- Effective.

**Strengths:** First impressions.

**Weaknesses:** Not wanting to delegate, micromanaging at times.

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**Brett North - Alderman, City of Acworth, GA 678-793-8836**

Mr. North has known Mr. Bulthuis since 2000, as Mr. North was a citizen of Acworth. Mr. North was then elected as an Alderman in 2014 and began working with Mr. Bulthuis professionally. Mr. Bulthuis is incredibly knowledgeable, has great attention to detail, is cost conscientious, protective of the city council members, and will ensure everyone is content in their roles. When a question is posed to Mr. Bulthuis concerning municipal government, he will 90% of the time know the answer right off the top of his head, very rarely will he need to take time to research and get back to you.

Mr. Bulthuis offers his time to meet with any and all who have questions or would like guidance. Mr. North is the newest Alderman on city council and he met with Mr. Bulthuis once a month for lunch to have a more casual conversation in which Mr. North could ask questions and get advice from him on the best direction for the city.

Mr. Bulthuis is innovative and open to change. If the city council brought something to his attention, he would be sure to accomplish the task in a timely manner. He not only supports the city council himself but he takes their ideas to the department heads and expands upon the original vision. He spends a decent amount of his time networking, more so in group settings but

Reference Notes  
Brian Bulthuis

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is always open to one on one meetings. Throughout the pandemic, Mr. Bulthuis had to change his work model to spend half of his time at city hall and half at home, where he kept the Alderman and city council informed through email and follow-up phone calls.

During the pandemic, Mr. Bulthuis was instrumental in prioritizing that the city services were never discontinued. He took tasks on personally, as well as reached out and involve department heads and other employees to collaborate and accomplish projects to the highest achievable standard. Mr. Bulthuis led the overhaul of Acworth's downtown redevelopment.

Mr. Bulthuis is a wonderful judge of character and is gifted in selecting department heads that stay in their positions long term, and Mr. Bulthuis has uncompromising ethics. He steers others in the right direction if he sees there may be a possible controversy or poor decision. Any city that has the chance to work with Mr. Bulthuis should not let the opportunity pass them up.

**Words or phrases used to describe Brian Bulthuis:**

- Considerate,
- Careful,
- Conscientious,
- Compassionate,
- Outgoing, and
- Assertive.

**Strengths:** Knowledge, hiring personnel, innovation, networking.

**Weaknesses:** Communication.

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**Doug Haynie - City Attorney, City of Acworth, GA 770-527-0623**

Mr. Haynie has known Mr. Bulthuis since 1996, they interacted when a legal matter took place within the city. Their work together included contracts, selling and buying real estate, and when the city was sued for any reason. Mr. Bulthuis is a very capable city manager, whom Mr. Haynie would hire due to his uncompromised work ethic.

Handling intricate legal contracts can be a daunting task, but Mr. Bulthuis takes this in stride and is always open to applying advice when needed. Mr. Bulthuis' work was always done in as timely a manner as possible when working with complex legal documents and proceedings within government.

Mr. Bulthuis is a good decision maker, and due to this he retired in good graces with an exceptional public standing. Mr. Bulthuis was not entangled in any controversy and handled the legal situations with intellect and understanding.

Reference Notes  
Brian Bulthuis

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**Words or phrases used to describe Brian Bulthuis:**

- Conscientious,
- Intelligent,
- Hard-working,
- Capable,
- Informed, and
- Knowledgeable.

**Strengths:** Decision making, stress management

**Weaknesses:** None identified.

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**Wayne Dennard - Police Chief, City of Acworth, GA 770-851-8904**

Mr. Dennard has known Mr. Bulthuis since 2003. Mr. Bulthuis had a hand in hiring Mr. Dennard as the Police Chief of the city of Acworth. In his time as city manager, Mr. Bulthuis built a good rapport with the citizens, elected officials, and government employees alike. Mr. Bulthuis is a progressive leader who is not afraid of change, in fact he often led the way.

As city manager Mr. Bulthuis faced different problems on a daily basis, but he was always a good problem solver and could come up with creative solutions to the different difficulties that would arise. He made good decisions that brought about compromise and gained him favor from those involved.

Mr. Bulthuis is a team player and he knows when and where he is best needed within any team he puts together. He knows when to let others on the team lead, but always has an open door policy so anyone can ask him questions, and he knows when to step out front and rally the people behind a project.

**Words or phrases used to describe Brian Bulthuis:**

- Hard-working,
- Devoted,
- Committed,
- Innovative,
- Knowledgeable, and
- Team player.

**Strengths:** Growth, creative ideas, knowledge, finance.

**Weaknesses:** None identified.

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**Prepared by:** Rebecca Whitman  
Colin Baenziger & Associates

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*CB&A Internet Research*

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**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Brian Martin Bulthuis**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Atlanta Journal-Constitution, The (GA)  
July 4, 2021

**City manager retires; parks director will be promoted to fill post – ACWORTH**

Author: Matt Bruce

Acworth City Manager **Brian Bulthuis** has retired after nearly 25 years as the city’s top administrator. He stepped down June 18 and city leaders plan to promote from within to fill his vacancy. “Acworth was a small bedroom community of about 6,000 and today we are a thriving community of 24,000 with exciting housing opportunities with a wonderful downtown and a great quality of life for everyone,” **Bulthuis** wrote in a statement.

During a special meeting Friday, the Board of Aldermen unanimously approved a motion to install James Albright, who’s been Acworth’s director of parks, recreation and community resources for 16 years. He joined the city’s ranks as a summer camp counselor in 2000. “It’s a big honor for me,” Albright told The Atlanta Journal-Constitution on Monday. “To be able to serve in this capacity in a community I was born and raised in, it does so much for me and my personal growth.”

Albright, 39, took the helm as the interim city manager Monday. Council members are expected to approve his finalized contract and appoint him in a permanent capacity July 15. He will earn \$150,000 as the new chief of staff, leading a team of about 170 employees across nine city departments. **Bulthuis** came to Acworth from Michigan in October 1996. He guided the city through a period of growth and helped attract national retail chains like Target, Walmart and Best Buy to town.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Brian Martin Bulthuis**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Cherokee Tribune (Canton, GA)  
June 9, 2021

**Mayors and commissioners huddle over cityhood movements**

Author: Chart Riggall

MARIETTA — A summit between Cobb's commissioners and mayors quickly turned to a discussion of which mayors — and cities — might soon be joining their ranks. "I'm going to open a can of worms," Commissioner JoAnn Birrell announced to chuckles. "What's going to happen with the four cityhoods? ... I'd like to hear from the other cities what their take is."

Acworth City Manager **Brian Bulthuis** proffered that it was far too early to say how the four proposals circulating around the county — East Cobb, Mableton, Lost Mountain/West Cobb, and Vinings — might impact the other governments. "If there are four new cities, we're going to have to look at what—the first thing is, what services they're providing. So until those things are decided, you know, you can't even talk about it," **Bulthuis** said. "Because, again, the whole thing is service delivery. And if they are, what's the word, 'city-lite?' ... I think right now, we all have to wait and see."

New cities are required to provide at least three services to their residents, ranging from code enforcement, to parks and recreation, to sanitation. All four cityhood movements have named planning and zoning as a service they will take under their control. Chairwoman Lisa Cupid has, until recently, been hesitant to openly comment on any of the four proposals. At a Cobb Association of Realtors panel last week, she said she found the movements "a little frustrating" as Cobb Countians have historically resisted expanding government but now seem dissatisfied with county government's level of service.

On Thursday, Cupid, County Manager Jackie McMorris, and Deputy County Manager Jimmy Gisi said they were working toward talks with the state representatives backing Mableton and East Cobb later this summer to try and tackle their concerns. "If it's truly about service delivery, then let's sit around the table and talk about, where are the gaps," McMorris said, characterizing the talks as "an olive branch." "We are working on that now. We're reaching out to them to say, hey, if there's anything that you want us to sit down and talk about ... we will reach out and coordinate that. That's about all we can do, is listen," she added.

McMorris's invitation, however, stood in contrast to comments from lawmakers who have said service delivery concerns are very much secondary. State Reps. Ed Setzler, R-Acworth, and Ginny Ehrhart, R-west Cobb, the vanguards of the Lost Mountain proposal, have explicitly said local control of zoning is their prime motivation, and interest spiked after Democrats won control of the Board of Commissioners last November.

Cupid went on to acknowledge some of the pushes may be coming from more than a mere desire for improved trash pickup. "It's something that I think resonates with a lot of you who are here. There's a certain level of nostalgia and sense of place that comes from a city," Cupid said.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Brian Martin Bulthuis**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Most of the mayors in attendance Tuesday did not speak either for or against any of the movements on the table, though Powder Springs Mayor Al Thurman asked whether the new boundaries could create "islands" of unincorporated Cobb between the cities. "A lot of our constituents in some cases don't know whether they're in the city or the county," Thurman said. "So I'm just concerned regarding that on these boundary lines."

Cobb Planning and Economic Development Division Manager Jason Gaines said county staff had already identified some areas of concern where such "islands" were possible, and mitigating those would be a focus of talks between the county and lawmakers. The meeting was originally called as an annual, legislatively-mandated discussion to address issues of service delivery between jurisdictions. In 2024, the county and its cities will be required to sign off on an updated service delivery agreement.

On another front, Cupid and McMorris extended that same olive branch to the various mayors as the county works through discussions on its Comprehensive Transit Plan and a proposed 1% mobility SPLOST, to be voted on in 2022. The Board of Commissioners is scheduled to hold a work session on June 22 regarding initial public input for the transit plan, and McMorris encouraged mayors to join that process.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Brian Martin Bulthuis**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Marietta Daily Journal (GA)

December 6, 2020

**'Minor miracle' in Acworth**

Author: Staff Writer

DEAR EDITOR:

On the Wednesday before Thanksgiving, I sent an email to Acworth City Manager **Brian Bulthuis** complaining that the DOT-closed Main Street sidewalk beneath the Route 92 bridge presented a danger to pedestrians. On Monday I received a pleasant reply, and yesterday, exactly one week after I wrote, the sidewalk was restored and the dangers allayed. To me this is a minor miracle, and Manager **Bulthuis** should be recognized for his outstanding civic record.

Bob Foreman

Acworth

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Brian Martin Bulthuis**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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[CB&A Note: Only the information relevant to Acworth is listed below.]

Marietta Daily Journal (GA)  
October 26, 2020

**Cobb cities spend pandemic money on businesses, technology, safety equipment**

Author: Ryan Kolakowski

Acworth City Manager **Brian Bulthuis** said Cobb gave the city about \$1.1 million from the CARES Act, and all of that money has been spent or assigned to be spent. "We want to thank the board for their consideration for these funds," **Bulthuis** said. "They've gone a long way in our community."

The city spent \$588,000 on business grants, writing checks in amounts of about \$5,000 to \$6,000 for local businesses.

Acworth budgeted about \$105,000 for computers and other technology to facilitate remote work, and it has spent about \$101,000 of that budget so far. It budgeted another \$230,000 for technology upgrades in city facilities like city hall, the police department and other locations. This money will be spent on audio and video technology to allow for more virtual meetings. The city also budgeted \$80,000 for building modifications to better allow for social distancing.

Another \$143,000 was assigned to cleaning equipment and personal protective equipment, and other funds were allocated for legal costs and public communication notification.

"We are pleased that we have been able to allocate 100% of our funds," **Bulthuis** said.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Brian Martin Bulthuis**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Marietta Daily Journal (GA)  
July 24, 2020

**Acworth Board of Alderman approves tax increase**

Author: Shannon Ballew

Higher taxes are on the way in Acworth. The Acworth Board of Aldermen unanimously approved raising the city's millage rate from 7.6 to 8.95 mills, at a special-called meeting Thursday evening.

Were the city to have kept its millage rate at 7.6 mills, city revenue would have increased by \$300,000 to \$400,000 due to rising property values. Cities are required every year to calculate a "rollback rate" that will produce the same revenue as last year, and this year's rollback would have been 7.138 mills. Raising the millage rate adds to projected revenues by another \$1 million, City Manager **Brian Bulthuis** told the MDJ.

A resident with a home valued at \$300,000 who originally bought it for \$250,000 and has the city's homestead exemption will see an increase of \$135 more this year than last year, **Bulthuis** said. The millage increase follows an April vote in which the Board of Alderman voted to give the board and mayor raises of about \$5,000 and \$7,000, respectively, which will go into effect in 2022.

Mayor Tommy Allegood said the city was facing revenue shortfalls and increasing expenses, and had to raise taxes to maintain city services. "Obviously, with the whole pandemic, COVID, our revenues were impacted, and we've had a general increase of expenses in the last couple of years," Allegood said. "We just could not maintain our budget without increasing the property millage rate. It's simple. We've got this really great quality of life and to continue to deliver our quality of life services we had to adjust our millage rate."

**Bulthuis** said personnel costs were among the main expenses for the city. "We've had some expenses due to COVID, we've seen some of our revenues have dropped. Some of our revenues we've seen from the state has decreased over time. The (title ad valorem) tax people pay that we get from the state, has decreased over time, several hundred thousand dollars," the city manager said. "And then we've seen our healthcare costs go up. We've seen just the cost of employees, personnel costs have increased."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Brian Martin Bulthuis**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Marietta Daily Journal (GA)  
July 21, 2017

**Acworth keeps millage rate at 7.6**

Author: Staff reports

Acworth's property tax rate will stay the same for 2017 after the city's Board of Aldermen unanimously voted to set the city's tax rate at 7.6 mills on Thursday. The rate has been steady at 7.6 mills for the last 11 years, according to City Manager **Brian Bulthuis**.

While the city's tax rate will stay the same, some residents may still see an increase on their tax bills due to a rise in the tax digest, which is the total value of property within Acworth city limits. According to the county's tax assessor, the gross digest for Acworth rose from \$671.3 million in 2016 to \$739.8 million in 2017.

To generate the same property tax revenue as last year, the city could have rolled back the tax rate to 7.04 mills, according to the county tax assessor.

Acworth Mayor Tommy Allegood told the MDJ previously that the extra revenue from higher property values will allow the city to cover expenses as Acworth grows. "We're one of the fastest-growing cities in Cobb County so we're having to hire more people, expand police services and our park services," Allegood said earlier this month.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Brian Martin Bulthuis**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Marietta Daily Journal (GA)  
October 7, 2016

**Acworth's budgeted pay raises to take effect this month**

Author: Jon Gargis

Employees of the city of Acworth could see a little bit extra in their paycheck this month as merit-based increases take effect.

Acworth's Board of Aldermen this summer passed its fiscal 2017 budget, which included employee merit pay raises of up to 3 percent. On Thursday, the board approved new, increased employee pay scales due to the pay increases. "What we do is we take whatever the pay raise the council authorized and up the scale half of that, so what we did is bump the bottom of the scales and the top of the scales 1.5 percent," City Manager **Brian Bulthuis** said. "People move within the scale, but what we also do so the scale doesn't get stagnant, we don't get behind, is we bump the scale a bit every year. We've just always done that so our scale stays relevant."

**Bulthuis** said the pay scales were the final implementation of the approved pay increases, a process that sees the city's estimated 150 employees reviewed and their department heads determine how much of a merit increase, up to 3 percent, they receive.

Acworth's fiscal 2017 budget, which took effect July 1, projects general fund revenues of about \$14.1 million compared to last year's amended general fund budget of \$13 million, an increase of 8 percent — the largest percentage of general fund growth among the adopted fiscal 2017 budgets of Cobb's six cities.



**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Brian Martin Bulthuis**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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[CB&A Note: Only the information relevant to **Brian Martin Bulthuis** is listed below.]

Marietta Daily Journal (GA)  
August 5, 2014

**Two Cobb cities top list of Georgia’s safest**  
Section: Local News

Residents of Acworth and Kennesaw can sleep a little easier knowing their cities have been listed among the 10 safest in the state. Movoto Real Estate, a real estate website known for its creative top 10 lists, compiled crime statistics in cities across Georgia, such as murder, rape and property crime rates, and ranked the cities according to which had the lowest rates.

According to Movoto, the site looked at the 84 cities in the state of Georgia with a population of more than 10,000 people and compared crime data from the 2012 FBI Uniform Crime Report. If a city did not have crime data in the report, it was omitted, the website says, leaving 73 cities. After looking at the crime data, Movoto published a list of the top 50 safest cities in the state. While Marietta came in near the bottom of the top 50 list at 47th, Acworth and Kennesaw earned high praise from the site: Acworth claimed the second spot, and Kennesaw placed fourth.

Captain Mark Cheatham of the Acworth Police Department, which consists of 43 officers, said his city had no murders in 2013 and saw nine violent crimes, which includes forcible rape and aggravated assault. Acworth saw a total of 404 property crimes in 2013, Cheatham said, including larcenies and thefts. Movoto lists Acworth’s population as 20,425.

Acworth Mayor Tommy Allegood cited the city’s leadership as one of the key reasons his city ranks so highly on the list. “It’s leadership — from the police chief down through the ranks of our command staff — and our City Council, our commitment (to) making sure we ... made the kind of investment, financial as well as philosophical investment, to ... create the second safest community in the state of Georgia,” Allegood said. Allegood added the city’s police department stays well-connected with its citizens. “When you have a ... policing philosophy that is community-minded, then you’re out there making sure you’re connected with all the neighborhoods through community watches, though homeowners association,” he said.

According to **Brian Bulthuis**, Acworth’s city manager, the city spent about \$3.5 million on its police force last year, representing about 30 percent of its total budget in fiscal 2014. The Kennesaw Police Department also listed zero murders on its annual report from last year. In addition, the report shows Kennesaw experienced 27 aggravated assaults and 415 larcenies and thefts in 2013.

Pam Davis, spokeswoman for the city, said public safety, consisting of the city’s police and corrections departments, received more than \$5.3 million from the budget for fiscal 2014, which she said was just under 30 percent of what the city spent overall. The city has 65 sworn police officers, Davis added.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Brian Martin Bulthuis**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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CB&A Note: Only the information relevant to **Brian Martin Bulthuis** is listed below.]

Atlanta Journal-Constitution, The (GA)  
December 10, 2013

**Cobb**

Author: Carolyn Cunningham, Tucker McQueen

The Northwest Cobb Area Council of the Cobb Chamber has named Phillip Page, principal at North Cobb High School in Kennesaw, citizen of the year. Page was recognized for his work and service in the Acworth community.

Acworth City Manager **Brian Bulthuis** also received the council's community impact award. **Bulthuis** has been city manager for 17 years.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Brian Martin Bulthuis**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Marietta Daily Journal (GA)  
June 22, 2013

**Acworth officials refinance to save \$2.3M on bonds**

Author: Megan Thornton

Acworth's Board of Aldermen approved the refinancing of its bond debt Thursday in a move that will save taxpayers more than \$2.3 million in the long run. One of the bonds is used to finance the Lakeside Marketplace retail complex within the Tax Allocation District, and by refinancing at a reduced term and lower interest rate the city will realize savings of about \$2 million. The second bond was issued 10 years ago by the city's Downtown Development Authority to fund the construction of City Hall and Acworth Sports Complex, and refinancing now at a lower interest rate will provide savings over the bond's life of about \$291,000.

The aldermen had much praise for city staff working with Gordon Mortin, managing director of independent financial adviser Raymond James, who helped secure the lower rates and reduce long-term costs.

The TAD bond was originally to go until 2029, but the debt has been refinanced to be paid off in 2025 at a reduced interest rate of 2.53 percent, down from 6.75 percent, Mortin said. "It's hard to remember (Lakeside Marketplace shopping center) was a construction debris landfill and there was no significant development north of that," Mortin said. "And you look at what's happened there: It's been a great revenue generator. This is the classic example of how a TAD is supposed to work."

Georgia's TAD designation was created as an economic development tool for cities to finance projects to remove urban blight - such as the landfill that was previously at the Lakeside Marketplace site - by attracting development to these designated areas. Acworth secured bonds to finance these improvements through the "tax allocation increment," or the increase in property tax revenues resulting from the 350,000-square-foot shopping center development that now boasts a Super Target.

"Our TAD is operating exactly as it should," City Manager **Brian Bulthuis** said. "We're having excess revenues every year." **Bulthuis** said the increment over the base property tax revenues peaked a few years ago at \$27 million and revenues are now at about \$23 million over the base. The incremental funds are paid back to the city, which then uses the money to pay off the bonds with the excess split between Acworth, the Cobb County School District and the Cobb County Commission, per the original TAD agreement.

The bond covering City Hall and the sports complex was issued 10 years ago and will be paid off in 2023. The refinanced interest rate has been adjusted to 1.74 percent, resulting in a savings on average of about \$30,000 per year. "In my 43 years, this is bottom of the market," Mortin said.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Brian Martin Bulthuis**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The total cost to refinance the City Hall and sports complex bond is about \$3.4 million. City Manager **Brian Bulthuis** said the DDA met Tuesday night and approved all of the documents. **Bulthuis** clarified that the savings from the TAD will not all go to Acworth, as it has about a 20 percent share of the TAD, with Cobb County School District receiving about 57 percent and the remainder going toward Cobb County per the intergovernmental agreement. "This is not only a benefit to us, this is a benefit to our schools and the county, but we'll see it (paid off) in 2025 instead of 2029," **Bulthuis** said.

The cost to refinance the TAD bond is almost \$6 million. Mortin said the higher cost is because the refinance has taken a year and is almost twice the size. "It's been extremely hard to get done but you can obviously see the benefits in the level of savings," Mortin said.

**Bulthuis** said he was proud of the work done both by city staff, City Attorney Doug Haynie and Mortin. "This was a huge undertaking to get these refinanced and our timing in the market I don't think could have been better because in my 25 years of doing this I've never seen (interest rate) numbers like this," **Bulthuis** said.

Mayor Tommy Allegood was not present at Thursday's meeting, which was conducted by Mayor Pro-Tem Tim Richardson. The board also approved the fiscal 2014 budget of \$11.4 million with no one speaking out during the public hearing.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Brian Martin Bulthuis**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Marietta Daily Journal (GA)  
June 6, 2013

**Acworth budget has 3% garbage collection bump**

Author: Megan Thornton

Though taxes won't be increasing next year, Acworth residents will see a 3 percent increase in garbage collection fees under the city's proposed fiscal 2014 budget. Acworth officials are proposing an \$11.4 million budget, a 1.6 percent increase from the current budget of \$11.2 million.

The first public hearing for the budget, which runs from July 1 through June 30, 2014, will be tonight at 6:30 p.m. at City Hall. It will be followed by a regular meeting of the mayor and Board of Aldermen at 7 p.m.

City Manager **Brian Bulthuis** said the budget, which includes only the general fund, is projected to be slightly higher than the previous year because the city eliminated some of its debt and anticipates receiving extra money from the recent change in the ad valorem car tax that went into effect March 1. "We're anticipating this first year, because of the change over, there will be a little extra," **Bulthuis** said.

Under the new tax, people who purchased and titled a vehicle between Jan. 1, 2012, and March 1, 2013, may be eligible to opt into the new tax system. City Treasurer Sharron Burtz said she anticipates more residents will be opting in initially, but that the revenue will level out in coming years.

The only city fee to increase this year is for garbage collection, which will rise 60 cents per month, from \$19 per household to \$19.60. **Bulthuis** said the increase is because gas prices have gone up, along with the cost of dumping waste.

The anticipated budget expenses are approximately \$11.4 million in fiscal 2014. The final amended budget for the current year shows revenues of \$11.2 million and expenditures of \$11.2 million. The city's reserve fund will stay virtually the same at \$2.9 million by the end of the upcoming fiscal year. "We're projecting a small surplus," **Bulthuis** said.

With the projected increase, the city expects to maintain its 161 full-time employees and has no plans to make cuts to any services or programs. The millage rate of 7.6 also will go unchanged pending board approval next month. Tonight's public hearing is the first of two, with the second hearing just before the Board of Aldermen will vote on the budget on June 20.

Employee raises still in question

**Bulthuis** said the city plans to wait until the end of the calendar year to evaluate health insurance costs and the local tax digest to determine whether city employees will get a raise. The tax digest is the total amount of revenue that comes into the city from property taxes. "If we can keep

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Brian Martin Bulthuis**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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health insurance numbers down, then we'll be looking to use any savings to possibly give raises," **Bulthuis** said.

Mayor Tommy Allegood said the potential increase hinges on where the city ends up with health care costs so he could not say what the raises could amount to. Allegood said he's in favor of the proposed budget because it's balanced. "Most importantly, we don't have to raise anybody's property taxes to augment any shortages," Allegood said. Over the last 15 years, the city has lowered its millage rate from 7.9 percent to 7.6 percent and is still able to maintain a high level of services, Allegood said.

**Bulthuis** said the city's major focus for the coming year is allocating SPLOST funds for capital improvement projects, including a proposed \$3.8 million police station.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Brian Martin Bulthuis**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Marietta Daily Journal (GA)  
May 3, 2013

**Acworth votes to annex Cobb property**

Author: Rachel Miller

Mayor Tommy Allegood and the Board of Alderman approved annexing portions of unincorporated Cobb County into the Acworth city limits Thursday night. Several county residents spoke in opposition to the move, but the board approved the annexation that will bring "islands of land" into the city that confuse emergency responders and road maintenance crews over jurisdiction. The lone vote against the annexation came from Alderman Butch Price, who said, "It is hard to justify."

Before approval, City Manager **Brian Bulthuis** added stipulations that owners or renters who are currently living on the designated properties will receive free trash removal for 10 years, which is a savings of \$235 a year. **Bulthuis** also recommended to the board that they honor current county business licenses paid through 2013 for the six-month gap before Acworth's next business licensing in June 2014. He said businesses that are part of the annexation will be licensed at half price for the next five years.

Alderman Tim Richardson asked that mailings with this updated information be sent to the property owners this month, which was the only comment from a board member before the vote.

A representative from Cobb County attended to show support from the county, which is the only other party that needed to consent to the city takeover of the land. The county has an agreement to cooperate with Acworth on any actions deemed necessary to end duplication of services. The annexation will take effect June 1.

From an audience of more than 50 people, seven individuals spoke during a 25-minute public comment period. Each landowner spoke against another level of government being placed on them. Commercial property owner Steve McNeel began the quiet rally, saying he admitted the city had the power and was not asking for his vote.

Al Fortney, CEO of Fortney Sales Company Inc., purchased 5.5 acres in December to move his business from Kennesaw, but said that he never received notification from the city about its intention to annex his parcel. **Bulthuis** said the certified letters were addressed based on tax filings. "You might have well thrown it out the window," Fortney said to the board. Fortney accused the board of having a vested interest in the land grab because of the increase in tax revenue. "I can tell you roads aren't cheap," **Bulthuis** responded about using part of city property taxes on road maintenance.

Most people who addressed the board said they felt victimized by the mandate, which made them fearful of future property demands by the city, such as adding power lines or fines for nonworking vehicles parked on the properties now part of the city. Landowner Ben Turner

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Brian Martin Bulthuis**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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pointed to previously annexed land, which now houses the Lake Park subdivision and which he said caused erosion and flooding to his family's adjacent property.

A couple of speakers pointed out that the regular scheduled meeting began in the typical fashion, with everyone in the room standing to recite The Pledge of Allegiance, but that there was no "liberty and justice for all" regarding the annexation. Although Allegood advised the public comment period was not a time for questions, Turner, who has owned 7 acres on Lot 50 since 1955, asked, "Will I be a good citizen if I am forced to be one?"



**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Brian Martin Bulthuis**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Marietta Daily Journal (GA)  
March 3, 2013

**Cobb divided on use of outside lobbyists**

Author: Jon Gillooly

When it comes to ensuring state and federal lawmakers hear local concerns, no two communities are alike. And in Cobb County, local government agencies are similarly divided on the usefulness of outside lobbyists in putting their interests front and center in the halls of the Capitol.

The cities of Acworth, Austell, Powder Springs and Smyrna do not hire lobbyists. "We've never had a lobbyist," Acworth Mayor Tommy Allegood said. "Being a member of the Georgia Municipal Association, we kind of rely on them for information. We don't have any direct contract with the lobbyist through GMA, but we get regular updates from the GMA."

Allegood and Mayors Pat Vaughn and Joe Jerkins say if they need something for their city, they pick up the phone and call the lawmakers who represent them. "Really and truly our elected leaders are our lobbyists, the way we look at it is certainly state Rep. Ed Setzler and Sen. Lindsey Tippins, they do a fine job for us," Allegood said.

Acworth City Manager **Brian Bulthuis** said Acworth pays GMA a \$6,488.51 membership fee. "Its main purpose is training elected and staff and being a resource for elected officials and staff on common issues which we all face," **Bulthuis** said. "It's a resource for jobs. It has group health insurance, workers compensation insurance, liability insurance, retirement programs. It is much more than a lobby company."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Brian Martin Bulthuis**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Marietta Daily Journal (GA)  
February 19, 2013

**Acworth studies IMAGE program**

Author: Noreen Cochran

The city of Acworth is no closer today to joining a federal immigration enforcement program, but now it has more information to ponder. During a work session Monday, City Manager **Brian Bulthuis** brought Mayor Tommy Allegood and the Board of Aldermen up to speed on his research into the ICE Mutual Agreement between Government and Employers, or IMAGE. The program, developed by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, is designed to determine whether all employees are legally able to work.

**Bulthuis** told the board the program includes E-Verify, in which the city and its contractors already participate per a new state law. E-Verify compares information on a new hire's I-9, which is an employment eligibility verification form, and data from the Social Security Administration.

There is no checking of workers who signed on before the system was in place. "You can't go back and look at old employees," **Bulthuis** said. "You can only look at new employees." **Bulthuis** said if someone blew the whistle on a worker, the Acworth Police Department would have to contact the federal enforcement agency. As the city, we don't have any enforcement ability whatsoever," he said. He said the system has not unearthed any illegal workers among Acworth's 150 employees, only a newlywed with a name change not yet registered with Social Security.

**Best practices**

IMAGE includes E-Verify and 11 other "best practices," **Bulthuis** said. One is a retroactive function, examining all employee records regardless of hire date and verifying Social Security numbers. Another addition is to "ensure that contractors and/or subcontractors establish procedures to comply with employment eligibility verification requirements," according to [www.ice.gov/IMAGE](http://www.ice.gov/IMAGE). Yet another is "encourage contractors and/or subcontractors to incorporate IMAGE best practices and, when practicable, incorporate the use of E-Verify in subcontractor agreements."

**Stumbling blocks**

Contractors and the firms they hire to perform parts of a large job, such as constructing a police station, may constitute a stumbling block. "The city would be required to start monitoring all subcontractors and sub-subcontractors. That would be an additional step that we're not required to do now," **Bulthuis** said. Right now there are no requirements for the city's contractors to be in the IMAGE program.

Marietta resident D.A. King spoke during the work session. "Please believe me, you don't have an accurate picture of what IMAGE is," he said. "To become IMAGE certified or applying for it

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Brian Martin Bulthuis**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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in no way requires that you require a sub-sub-subcontractor to use E-Verify." King recommended tapping ICE Special Agent Rick Beamish to address a future work session. "You don't have all the information to become IMAGE certified," King said.

Allegood said he would consider the suggestion. "Let's digest this," he said.

Costs not calculated

Although the IMAGE website does not list a charge to be certified, neither does it offer compensation for completing its 12 steps. Some of the requirements include added paperwork for human resources departments and specialized training, which would come out of the city's budget.

**Bulthuis** did not present cost estimates at the work session, and Allegood said after the meeting they had not worked up those costs. **Bulthuis** said seven of the 12 requirements would have to be started from scratch. "We don't have those in place yet," he said about items such as establishing an anonymous tip line.

The Acworth board made no commitment to place the agreement on a future agenda. Why now? Last year the Cobb Board of Commissioners agreed to become certified with the program. Now that board is considering a measure to require contractors doing business with the county to apply for IMAGE certification. Since the county joined, the city became more interested in the program's effects on local government.

Alderman Tim Richardson brought up the topic, and the board scheduled the work session. "We've been asked the question, are we going to become IMAGE certified and are we going to make our contractors be certified?" Allegood said. "We don't know. Everyone is going to have this conversation at some time. We're getting to it early."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Brian Martin Bulthuis**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Marietta Daily Journal (GA)  
January 10, 2013

**Allegood: New positions save taxpayers money**

Author: Noreen Cochran

The Acworth Board of Aldermen has created new positions, but they will actually reduce expenses in its \$26 million general fund, according to Mayor Tommy Allegood. "We consolidated our power and public works departments together," he said Tuesday. "In doing that, we created some real management efficiencies, with overall savings of about \$50,000, so that's saving taxpayers money."

Public Works Director Mark Hipp will lead the combined departments, Allegood said. "In creating a new position for the two departments, we outsourced some of those responsibilities over to our city treasurer," Allegood said. "So we took our treasury department and moved some things over."

City Manager **Brian Bulthuis** said the reorganization includes redefined roles for existing staff members. "We had a variety of job descriptions approved," he said about a city treasurer, deputy city treasurer, accountant, human resources manager, accounts payable technician, utility billing clerk and several customer service staff members. "We had some people retire in our finance department, so we just reorganized positions."

The new position of tax administrator, also created at the meeting on Jan. 3, is advertised on the city's website, [www.acworth.org](http://www.acworth.org).

According to the website, the salary is \$34,500 and "includes all functions required for the billing of property taxes, as well as occupational tax certificate bills."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Brian Martin Bulthuis**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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[CB&A Note: Only the information relevant to **Brian Martin Bulthuis** is listed below.]

[https://transformgov.org/sites/transformgov.org/files/303952\\_Final%202012%20Service%20Awards%20List.docx](https://transformgov.org/sites/transformgov.org/files/303952_Final%202012%20Service%20Awards%20List.docx)

**CELEBRATION OF SERVICE**

**Congratulations to the 2012 Service Award Recipients!**

ICMA Service Awards recognize and celebrate members' dedication to public service and professional management at the local level. Awards are granted at 10 years and 20 years of local government service. After 20 years, awards are given in five-year increments. Members receiving awards for 30 years or more of local government service will be recognized individually during the Celebration of Service to the Profession, which takes place at the ICMA Annual Conference.

25 Years

**Brian M. Bulthuis**

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Brian Martin Bulthuis**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Marietta Daily Journal (GA)  
June 1, 2012

**Acworth officials propose new fiscal budget City manager says falling property values leading to lower projected budget for 2013**

Author: Marcus E. Howard

Acworth officials are proposing a Fiscal Year 2013 budget balanced at \$10,945,150, down 3.4 percent from the current budget. City Manager **Brian Bulthuis** said the projected budget, which currently includes only the general fund, is down because of falling property values. "Our preliminary estimate of our assessment roll was down about 6 percent, which means our property taxes will be lower," **Bulthuis** said. "The assessments went down; my house went down. So it's just based on what the assessor has done." Nevertheless, the city does not plan to make any cuts in services or programs and have no plans for layoffs, furloughs or use of reserve funds. The current property tax rate of 7.6 mills will also remain unchanged under the proposal.

The Acworth City Council will conduct two public hearings on the proposed budget beginning at 7 p.m. Thursday at City Hall. The final hearing will occur at the same time on June 21, just before the council votes on the budget. The vote on the millage rate will take place in July.

About 50 percent of Acworth's revenue comes from property taxes, according to the city. To cope with the loss of revenue, the city will defer from making major capital purchases, such as police cars, and rely on maintenance, **Bulthuis** said. The city will do some reshuffling of job duties in its parks and recreation department as well. And after Wayne Dennard was recently promoted to police chief, the city's police department will not fill his former position of major and will instead use captains to handle those job duties, **Bulthuis** said. "We look at what it takes to get the job done in terms of each department," he said. "Some were able to cut more than others."

However, the city does plan to raise its sanitation rate by 25 cents to \$19 per month, as a result of increased fuel costs, **Bulthuis** said. "Which is still a lot cheaper than a lot of places around us," he said. The city's health care cost for its more than 150 employees has also gone up by 3 percent, the city reported. Each December, city officials renegotiate its health care to keep costs in check and have switched providers twice in the past two years. Aetna is currently its provider. "By going out on the market when we do, we've been able to keep our health cost increases to a minimum," **Bulthuis** said. "They've only been about 3 or 4 percent the last couple of years."

**Bulthuis** said SPLOST money will pay for the city's capital improvement projects. "It was a little bit more difficult this year," he said of putting together the new budget. "The assessment roll went down a little bit more than I expected. I was thinking it was going to be about a 3 percent decrease. When it went down 6 percent - that surprised us a little bit. That's still an estimate." Acworth's fiscal year runs July 1 to June 30.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Brian Martin Bulthuis**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Cherokee Tribune (Canton, GA)  
June 16, 2011

**Acworth set to approve \$10.86 million budget for 2012**

Author: Jon Gillooly

Acworth's Board of Aldermen is expected to approve a fiscal year 2012 budget of \$10.86 million tonight. No tax increases or cuts to public services are expected. "There are no raises budgeted and do not anticipate the need for any furlough days," City Manager **Brian Bulthuis** said.

Acworth's general fund budget balances revenues and expenses at \$10.86 million, which is \$666,366 or 5.8 percent, lower than FY11's budget of \$11.526 million.

Mayor Tommy Allegood said it's a budget he's proud of. "We just cut expenses out of the department," Allegood said. "We haven't given any raises. We've just cut some of the capital expenditures and cut it out of the departments without cutting any services or any people. I'm proud of it because we're not putting the burden on the taxpayer."

Acworth's fiscal year begins July 1. The budget funds 150 full time employees, the same number as in the current fiscal year. Acworth's maintenance and operations tax rate, which is 7.6 mills, is expected to remain the same, **Bulthuis** said.

The city will dip into its rainy-day reserves by \$34,398, leaving \$2.5 million in reserves for 2012.

Acworth is part of the Cobb Fire System, but its police department is budgeted at \$3.29 million, compared to FY11's \$3.30 million, a difference of \$15,222. The police department has 40 sworn officers and three support employees.

The city of Acworth has a population of 20,425 people.

Tonight's meeting begins at 7 p.m. in the Council Chambers at 4415 Senator Russell Ave. in Acworth.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Brian Martin Bulthuis**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Marietta Daily Journal (GA)  
April 10, 2010

**Acworth chosen as All-America City contender**

Author: Katy Ruth Camp

Although Mayor Tommy Allegood said he already feels Acworth is one of the best cities in America, the National Civic League may officially give his city that title in June. Acworth is the only city in Georgia to be selected an All-America City finalist. City officials learned Tuesday that the northern Cobb County city was in the running for the high honor.

"If you think about the scope of this and that of all the cities in the nation, 27 are picked and we're one of them, that's huge," Allegood said. "No other city has the type of programs we have, and we've definitely made our mark as a city and community that gives."

Allegood will travel with a group of about 25 city delegates to Kansas City, Mo., on June 16, where they will "pitch" the city to a selection committee of 10 people. On June 18, the committee will select 10 of the 27 finalists as All-America cities.

City Manager **Brian Bulthuis** said the three-day trip to Missouri will be funded solely through donations. More than \$5,000 has already been raised from the community in just two days, **Bulthuis** said.

Only five cities in Georgia have ever earned the title of All-American City. Marietta was named in 2006. Atlanta, Savannah, Toccoa and all of DeKalb County are the other Georgia titleholders.

**Bulthuis** said when Acworth officials applied in March for the title, they were asked to submit three city programs that bring the community together. City staff chose Horizon Field, which is the baseball and softball field specially designed to serve children with special needs; the Expanding Horizons program, which funds trips for students, many who have never traveled outside of the city limits, on educational trips through donations by local businesses and residents; and the Acworth Achievers program, which offers after-school opportunities for students.

"It's not just the government that makes Acworth so special – it's the churches, the schools, the businesses, everyone coming together," Allegood said. "This award really stresses the importance of an entire community coming together to make it better, and we certainly do that. I'm not surprised at all we're chosen, and I fully expect us to come back with the award."



**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Brian Martin Bulthuis**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Marietta Daily Journal (GA)  
March 4, 2010

**Acworth businesses approved for tax credits**

Author: Jon Gillooly

The state has approved the city of Acworth to use a program that encourages new businesses to relocate to the city or existing businesses to expand in the area through the use of tax credits. Qualifying businesses will receive \$3,500 per year per employee for every two or more positions created, Acworth City Manager **Brian Bulthuis** said.

The boundaries for the incentive encompass downtown Acworth, where the old Chevrolet building is on Main Street, extending along Main Street almost to the northern edge of the city, and also from Main Street along the Cherokee Street Corridor out to where the former K-Mart building stands near I-75, **Bulthuis** said.

Mayor Tommy Allegood called it a huge accomplishment. "Our efforts over the years in recognizing areas that needed special attention is now supported by the state. We are excited and proud of what this will mean to the citizens of Acworth," he said.

The Georgia Department of Community Affairs designates governments as having "Opportunity Zones," where an undertaking of redevelopment and revitalization in older commercial areas has occurred. Acworth has initiated a redevelopment plan for its northern downtown area, which incorporates several large parcels where buildings were left vacant and dilapidated after businesses either moved or went under. The tax credit program, which was approved Tuesday, is effective immediately.

Acworth is the 20th out of Georgia's 534 cities to be approved for the program, **Bulthuis** said. Marietta became the first Cobb city to qualify in November.

Marietta's opportunity zones encompass parts of Roswell Street, the South Loop, Fairground Street, Franklin Road, Powder Springs Street, such as the dilapidated area around Sandtown Road, and some of the older industrial park areas along Interstate 75 and Canton Road, City Manager Bill Bruton said. Shortly after getting approval from the state, Bruton said, "This is the biggest economic development tool that we have ever had to encourage the expansion of local business and the relocation of other businesses to Marietta."

Other counties that use the tax credit incentive include Augusta-Richmond, Norcross, Cherokee, Cornelia and Darien, said Beth Sessoms, Marietta's economic development manager. For more information, contact Brandon Douglas, Acworth's economic development director, at (770) 974-3112.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Brian Martin Bulthuis**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Marietta Daily Journal (GA)

February 4, 2010

**School board appoints panel members**

Cobb School Board Member David Banks has been appointed as the board's liaison to the Facilities and Technology Committee. The committee is a 16-member citizen's oversight panel that reviews spending of the special purpose local option sales tax programs. Each school board member, plus the superintendent, appoints two members to the committee.

At Thursday's school board meeting, board members announced their appointees for the year, although many current members will continue to serve. New committee members, and the board member who appointed them, are: Kimberley Euston (Dr. John Crooks); Joel Stone Jr. (David Banks); and Bill Thrash (Lynnda Crowder-Eagle).

Returning members are: Wallace Coopwood and Ralph Williams (Superintendent Fred Sanderson); Allison Krache Giddens (Crowder-Eagle); Ann Kirk and Susan Pearson (Holli Cash); Virginia Gregory and David Wilkerson (David Morgan); David Chastain (Dr. John Abraham); Donald Hill (Banks); Angie Delvin-Brown (Crooks); and Angie May and John Williams (Alison Bartlett).

Abraham said Wednesday that he is still working to fill his other vacancy on the panel, created by the resignation of **Brian Bulthuis**.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Brian Martin Bulthuis**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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[CB&A Note: Only the information relevant to **Brian Martin Bulthuis** is listed below.]

Marietta Daily Journal (GA)  
June 23, 2009

**Committee talks schools expansion, technology program**  
Author: Jon Gillooly

Program management

**Brian Bulthuis**, appointed by board Chairman Dr. John Abraham, brought up what a deal the school district was getting by hiring Atlanta-based Brookwood and Tampa-based PBS&J as the program manager for building the ninth-grade centers for North Cobb and South Cobb high schools and a replacement school for East Side Elementary at a cost of only 1.3 percent or \$998,800 of the total \$77.4 million projected cost of the projects.

**Bulthuis** suggested bundling other SPLOST III projects and releasing an RFP to see what else the market provided. Yet Angie May, appointed by board member Alison Bartlett, raised a flag of caution. Brookwood/PBS&J's bid was about 25 percent lower than its closest competitor, she said. "I think there are some other issues going on that bid," May said, suggesting the firm bid low to get future business with the school system.

Committee Chairman Chuck Casto said the issue was not determining what the firm's motive was, but taking advantage of what the market has to offer. The committee ultimately decided to leave it up to the school board whether to outsource more SPLOST III projects.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Brian Martin Bulthuis**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Marietta Daily Journal (GA)  
June 19, 2009

**Acworth budget receives unanimous approval**

Author: Ashley Hungerford

The Acworth Board of Aldermen unanimously approved the city's 2010 fiscal year budget Thursday night. The revenue for the general fund budget is \$10,816,974 and the expenses are \$10,876,269. City Manager **Brian Bulthuis** said the \$55,000 difference will come from the city's fund balance.

The budget does not require a millage increase. The city's millage rate will remain at 7.6 mills, meaning property owners will continue to pay \$7.60 per \$1,000 of assessed property values.

Similar to surrounding jurisdictions, **Bulthuis** said Acworth's budget is very bare bones with revenues dipping this year because of the economy. "There is nothing extra in this budget," **Bulthuis** said. "There are no new initiatives this year."

Mayor Tommy Allegood said the city did a "serious belt tightening," when preparing the budget. "We worked very hard to reduce certain expenditures, but not reduce services," he said. "We believe we have estimated correctly on revenues. We have a budget that we're proud of, and we have a budget that does not require us to increase our millage rate."

Employee raises have been cut from the budget, but the city does not have to cut any of its employees. "Right now, if revenues are the way I've projected, I don't anticipate any layoffs or millage increase," **Bulthuis** said. "This is the first time in my 12 years that we've not given raises."

Several of the Aldermen said they're sad that the city couldn't afford raises for the city employees, whom they commended for the work they do for the city. "It hurts not to give them a raise, but it would hurt more to have to lay people off," Alderman Bob Weatherford said.

The only new positions in the budget are four new police officers, but those aren't a sure thing yet, **Bulthuis** said. The city has applied for grants funded by the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act. If the city doesn't get the stimulus money, **Bulthuis** said they will not have any new positions.

This is the first time the city has approved the budget in June. The city changed its fiscal year to run July 1 through June 31 to be better in line with when tax revenue is collected, **Bulthuis** said. Acworth property taxes are collected through the Cobb Tax Commissioner's office on October. Previously, the city's fiscal year ran Jan. 1 through Dec. 31.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Brian Martin Bulthuis**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Marietta Daily Journal (GA)

April 22, 2009

**Show results Schools group wants data from '21st century classroom' pilot study**

Author: Jon Gillooly

An oversight committee wants to know the results of a pilot study of seven Cobb schools that have been using "21st century classroom" technology. The Cobb school board's Facilities and Technology Review Committee voted unanimously Monday to have Dr. Judi Jones, the district's chief accountability officer, give her findings of the pilot at the committee's meeting next month.

The vote was made at the recommendation of F&T member Wallace Coopwood, who is appointed by Superintendent Fred Sanderson. The findings may help the committee recommend to the school board how high tech devices should be purchased and distributed in all classrooms in the district.

Associate Superintendent Dr. Gordon Pritz said the pilot has been ongoing since January 2008. F&T Vice Chairman Mike Russell said the 21st century classroom program has been "held in limbo." The program was met with stumbling blocks since its inception.

In May 2007, Chris Ragsdale, the district's technology chief, and other administrators released a Request for Proposal to outfit 400 to 500 classrooms at seven Cobb schools with all the gadgets needed to become "21st century classrooms." Those included electronic whiteboards, projection screens, electromagnetic digital pads, projectors, speakers, amplifiers, wall-mounted controllers, DVD players, student response systems, wireless microphones, and document cameras. Schools chosen to participate included five elementary schools, Durham Middle School and Sprayberry High School.

Sanderson at that time recommended the board vote to accept three vendors - Canton-based Computrac, Logical Choice and Multi Media Services - to carry out the pilot at a total cost of \$4.4 million. But in June 2007, three Cobb school board members ordered Sanderson back to the drawing board. Then-board Chairman Lindsey Tippins, then-board member Dr. Teresa Plenge and current Chairman Dr. John Abraham told Sanderson his proposal was inadequate. Plenge said she was amazed Sanderson would propose such a project without public buy-in. She said the proposal was so vastly incomplete that if a graduate student brought it to her to approve for a doctoral dissertation she would fail the student.

So the next month, after Sanderson built in an evaluation process to determine if the pilot program would be successful, the school board approved Sanderson's reduced \$2.2 million test program to equip the seven schools.

In January, Abraham said he had asked Sanderson to give the board a presentation on the pilot program. But that has yet to occur at least publicly. Pritz said the SPLOST III program earmarks \$14 million in special tax dollars for "interactive classroom devices" that would turn Cobb's

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Brian Martin Bulthuis**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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classrooms into 21st century classrooms. Pritz, on Monday, told the F&T Committee that the SPLOST language does not specify that every classroom would receive the same interactive classroom devices, such as whiteboards, student response systems and electronic pads, because the results of the pilot will determine how they are distributed. "It did not specifically spell out that every classroom in the district will have every one of those things...That's because the pilot would bring us some data," he said.

Among the data being collected, Pritz said, is how often students use the various devices in the seven pilot schools. "Were the boards used more so than the pads? Did it get used more extensively in the upper elementary grades versus the lower elementary grades? (The pilot should) tell us what it should look like based on good sound data," he said. The committee will wait to hear Jones' report on the pilot results before making a recommendation to the school board on how to spend the \$14 million.

Pritz said a second line item in the SPLOST III program calls for \$18 million to be spend on audio visual equipment for each classroom in the district. Pritz told the committee his office is in the process of installing some of that equipment. The SPLOST timeline calls for \$6 million to be spent each year on the audio visual equipment for a three year span, although that is subject to change due to cash flow, he said. Ragsdale asked the committee to approve installing all \$18 million worth of audio visual equipment in a 12 month span rather than a three year span. The committee voted unanimously to do that at the recommendation of member **Brian Bulthuis**, who is appointed by Abraham.

Board member Dr. John Crooks, who was at the meeting, told the Journal after the vote, "I'm going, whoa! I think we need to very careful. They don't make motions, they make recommendations and they make requests. And the proper request would be 'if there is monies available then we would like to see those things done.'" Crooks serves as the board liaison on the F&T Committee. He said with SPLOST revenues coming in lower than projected, he wasn't sure the money was there to do it all at once. "I was very interested in the dialogue going on there last night," Crooks said.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Brian Martin Bulthuis**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Marietta Daily Journal (GA)  
December 20, 2008

**Acworth approves 6-month budget**

The Acworth Board of Alderman approved a six-month, \$5.96 million city budget on Thursday. The budget is for Jan. 1 through June 30, 2009. City Manager **Brian Bulthuis** said the city is changing their fiscal year to run July 1 to June 30 and that the city will approve a 12-month budget in June. The city's current fiscal year runs Jan. 1 to Dec. 31.

Revenue for the six-month budget totaled \$2.8 million. **Bulthuis** said the balance would come from funds rolled over from the previous year's budget.

The six-month budget includes two new positions: a new police officer whose starting salary is in the mid-\$30,000, and a new position in parks and recreation with a salary around \$40,000.

The parks and recreation position will be for programming for special-needs and senior citizen residents in the city, **Bulthuis** said.

Besides the two positions, the rest of the budget is maintaining the status quo, **Bulthuis** said. He said all departments have cut expenses such as travel and training.

The change in fiscal year will allow the city to get a better picture of tax revenues when planning the budget, **Bulthuis** said. "The change is a cash-flow issue, not an economy issue," he said. "We're trying to get a truer picture of the cash flow."

The County Tax Assessor's office releases the tax digest in the summer. The digest is the value of all real and personal property and registered vehicles in the county. **Bulthuis** said he has to almost "guess" what tax revenue will be months before he has any idea what tax collections will look like.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Brian Martin Bulthuis**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Marietta Daily Journal (GA)  
July 17, 2007

**\$1.2M grant will help downtown redevelopment**

Author: Ashley Hungerford

The Atlanta Regional Commission has awarded the city a \$1.2 million grant to continue downtown redevelopment along Senator Russell Avenue. Fast becoming a second main street, Senator Richard B. Russell Avenue parallels Main Street and is home to Acworth City Hall, Cotton's Restaurant, Bella Dia European Day Spa and Teacup Cottage.

Acworth City Manager **Brian Bulthuis** said the ARC's Livable Communities Initiative grant would help pay for sidewalk and streetscape improvements along Senator Russell Avenue from Dallas Street to Morningside Drive. "Our vision is to make Senator Russell (Avenue) our second main street, and we're trying to make it a more walkable downtown," **Bulthuis** said.

Officials plan to use the money to finance street improvements along the avenue that began nearly four years ago. The project's first phase, funded through a 2003 ARC grant, paid for traffic improvements, parking, lighting, street infrastructure, and sidewalks from Lemon to Dallas streets. The latest grant will continue similar improvements to Morningside Drive.

**Bulthuis** cautioned residents and downtown businesses not to look for immediate improvements, as second phase construction is a couple of years away and pending final design approval. "But the Downtown Development Authority is excited about it," **Bulthuis** said. The city initially planned to finance improvements to Senator Russell Avenue with its share of revenue from Cobb's 1-cent Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax designated for street resurfacing. "This will help make the SPLOST dollars go that much further," he said.

Mayor Tommy Allegood said the grant money would help the city continue its momentum to redevelop downtown. "As grant funding permits, we'll continue redevelopment of our downtown," he said.

Downtown Development Authority Director Jan Harris said businesses are more likely to invest money downtown when city officials show the area is important. "It has been my experience that where public money goes, private money will follow," she said. "If you improve the curb appeal, businesses have a tendency to be more successful."

Allegood said there isn't any business vacancies in the city's downtown district and what few openings exist along Main Street south of downtown are being redeveloped. The former Day's Chevrolet lot just south of downtown is the future site of Senior Village, a \$38 million private development.

Allegood said Acworth has the right components -- including a strong sentiment among residents for historic preservation -- to drive downtown redevelopment. Acworth has earned millions of



**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Brian Martin Bulthuis**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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dollars in grant money to redevelop its downtown in recent years. Ms. Harris could name about a dozen downtown projects the city has completed. Some of those projects include \$450,000 to acquire a bank building that is now City Hall; \$4.8 million in SPLOST and city matching funds to redo downtown streetscapes in 2002; \$130,000 to redevelop the Depot and nearby streetscapes; and \$95,000 to build 30 additional parking spaces on Cherokee Street in 2003. The city also completed a \$1.2 million parking lot with 72 spaces between City Hall and the library with a combination of SPLOST and city funds.

Acworth's Revitalization Grant Committee also awards façade grants to downtown businesses to improve entrances. Ms. Harris said any independent business in the downtown district is eligible to apply for the grants. "They continue the growth of the 'mom-and-pop' businesses because that's really the heart of the downtown area," she said.

Ms. Harris said the downtown authority works with the city to provide investments and incentives for business owners to redevelop downtown. "The downtown historic area is important, and it's a great thing," Ms. Harris said.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Brian Martin Bulthuis**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Marietta Daily Journal (GA)  
February 28, 2007

**Chamber accepting nominations for class**  
From combined reports

The Cobb Chamber of Commerce is accepting nominations for Leadership Cobb class of 2007. Leadership Cobb is a comprehensive leadership development program that provides participants with leadership skills and education about community demographics, economic development and available community resources.

Alexis Amaden, owner of the Whitlock Inn in Marietta, and Cobb Spokesman Robert Quigley will serve as co-chairs of the program. Nominees should be able to assume increased community responsibilities for the length of the nine-month course. Participants will be selected from business, industry, education, government and other professions, as well as from volunteer, civic and religious organizations.

The leadership course meets once a month, holds periodic evening sessions and attends retreats in the fall and spring. The program begins this fall and runs through spring 2008.

To make the nomination more meaningful to the nominee, those who submit a name are asked to contact the nominee personally to confirm their interest in the program. Nomination forms are available at [www.cobbchamber.org](http://www.cobbchamber.org) or fax the nominee's name, title, employer, mailing address, e-mail address, business and home telephone number to Leadership Cobb Coordinator Ruth Evangelista by Friday.

Past participants include, Acworth City Manager **Brian Bulthuis**; Joyce Waldin, Caraustar Human Resources Manager; Smyrna Spokeswoman Jennifer Bennett; Stuart Sims, an attorney with Bentley, Bentley, & Bentley and Judge Juanita Stedman.

Call Ms. Evangelista, (770) 859-2345, for more information.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Brian Martin Bulthuis**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Marietta Daily Journal (GA)

August 3, 2006

**This Day In History**

Acworth -- In 1996, the Acworth City Council, by a 4-0 vote, hired a new city manager, city attorney and development authority director.

Mayor Bob Gibson said new City Manager **Brian M. Bulthuis** was hired "following a national search and an extensive screening process."

The Board of Aldermen also hired well-known Marietta lawyer Doug Haynie as city attorney and Robyn Rogers of Roswell as Downtown Development Authority director.

The appointment of **Bulthuis**, city manager in Mount Morris, Mich., for the past six years, was announced during the city council meeting.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Brian Martin Bulthuis**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Marietta Daily Journal (GA)

February 26, 2006

**Hometown feel kept amid major changes [PROGRESS 2006] Acworth takes on stylish new look within historic ambience**

Author: Katie Fallon

If a resident who moved away from Acworth five years ago were to return to town today, they might not recognize the downtown area. Although the revitalization process is not finished, it began about four or five years ago and the momentum has created a brand new downtown. "If you are talking about a 100-step process of revitalization, we are probably at step 60," said Mayor Tommy Allegood. "We are in step six of a maturing process of our downtown."

The mayor said the whole process began about four years ago with an active commitment from the downtown development authority, the city council, who provided incentives on things like sewer impact fees and sidewalk grants, and a city staff that helped facilitate the whole process from the renovations and economics to the responsibility of looking after the management of the downtown area. "It was a lot of different things and a lot of different momentum with the momentum being the overall desire of every citizen in the community really having ownership in the redevelopment of our downtown business district," Allegood said.

What has happened in historic downtown Acworth is a tremendous influx of development and new business over the last five years. City manager **Brian Bulthuis** said residents used to be able to joke that you could roll a bowling ball down Main Street and never hit anything. Similarly, Allegood said when he came to town eight years ago, he walked down the street and there were only two stores. "When you look at our downtown, if you had seen it even six years ago before we did the Main Street project, it had not had any work done on it...no sidewalks, no curb and gutter and the streetlights were not even the same as they are now," **Bulthuis** said. "It is a great town, but anywhere you don't do investment, it is going to get worn."

The revitalization of Main Street began with money from a 1994 Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax, or SPLOST. Allegood said the money for revitalizing Main Street was a huge part of the momentum. The city used the money to widen and add curbs and gutters to Main Street, fix the sidewalks for connectivity and, most importantly, construct the Cowen Road railroad underpass. Once revitalization began, Allegood said the costs ranged from at least \$5 million from the private side and several more millions from SPLOST, transportation grants and money from being designated both a Georgia and National Main Street City.

**Bulthuis** said the need for revitalization was the same in Acworth as it is in so many small towns. He said downtown was hit hard when Town Center Mall was built. Downtown, said **Bulthuis**, used to have drug stores, clothing stores and even a hotel, but as of a mere decade ago, all of that was gone. "When you look at where the city was even 10 years ago, most of the businesses were vacant," said **Bulthuis**. Now, **Bulthuis** estimates there are maybe two vacant storefronts and that renewed business has been a direct result of the revitalization.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Brian Martin Bulthuis**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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"If we have 25 businesses in a two and half block are, probably 80 percent of them are people that came to our community because of the opportunity," Allegood said. "They didn't live here."

The mayor said it is because of the downtown renovation that the city was able to attract new business. The "recruitment process," as Allegood calls it, has been successful because the city has been able to attract entrepreneurs from outside the city. "At the end of the day for us, it is really all about quality of life and quality growth," said Allegood.

That quality of growth is something the mayor and city manager said the city had to keep an eye on to maintain the historic, small town features of the planning and design of the revitalized downtown. "That has always been our focus, to basically, in all of our development, to enhance our historic look," said **Bulthuis**. "That hometown feeling and hometown spirit ... we have worked really hard not to lose that."

The city manager said that his own goal throughout the revitalization process has been to make downtown Acworth a destination city and that effort began when the mayor formed a task force to get more restaurants into the city. Now, the two and a half block radius of downtown boasts seven options for lunch and three for dinner.

Those three dinner spots do seem to be the definitive "hotspots" well known to all those who frequent downtown Acworth. While there are no tradition and clubs like what might be found in Buckhead, restaurants do seem to be the favored destination and the top spots all have their own distinct flare.

Within a two block radius, visitors to downtown can travel to the piazzas of Rome, the Louisiana Bayou or the French countryside. While parking can be a problem on Main Street, overflow is allowed in the parking lot behind City Hall. One of the most well-known establishments is Henry's Louisiana Grill. With the upbeat atmosphere of any Cajun-inspired eatery, Henry's prices are surprisingly decent considering the number of seafood dishes. Lunch prices range anywhere from \$3.95 to \$14.95 for appetizers to \$7.95 to \$14, depending on portions, for main dishes.

Just down Main Street from Henry's is the Italian trattoria Fusco's Via Roma. With an environment ripe for enjoying good food and good wine, Fusco's prices can climb to the steep end of the scale. Although appetizers and salads run from only \$5.95 to about \$13, entrees range from \$9.95 to \$22.95, with the exception of the one veal chop dish at \$34.95.

Finally, at Seasons de Provence, a romantic ambiance can definitely be found. The restaurant is actually the converted basement of a building across from the back of City Hall on Senator Russell Avenue. The prices, however, will not break the wallet. For lunch, appetizers, salads and main dishes range from \$3.50 to \$10.50. For dinner, a wide range of appetizers, soups and salads can be found for anywhere from \$3.95 to \$8.95 while entrees range from \$13.95 to \$22.95.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Brian Martin Bulthuis**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Atlanta Journal-Constitution, The (GA)  
December 22, 2005

**1 percent tax kicks in Jan. 1 - Extra money to fund \$826 million in projects**

Author: Richard Whitt

Looking to save a little on that Lexus? You have 10 days. On Jan. 1, Cobb County's sales tax will jump from 5 percent to 6 percent on just about everything you buy. It may not sound like much, but consider -- 1 percent amounts to \$3,280 on a \$328,000 Rolls Royce Phantom. Those not shopping for luxury can still save a few bucks by stocking up on groceries before Jan. 1.

Passed in September by a bare majority of 117 votes, the tax is expected to raise \$826 million over its six-year life. The 1 percent increase will cost \$140 a year, on average, for every Cobb resident -- man, woman and child.

Approximately \$110 million is earmarked for an 864-bed jail expansion, \$55 million for a new court building in Marietta and \$27 million for purchasing a new emergency communications system. The remaining \$634 million will be spent on roads, bridges and traffic flow improvements around the county and in Cobb's six cities. With additional state and federal matching transportation funds, the tax is expected to generate about \$1.1 billion for road and highway improvements. Cobb's cities will get \$161.5 million, or about 25 percent, of the funds for transportation.

Marietta's first priority is to build a connector road from Powder Springs Road to South Cobb Drive, said Mayor Bill Dunaway. "That's going to be one of the fastest solutions to traffic problems on Powder Springs and on the loop," he said.

Smyrna expects to spend about \$800,000 to upgrade to digital radios for public safety officers, City Administrator Wayne Wright said. The remainder will go for road improvement projects, many of which call for additional lanes and medians as well as sidewalks and bike trails, Wright said.

Kennesaw will spend nearly \$10 million to relieve traffic congestion on Jiles Road, which will be widened from U.S. 41 to Wade Green Road.

Powder Springs will spend the bulk of its funds on sidewalks, bike paths and trails.

Austell has identified four projects estimated to total \$5 million. The first project will be Humphries Hill Road at C.H. James Parkway, City Administrator Jim Graham said.

Acworth's top priority is adding parking downtown, City Manager **Brian Bulthuis** said. The city is negotiating with Cobb officials to build a large parking lot on wooded land behind City Hall. The city also plans to acquire three adjacent properties for the parking lot. In all, the lot is expected to have 100 to 150 spaces. The county plans to fund jail expansion, emergency radios

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Brian Martin Bulthuis**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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and roads first. Money for the new courthouse will come in the final three years of the tax, said county spokesman Robert Quigley.

Cobb Transportation Director David Montanye said staff is first focusing on transportation improvements that are eligible for matching state funding and those that have the greatest impact on congestion relief. Among the transportation improvements being considered for early funding are Terrell Mill and Paper Mill roads, Stilesboro Road, Maxham Road, Wooten Lake and North Booth roads, Post Oak Tritt Road and Austell Road at the East-West Connector. A list of projects will be submitted to the County Commission for final action in January, Montanye said.

A citizen's oversight committee will be looking over the shoulders of county officials to ensure they follow the transportation improvement plan presented to voters. "I feel confident we won't have issues," said committee Chairwoman Holly Comer. "If we do get information that something's not going the right way, we need to investigate and make sure it does. We need to be able to respond to concerns any citizens have."

The citizens committee will set priorities for spending the \$17.4 million earmarked for county sidewalk improvements. The committee will select projects based on criteria approved by the commission, Comer said. Oversight committee meetings will be at 3:30 p.m. Jan. 26, and on the fourth Thursday of subsequent months. They will be open to the public, Comer said.

**WHERE THE MONEY WILL GO**

Distribution of the 1 percent sales tax funds based on population:

City.....	Population...	Amount
Austell.....	5,230....	\$5,540,132
Acworth.....	13,422...	\$14,213,749
Kennesaw.....	21,675...	\$22,951,974
Marietta.....	58,748...	\$62,201,305
Powder Springs..	12,481...	\$13,212,326
Smyrna.....	40,999...	\$43,400,391

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Brian Martin Bulthuis**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Atlanta Journal-Constitution, The (GA)  
December 15, 2005

**Acworth aldermen to vote tonight on 2006 budget**

Author: Tucker McQueen

The Acworth Board of Aldermen will vote tonight on its \$9.3 million budget for 2006. The fiscal year begins Jan. 1. As proposed, the budget shows a \$65,000 shortfall, which will be made up through the city's reserve fund. Overall, the spending plan is 5 percent more than the current year's budget.

The budget estimates an increase in revenue from 2005 of \$345,000, or about 4 percent. City Manager **Brian Bulthuis** said the increase in revenue is based on growth.

Also included in the budget is a fringe benefit for employees who become members of Gold's Gym. Employees pay 75 percent of the membership fee, and the city picks up the rest. **Bulthuis** said the city's cost is \$1,750. "We get a lower rate for employees to exercise there for better health," **Bulthuis** said.

The city has budgeted for three more police officers at a cost of about \$150,000. Acworth also plans to buy four fully loaded patrol cars for \$140,000 and 15 computers for the patrol cars at a cost of \$67,500.



**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Brian Martin Bulthuis**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Marietta Daily Journal (GA)  
February 27, 2005

**Acworth first to approve \$6M tax bond project [SPECIAL SECTION - PROGRESS EDITION 2005]**

Author: Daniel Shuman

Acworth Mayor Tommy Allegood and the Board of Aldermen made county history in December when they unanimously approved more than \$6 million in Tax Allocation District bonds, the first ever in Cobb. The money is currently being put to use to clean up underground contamination on the property of the old Highway 41 Flea Market, located on Cobb Parkway just south of Mars Hill Road. In its place, developer North American Properties will build 350,000 square feet of retail area called Lakeside Marketplace that will be anchored by a Super Target store.

"I think it's a great day for the City of Acworth and north Cobb County for the redevelopment of this property into a terrific shopping complex," Allegood said after signing the TAD bond documents. "I'm so proud of the fact that our city is the first city in the county to take advantage of the Tax Allocation District ... The flea market being contaminated with underground methane fires burning gave us the perfect opportunity."

Within a TAD, a city freezes the property tax on a specific area at its current level and uses taxpayer-backed bonds to fund improvements to that area. Taxes collected in the improved area then go toward paying off the bonds. Because TADs affect taxes collected by the county government and local school board, a city must have the approval of both to move forward.

The prospect of designating the 30-acre area as a TAD first arose about two years ago, Allegood said, and it was approved by both the Cobb County Board of Commissioners and the Cobb Board of Education last December. But getting such a project all the way through to issuing the bonds is an arduous, difficult process, according to both city staff and consultants, a point brought to light by the recent collapse of Marietta's TAD-backed plans for the Johnny Walker Homes site and the fact that Acworth's is only the fourth TAD in the state to be completed.

"If you've watched Marietta work through their TAD, then you know it's hard to do," said Gordon Mortin, who served as one of Acworth's financial consultants during the process of formulating the TAD documents. "These TADs are a good thing, but they're very hard to accomplish." Even with the difficulty and complexity involved, though, those involved say the TAD will turn an area that might have had trouble selling on the open market into a community asset. "If it wasn't for the Tax Allocation District we would have a \$6 million problem sitting out there that we could do nothing about," said Acworth City Manager **Brian Bulthuis**.

They will carry an interest rate of 6.25 percent and the principal amount -- \$6,050,000 -- will be paid back by the year 2029, said consultant Robert Reardon. All preliminary estimates say the project should be completed by the spring of 2006.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Brian Martin Bulthuis**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Marietta Daily Journal (GA)  
December 17, 2004

**Acworth**

Acworth's Board of Aldermen has approved the city's budget for fiscal year 2005, which is a slight increase over this year's.

City Manager **Brian Bulthuis** said the new budget is \$8.1 million -- with both revenues and expenses -- and shows an increase of just under four percent from 2004's total.

**Bulthuis** said the increased budget was necessitated by the city's ongoing rapid growth.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Brian Martin Bulthuis**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Marietta Daily Journal (GA)  
July 23, 2004

**Aldermen unanimous in joining other cities on House Bill 489**

Acworth kept House Bill 489's momentum rolling as it unanimously approved the controversial bill during a special called session. "It was a relief to finally get it settled and done," said Alderman Butch Price, adding "it seemed to be a pretty good settlement of the issue."

According to city manager **Brian Bulthuis**, the meeting lasted "about five minutes," with the council briefly explaining the agreement before giving it the all clear.

Assistant city manager Brian Binzer said the county addressed the council's last-minute concerns about land-use that necessitated the weekend meeting. "The (city and county) staffs hammered out the agreement, and that's what they wanted to stick with," Binzer said.

That brings the tally of cities that have agreed to H.B. 489 to four, leaving only Austell and Powder Springs to sign. If those two agree, city residents will see a reduction of the millage rate by 4/10 and they will no longer pay taxes for county services that they already receive from their city -- like police departments.

Calls to the mayor and other council members of Acworth were not immediately returned.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Brian Martin Bulthuis**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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[CB&A Note: Only the information relevant to the City of Acworth is listed below.]

Atlanta Journal-Constitution, The (GA)  
October 27, 2003

**Increases in population evident across metro map**

Author: Christopher Quinn

**Brian Bulthuis**, city manager in fast-growing Acworth in Cobb County, which got \$300,000 in LCI funds this year to help improve its central business district, said some growth is driven by homeowners who want a sense of living somewhere identifiable other than a suburb.

Seven years ago, his little downtown was looking run-down, with mostly empty storefronts. Now they are spruced up and filled with restaurants and small businesses. New neighborhoods have been built, and homeowners take advantage of the city's developing network of paths and sidewalks connecting downtown and a new green-space trail along Lake Acworth.

His city nearly doubled in density between 1990 and 2000 from a spread-out 982 people per square mile to 1,897.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Brian Martin Bulthuis**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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[CB&A Note: Only the information relevant to **Brian Martin Bulthuis** is listed below.]

Marietta Daily Journal (GA)  
December 20, 2002

**A Look Back**

Author: From staff reports

\* In 1997, residents calling Acworth city offices were no longer be greeted by a machine. Acworth ended the use of its automated voice mail system and replaced it with a receptionist who would direct all calls to the appropriate departments.

"We decided that it was more pleasant for people to talk to a real person when they call, rather than having to go through the voice mail system," said city manager **Brian M. Bulthuis**.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Brian Martin Bulthuis**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Atlanta Journal-Constitution, The (GA)  
July 4, 2002

**Acworth selling its cable TV system**

Author: Clint Williams

Acworth is getting out of the cable television business. But the only changes customers will see, officials say, will be more services. Acworth has signed a letter of intent with United Telesystems Inc. of Savannah to lease and eventually buy its system. The deal is expected to be finalized in August, said Acworth City Manager **Brian Bulthuis**.

UTI will refinance \$6.8 million in bonds the city issued to build the broadband network that delivers analog and digital video and music, and high-speed Internet access. Once those bonds are paid off, UTI will buy the system. "We come out of this breaking even," said **Bulthuis**, adding that UTI will pay the city an annual franchise fee of \$60,000 to \$80,000.

Acworth, which operates a municipal electric utility, began laying 100 miles of cable in 1999 and began providing service to residents in early 2001. Acworth CableNET is one of about a dozen municipally-owned cable TV systems operating in Georgia. The network lines now run past about 6,500 homes in Acworth and has about 2,600 cable TV customers and about 500 high-speed Internet customers.

UTI has the money to expand the system beyond the city limits and to add additional services, **Bulthuis** said. "One of the things we plan to do is add telephone services to the mix," said Allen Davis, president of UTI. The company intends to add video-on-demand within a year, Davis said.

The city will continue to handle customer service, **Bulthuis** said, and intends to maintain the same level of service, which includes 24-hour technical support.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Brian Martin Bulthuis**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Marietta Daily Journal (GA)  
March 29, 2002

**Changing hands? County votes to hand over 28 acres for recreational use**  
Author: Michelle Graff

ACWORTH -- The county will hand over nearly 30 acres of land leased from the Army Corps of Engineers to the City of Acworth, provided the corps approves the city's land-use plan for the property. By a unanimous vote Tuesday, the Cobb County Board of Commissioners voted to transfer 28 acres of corps property jutting between Kennworth Park and the Acworth Sports Complex to the city for the purpose of developing recreational facilities.

This proposed development is a variation on the corps' master plan for the entire 934 acres along Lake Acworth leased to the county, which calls for development of a botanical garden on that site. "We have always been told by the Corps of Engineers as we developed the 900-plus acres that you cannot have active, recreational uses. ... It has to be passive," Board Chairman Bill Byrne said. "Acworth has active recreational uses proposed. "In the past, that has not been accepted."

He said county officials are not opposed to Acworth's land-use plan, but added they are prepared to cancel the lease transfer if the corps does not approve the city's plans. "If they approve the plans, that's fine with us," Byrne said. "If Acworth can utilize 28 acres, then more power to them." Final approval of the city's land-use plan must come from the corps' district office in Mobile, Ala., which controls the corps' property throughout the Southeast.

Despite the variation on corps master land-use plan, Acworth Mayor Tommy Allegood said he expects the city will have no problem getting approval from the corps. "We have already talked to the Corps of Engineers," he said, referring to local officials in the corps' Atlanta office. "They have given us the nod. "It has not been formally approved."

And while city officials have not approached the district office with their proposal yet, City Manager **Brian Bulthuis** said the city is no rush to transfer the lease. "We've talked with the local district office," he said. "Now we're going to have to go through the steps to change the lease."

"We wanted to make sure the county was agreeable to this course first," **Bulthuis** said. "Even if it takes three to four months, it does not affect us." He said the land the city is attempting to lease from the corps is part of a more than \$1 million plan to expand the Acworth Sports Complex, a process that will take several years. Under design by the Atlanta architectural and planning firm Robert and Company, the plan calls for the construction of baseball and soccer fields on the corps' land, as well as a walking trail.

And while the city awaits formal approval for the lease transfer from the corps, **Bulthuis** said the city is applying for a \$100,000 land, soil and water conservation grant from the state to build a

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Brian Martin Bulthuis**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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bridge across Proctor Creek connecting the sports complex, the corps property and Kennworth Park. He said the mayor and board of aldermen are excited about the possibility of acquiring the Corps land. "This corps property is a direct result of the direction taken by the mayor and board this year," Allegood said.

The city is in the process of renovating the Logan Road Horse Farm, a renovation which will make the 38-acre tract of land the largest passive park in Cobb County, and also is creating a new master plan for Cauble Park. "Literally, we're working on every park," Allegood said. "This is just part of what we are doing."



**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Brian Martin Bulthuis**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Marietta Daily Journal (GA)  
March 1, 2002

**City bargains to stabilize energy rates**

Author: Michelle Graff

Better control over energy rates is what Acworth city officials say will come from the city's new contract with the Municipal Electric Authority of Georgia. Scheduled for signing by Acworth and MEAG officials Wednesday at Acworth City Hall, the contract makes Acworth the 49th city in the state to become a full partner with the Atlanta-based energy provider. "There used to be the fear of the unknown," said City Manager **Brian Bulthuis**, who served as the city's chief MEAG negotiator. "This gives us some stability."

By becoming a member, Acworth shares part ownership in some of MEAG's power plants, allowing Acworth Power to pull power directly from the plant and eliminating the middle man routing through MEAG. The city joins Marietta in Cobb County, and College Park and East Point in Fulton County as the only metro-Atlanta-area MEAG participants.

Since 1995, the city purchased its power wholesale through MEAG, but was not a participant in the system. This caused power rates to fluctuate from year to year. "We were buying it from MEAG," said **Bulthuis**. "Now, we're buying into [MEAG] and we have some assets. "We know where our power is coming from, and there is stability in that." "It's an excellent move," **Bulthuis** said. He said while he cannot guarantee power rates in Acworth will never go up again, the MEAG contract will assure that residents do not see the great fluctuations in power rates they have seen in past years.

\* The last rate increase occurred in May 2001, when the Acworth Board of Aldermen voted on a new rate schedule which established a \$7 per month base charge for service and kilowatt rates ranging from 6.5 to 9.3 cents per hour.

Acworth Power rates are higher than Marietta and Georgia Power, but lower than Cobb EMC. **Bulthuis** said this is the rate the city will stick with when the MEAG contract takes effect May 15. "We're not changing rates," he said. "This didn't affect rates at all." **Bulthuis** said when the rate hike took place, the city did not pass 100 percent of the cost increase onto consumers. "We just absorbed it," he said. "Our costs are still higher than they used to be."

MEAG is the third largest power supplier in Georgia, serving almost 750,000 customers statewide. A nine-member board of directors comprised of representatives from the participating communities governs the power company, which was formed in 1975 by cities in Georgia that provided residents with power directly.

**Bulthuis** said it is unclear when a member of Acworth will join the board. "It's something someone may want to [do]," he said. "Marietta has had someone on the board," **Bulthuis** said, referring to former Marietta Mayor Ansley Meaders. "I don't know if we'll have someone."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Brian Martin Bulthuis**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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[CB&A Note: Only the information relevant to **Brian Martin Bulthuis** is listed below.]

Marietta Daily Journal (GA)  
February 11, 2002

**Cobb people**

\* MARIETTA -- Twenty-seven community and business leaders were selected to participate in the Cobb Chamber's 2002 Honorary Commanders Association. The civilians have been paired with officers assigned to Dobbins Air Reserve Base and Naval Air Station Atlanta. The yearlong program is designed to give the civilians an opportunity to learn more about the activities of the military at Dobbins and NAS Atlanta. The association meets monthly for activities including luncheons, tours, orientation flights and special on-and off-base events. Dan O'Brien of Cordell Realty is the civilian chairman of the 2002 program.

The 2002 Civilian Honorary Commanders Association Participants are:

**Brian Bulthuis**, City of Acworth;

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Brian Martin Bulthuis**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Atlanta Journal-Constitution, The (GA)  
January 17, 2002

**Wide-open spaces: Parks to have room to run**

Author: Clint Williams

The emphasis is on open space -- not soccer fields or baseball diamonds -- for two city parks now under construction in Cobb County. An old horse farm just north of downtown Acworth is being developed into a 30-acre park that will feature a fishing pond, walking trails and "open space where kids can go and run," said Acworth City Manager **Brian Bulthuis**.

The city bought the property in 1999 when it went on sale because property taxes had not been paid. "We literally bought it on the courthouse steps," **Bulthuis** said.

The house on the property will be renovated to be used as a community center. The \$500,000 to develop the park comes from a recreation impact fee of \$500 a house. The park should be open by the end of the summer.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Brian Martin Bulthuis**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Marietta Daily Journal (GA)  
July 29, 2001

**CableNet system meeting goals [Fact Book - Special Section]**

Author: David Burch

After six months, Acworth's venture into cable television appears to be a success. Mike Williams, general manager for the CableNet system, said the city-run cable company now has about 1,300 customers, about a quarter of all Acworth residents. "We are at 24 percent penetration right now," Williams said.

Acworth launched the city-run CableNet system in January, responding to complaints from residents about poor service provided by AT&T Broadband. In March, CableNet expanded its offerings to include digital cable and high-speed Internet access. A former NationsBank building on Dallas Street near city hall has been renovated for the cable system's customer service offices.

All private residences in the city now have access to the CableNet system if they want it. The city now is working to connect to Acworth apartment complexes and local businesses. "We are slowly penetrating the commercial market, but our first emphasis has been residential," Williams said.

Funding for CableNet comes from \$6.7 million approved by Acworth officials in 1999, plus an additional \$5.4 million bond issued through the Acworth Downtown Development Authority in May 2000. The bond was earmarked to get CableNet up and running, as well as provide operational support until the system turns a profit.

Acworth City Manager **Brian Bulthuis** said the city should be finished with a six-month financial report on CableNet by August. Of the original \$5.4 million bond, he said the system still has between \$2 million and \$3 million. "As we get more people, we need to use less of it," **Bulthuis** said. Original projections estimated CableNet would turn a profit if 36 percent of residents in the service area signed up.

Williams said the cable system has met or exceeded all financial projections and should be profitable before bond funds are used up. "We will be turning a profit well before that happens," he said. "The bond was designed to operate through the end of next year, and we are on schedule."

So far, recruiting new customers for the Acworth-based service has been confined to direct sales, with CableNet representatives going door to door. "Basically, that's all we are doing ... letting people know the difference between AT&T and CableNet," **Bulthuis** said.

Although AT&T Broadband advertises a wide variety of services, **Bulthuis** said they still do not offer extras like digital Internet and high-speed cable in the Acworth area. AT&T Broadband does not expect to offer either of these expanded services in northwest Cobb until summer 2002.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Brian Martin Bulthuis**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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According to **Bulthuis**, CableNet customer service is far superior than AT&T, with no excessively long hold times for customers calling for service.

With CableNet now accessible to most in the city, Williams said the city is moving to phase two of its marketing plans. "The next phase is moving into a mass marketing approach," he said, such as adding direct mailing and utility bill inserts to its advertising efforts.

Williams said he knows of about 16 other cities in Georgia that are contemplating some sort of municipal cable or high-speed Internet venture. The trend has caused the Georgia Municipal Association to create a new division dedicated to city-run cable systems. The division, of which Williams is on the board of directors, was created partly because the National Cable Television Association does not allow municipal systems into its membership.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Brian Martin Bulthuis**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Atlanta Journal-Constitution, The (GA)  
February 15, 2001

**YOUR TOWN**

Author: From staff and wire reports

ACWORTH: Decal? No thanks

City officials are less than thrilled with a new state law requiring city decals on government-issued cars. So the Board of Aldermen tonight is expected to take advantage of an option that allows local governments to exempt department heads, mayors and elected board members from the provision.

As City Manager **Brian Bulthuis** explains, sometimes it's helpful to drive incognito. He recently made a drive-by observation in his official car after receiving a complaint about contractors working on a job site. For obvious reasons, he said, it helps to not alert everyone in sight that the city is watching. "I want to do it anonymously," **Bulthuis** said.

The monthly meeting begins at 7 p.m. today in the board room at City Hall, 4375 Senator Russell Square.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Brian Martin Bulthuis**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Marietta Daily Journal (GA)

January 26, 2001

**Making service a priority: Officials review accomplishments, set goals at business luncheon**

Author: Rachel D. Cooper

The city of Acworth is continuing to make "customer service" a priority in 2001, according to city manager **Brian Bulthuis**. At the Acworth Business Association luncheon Thursday, **Bulthuis** said serving residents better was one of the city's goals last year, and as part of the customer service priority, a new one-person department was created, the Management of Information Systems (MIS) department. The MIS department, headed by Keith Wilson, focuses on technology services for the city, such as telephone and computing services. The department has been in operation for one year.

**Bulthuis'** speech was made in place of Mayor Marcia Andruzzi's annual State of the City Address. Due to the death of a close friend, Ms. Andruzzi was unable to attend the luncheon and sent word with Mayor Pro-Tem Butch Price that she probably will deliver the address at a later date. The city is the largest employer with more than 100 employees and a yearly budget of \$6 million, according to **Bulthuis**. In the city's administration department, three new employees were hired, including a new city clerk, Kristi Lynch, and an assistant to the city manager, Brian Binzer.

The city's police department will focus on more "community policing" to make the area safer for its residents, according to **Bulthuis**. The department has 28 sworn officers to patrol the city. Video cameras also have been added to all of the patrol cars as well. The department also has hired Maj. Bobby Pearson as director of operations. In the public works department, the city upgraded equipment last year and recently bought a salt and snow spreader for the snow days. The power department, with a \$6.8 million budget, has more than 5400 customers, said **Bulthuis**. A \$1.3 million substation was built for the purpose of providing two feeds into the city. If the power goes out in one area, then it can be transferred from the other, said **Bulthuis**.

Other ways that the city is providing customer service for its residents are hiring new people to fill current positions and providing a new city-owned utility. Amy Lowry has been hired as the economic development director for the city. **Bulthuis** said her main priority is to attract and retain businesses so that Acworth can become a destination spot.

Sherry Levine has been named the new Downtown Development Authority director, filling the position that Lowry once filled. Levine will also work with Tourism Commission for the city, **Bulthuis** said. Michael Wyatt has been hired as a consultant for historic preservation. **Bulthuis** also updated the crowd on CableNET, the city's \$12.2 million project. He said that the purpose of the project was to help make Acworth a more progressive community. Mike Williams has been hired as the new general manager for the city-owned facility. When the plans for the project started almost two years ago, AT&T Broadband, formerly Media One, was not available to the community.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Brian Martin Bulthuis**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Marietta Daily Journal (GA)  
December 22, 2000

**Board of Aldermen OK budget for 2001**

Author: Mike Sampogna

The Acworth Board of Aldermen unanimously approved the city's budget for the 2001 fiscal year. The budget passed 3-0, with Alderman Bill Park absent. Alderman Tim Richardson arrived at the meeting late, but not in time for the vote. The three votes in favor of the budget were the minimum necessary to pass an ordinance according to the city's charter. The Acworth charter also said the budget had to be passed by Jan. 1.

The budget anticipates general fund revenues of just under \$6.1 million dollars, with expected expenditures of \$6.17 million dollars. The amended budget for the 2000 fiscal year saw the city's general fund finish in the black with revenues exceeding expenditures by \$185,000.

"We did explore all the items in the budget in discussions during work sessions," Mayor Marcia Andruzzi said. "I feel comfortable with the budget. I feel it is reflective of all the interests of the city of Acworth."

City Manager **Brian Bulthuis** said highlights of the budget included fully funded economic develop and management information systems directors. Also incorporated was a Geographic Information System mapping project for the entire city. "It will provide detailed overhead mapping," **Bulthuis** said. "It helps for planning, zoning, the public; it shows where everyone is located in relation to everyone else. It is also beneficial for police dispatch." The project, done in cooperation with Cobb County, will cost the city \$50,000.

After much discussion, the sanitation rate will remain at \$14 through 2001, though it will be revisited in the 2002 budget. "We decided to leave rates the same," **Bulthuis** said. "We transferred money from the general fund to make up the cost difference. We'll look at it again next year when we re-examine our recycling contract." The current recycling contract costs the city \$130,000 a year.

Acworth police are adding an additional patrol officer, as well as an additional patrol car.

Budget proposals also were completed for the power fund, 1 percent road tax fund, hotel/motel tax fund, the downtown development authority, the recreation impact fee fund, the water/sewer trust fund, historic commission fund, sanitation fund, capital improvements, CableNet and the Convention and Visitors bureau.



**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Brian Martin Bulthuis**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Daily Tribune News, The (Cartersville, GA)  
September 8, 2000

**Acworth to fund CableNet**

Acworth's venture into Internet service and cable TV will cost the city about \$8 million in addition to the \$6.7 million the city has already invested into the endeavor. The board of aldermen approved a bond resolution for \$5.4 million Thursday night. With interest, the city will spend \$8 million.

The city is still repaying its initial \$6.7 million bond issue for the project. According to City Manager **Brian Bulthuis**, the project, CableNet, was expanded to serve more customers.

The project was expanded in May after **Bulthuis** noticed that growth in Acworth was miscalculated. The project initially would have served 5,100 people. The expanded project will serve more than 8,000 customers, according to **Bulthuis**.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Brian Martin Bulthuis**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Marietta Daily Journal (GA)  
August 10, 2000

**Attorney general investigating Acworth open meeting compliance**

Author: Lisa Borello

The state attorney general's office is investigating allegations city officials violated open meetings laws when they voted to rescind a request by a developer. Deputy counsel for the attorney general's office Daryl Robinson said the state is looking into two complaints filed last month by Acworth residents claiming the Board of Aldermen violated sunshine laws by discussing city business during a June conference in Savannah. No ruling on the matter has been handed down, Robinson said.

The complaints came after a motion to rescind a June 15 vote that denied a request by the Myrick Company to rezone 23.15 acres off Mars Hill and Orr roads for a 64-home subdivision. Mars Hill Road resident Vonda Benham filed a complaint July 21 with the state, alleging the city discussed the rescinding of the vote during a Georgia Municipal Association conference in June. "We feel that the city of Acworth should not be allowed to continue this type of arrogant disregard for the laws. Someone has to keep them accountable and responsible for correct procedures and abiding by the laws," Ms. Benham said. A similar complaint was issued by another Acworth resident, Robinson said.

According to Georgia law, a quorum of officials meeting to discuss public business must be properly posted and the public given adequate notification. The meeting is then open to the public.

Acworth city attorney Doug Haynie called the complaints against the city "without merit." In a letter dated Aug. 1, Haynie said interviews with all board members and City Manager **Brian Bulthuis** and Assistant City Manager Brian Binzer were conducted to determine if a meeting took place. The letter stated the review showed no wrongdoing by city officials and staff. "Each and every elected official stated that they did not engage in discussion of any official business of the city of Acworth during any of the gatherings mentioned in the complaining letter," Haynie wrote.

Robinson said the attorney general's office is reviewing Haynie's response to determine if it adequately satisfies open meetings requirements. If the board is found in violation of sunshine laws, it is unlikely the board will be chastised.

Despite complaints for open meetings violations each year, penalties -- which include a \$500 fine per offense under the law -- have not been imposed since the law expanded the power of the attorney general to enforce open meetings in July 1998.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Brian Martin Bulthuis**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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[CB&A Note: Only the information relevant to **Brian Martin Bulthuis** is listed below.]

Daily Tribune News, The (Cartersville, GA)  
July 15, 2000

**Another necessary evil?**

It's a tax. It isn't a tax. It's a user fee. It's not a user fee. Whatever your perception of stormwater utilities are, they are growing in popularity in Georgia. And at this moment, Acworth has put the idea of stormwater utilities to sleep. "The council has been interested in it, but without a lot of education and more research into it, we're not doing anything with it," Acworth City Manager **Brian Bulthuis** said. "We're looking at it periodically, but it's not a top priority."

**Bulthuis** said city officials have done studies on stormwater utilities based on whether the city needs them. "We've looked at it for the last two years," **Bulthuis** said. "We had some studies done and talked to consultants about that, but by doing that (implementing stormwater utilities), we found out very quickly without the proper education, it can be controversial."

And it's not a tax, according to **Bulthuis**. "Number one, it's a utility fee," **Bulthuis** said. "I think people understand when they get a garbage or water bill they have something tangible they see they're getting, but I think there has to be education for people to see they are paying to have stormwater taken away from them."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Brian Martin Bulthuis**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Marietta Daily Journal (GA)  
April 25, 2000

**Cobb cities scramble for HB 489 slice of \$6.3M pie**

Author: Lisa Borello

House Bill 489 negotiations may be over, but some of Cobb's six cities are now scrambling to fatten their share of the \$6.3 million spoils from the county. Citing inaccuracies in the Atlanta Regional Commission's April 1999 population estimates, Marietta and Smyrna will likely increase their payouts from the county, which conceded to a \$6.3 million staggered payment plan to resolve tax equity and inadequate services issues. "We did not add anything to the estimate, but made sure the count was accurate," said Warren Hutmacher, Marietta's management analyst. According to Hutmacher, ARC miscounted 1,204 Marietta residents as residents of the county, he said. The "miscommunication" will translate to about \$19,000 more than the \$2.48 million the city originally agreed to, not including the more than \$60,000 the city will receive for its school patrol services, Hutmacher said.

Smyrna City Administrator Howard Smith said the city requested a corrected population estimate because ARC omitted several annexations from the 1999 figures. The difference amounts to about a one- or two-percent increase in funds dispersed from the county, Smith said. The city will now receive more than \$1.7 million from the county, which city officials will likely earmark for its downtown, Smith said. "The correct population count was more important than the actual dollar amount," he said.

But the dollars could matter to Cobb's smallest cities, which receive the smallest piece of the pie, which is determined by last year's population count. Kennesaw Mayor Leonard Church said the city will likely challenge its figures also to ensure the county's third largest city gets its "just due." But if all cities challenge their population, thus drawing funds from other cities agreed settlement, "someone's going to lose out on this somewhere," Church said.

Austell mayor Joe Jerkins said the city, which comprises less than 4 percent of the count's total population, will likely stick to the figures all mayors agreed on when the contract was signed earlier this year. Though Jerkins said he understands why cities are "trying to get what they are entitled to," the review of the estimates could delay the payment by the county. "They could lose more than they are getting out of it, just in interest alone," he said.

All cities must agree to the population and monetary allocations before the county delivers its first of three payments, according to Hutmacher. However, Acworth's city manager **Brian Bulthuis** said the population challenges won't delay the county's September 30 payment.

Acworth will also check its figures against ARC's, but doesn't expect the difference to be too significant, said **Bulthuis**. For now, the city is expected to receive upwards of \$500,000. A public hearing will be held May 15 to gather citizen input on how the money should be spent, he said.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Brian Martin Bulthuis**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Daily Tribune News, The (Cartersville, GA)  
February 1, 2000

**Acworth to set new garbage rates**

Trash service in Acworth is better than in many other cities in Bartow and Cobb counties, according to Acworth Alderman Doug Allen. So, at a Monday night work session, Allen proposed setting a rate of \$14 for all trash services the city provides. For the past month, Acworth citizens protested increased rates of trash service after City Manager **Brian Bulthuis** said the city had to make up for a \$57,000 deficit in trash service from 1999.

Allen said even though trash service is superior to other cities, Acworth needs to stress the benefits of recycling. "If they're not recycling, we have to tell them how," Allen said. "We need to find out who isn't recycling."

Recycling was discussed for a while at the meeting. The board was in agreement that too many residents had not separated recyclable materials from their regular garbage. Allen said this would be a way to utilize the recycling service the city already pays for and keep the volume of garbage down.

Also discussed was a special rate for senior citizens. Alderman Tim Richardson said it wouldn't be fair to set a different rate for seniors. "I question having a special rate for a special group," Richardson said. "Conversely, we have young couples who are raising families who are in the same boat. We should set the rate as low as possible for everyone."

Aldermen Tommy Allegood and Albert Price agreed the rate should be as low as possible. Originally, **Bulthuis** proposed the city raise the residential rate from \$12 to \$16. To accommodate a \$2 increase, **Bulthuis** said the city would have to allocate monies from other funds to the sanitation department.

The board will vote on the proposed \$14 across-the-board rate at its meeting Thursday night.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Brian Martin Bulthuis**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Marietta Daily Journal (GA)  
September 30, 1999

**Officials still struggling to end double taxation tiff: County, cities may face sanctions if state's deadline not met today**

Author: Megan Reisner

Despite a six-hour meeting Wednesday, Cobb County officials, with representatives from each of its six cities, continue struggling to end double taxation among city residents. City residents pay both county and city taxes for some services, such as police. Officials were supposed to have the issue resolved by today to meet the state's Oct. 31 deadline. The state needs 30 days in advance of the deadline to review the agreement, said Rob Hosack, Cobb's planning director. The county and cities face sanctions beginning Oct. 31, he said. Officials will meet again Oct. 15 to try and resolve the issue. Hosack did not know whether the state will impose sanctions if it does not have adequate time to review the material. City residents were overtaxed by \$2.8 million last year, according to a study conducted by Government Solutions Ltd., a consulting firm hired by Cobb County. But city officials argued Wednesday this figure is too low, calling the study one-sided.

A particularly sticky point is police. The study concluded city residents should continue paying taxes for Cobb's police department because of its presence in the cities. Twenty percent of the county's funding goes for countywide policing, according to the study. Cobb County police sometimes respond to calls in the cities and have many specialized units including a bomb squad, animal control, canine units, a shooting range and dive team.

Many of the cities do not have these services and rely on the county. "We respond any time, in any city, to a bomb call," Public Safety Director James Arrowood said. "There are a lot of things we provide to the cities. If they call us, we'll be there. This is not a money issue, it's a safety issue." But Acworth City Manager **Brian Bulthuis** pointed out city police also answer to calls outside their limits and said the costs should offset each other. He said Acworth police answer five times as many calls in unincorporated Cobb County as they do within the city.

Government Solutions Ltd. will study the issue further and make a new recommendation Oct. 15. Still, officials have made progress, having resolved 19 of 28 issues, including parks and recreation, according to Jacelyn Moore, a county employee who is drafting the agreement. Officials at Wednesday's meeting agreed to draft a 10-year countywide comprehensive plan of recreational needs. The plan will be complete Dec. 1, 2000. Acworth Mayor Marcia Andruzzi pushed for more immediate funding, saying the city is desperate for more ball fields. "We need some assistance now," she said. "I think it's way overdue in our area." The county is overburdened by its recreational needs, Cobb County Manager David Hankerson said. "None of us are meeting the recreational needs of the county and they're running away from us," Hankerson said. "We don't have anything to give up. We can't meet our needs now."

The outstanding issues are: courts, economic development, jails, libraries, police, senior services, street maintenance and water distribution

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Brian Martin Bulthuis**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Daily Tribune News, The (Cartersville, GA)  
December 19, 1998

**Acworth approves budget of \$4.4 million**

More police cars, more jailers and continuing improving the looks of Acworth are slated for funding in Acworth's 1999 budget. The Acworth Mayor and Board of Alderman approved the \$4.4 million budget at its Thursday night meeting after several weeks of discussion.

The city anticipates receiving more money from taxes, permits and police fines. But it also projects receiving less funds in 1999 than in 1998 from hotel/motel tax, business licenses and water/sewer interest income. Overall, its revenues are expected to climb 13 percent above the projected revenue for 1998, from \$3.9 million to \$4.4 million.

The city expects to collect about \$4,400 more in revenue than it plans to spend. City Manager **Brian Bulthuis** said that surplus will be added to the city's beginning fund balance, \$1.27 million.

With the approved budget, the city has earmarked funds to buy four more patrol cars, add a computer system for the police department and increase the pay of its officers. A full-time and part-time person will be added to the dispatch staff.

Two more jailers are also budgeted to add to the staff of five jailers. In January, Acworth plans to open a new jail, which will increase their jail space from five inmates to 42 inmates.

The approved budget also allots \$20,000 for the city's newly initiated facade grant program. So far, two business have used the program and the board of alderman approved five more at its meeting. The program reimburses business for up to \$2,000 for approved expenses to improve the looks of their exteriors.

Acworth's 1999 budget year starts January 1, 1999.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Brian Martin Bulthuis**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Marietta Daily Journal (GA)  
December 11, 1998

**Acworth fires two officers for alleged beating of prisoner**

Author: Gary A. Witte

Two Acworth police officers have been fired in the wake of allegations they used excessive force in arresting a Marietta man. On Tuesday, Acworth City Manager **Brian Bulthuis** turned down appeals by Sgt. Mark Dykes and Officer David Grimes to get their positions reinstated.

Acworth Police Chief Randy Henson said he fired the two men in October for "violation of department policies and procedures" related to the arrest of 39-year-old Terry Kenneth Strain. A GBI investigation into the case is ongoing as both city officials and Strain's attorney anticipate a lawsuit will be filed over the accusations the two officers physically abused Strain during the Sept. 22 arrest. Neither **Bulthuis** nor Henson would comment on Strain's allegations or discuss specifics. "If I could tell you all the details, things might sound different, but I can't," Henson said.

Dykes, an eight-year veteran of the department, and Grimes, who was with the department two years, could not be reached for comment Thursday afternoon. The incident happened when officers responded to a 911 hang-up on Academy Street and found Strain lying on the living room floor of his estranged wife's home, according to the police report. Strain, who had been fighting with his wife, was belligerent and appeared intoxicated, cursing at officers and telling them to put handcuffs on him, the report said. Officer Scott Lacy, who also responded to the call, said in his report that as Grimes was walking Strain to the patrol car they struggled all the way to the vehicle. Grimes and Strain fought again as he was taken out of the car and placed in jail, according to the report. Staples said his client maintains he was pulled off the porch of the house, thrown to the ground three times and punched in the face when he was arrested. Then Grimes subjected him to a "screen test" by speeding up the patrol car and hitting the breaks, causing Strain to slam into the wire partition, according to his client. Strain, who said his shoulder was injured, maintained his face was slammed into a wall and officers initially would not take him for medical treatment, Staples said. The force in the arrest "certainly looks like it was more than what was necessary to take him into custody," Strain's attorney said.

According to the police report, Strain demanded to be taken to the hospital for an asthma attack after refusing treatment from an ambulance crew. He continued his belligerence while he was being treated at the hospital, the report states. Strain was charged with possession of marijuana, two counts of disorderly conduct and use of profane and vulgar language, police said. The charges are still pending in Cobb State Court. The wife also was arrested when a suspected marijuana cigarette was found in the house, police said. Both Strain and she blamed each other for the cigarette, according to the police report. The department conducted an internal investigation into the allegations. Strain's attorneys sent a claim of damages to the City Council that was rejected last month. The claim is typically the first step before filing suit, Staples said.



**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Brian Martin Bulthuis**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Flint Journal, The (MI)  
August 6, 1996

**CITY MANAGER TAKES NEW JOB**

Author: Metro Report

City Manager **Brian M. Bulthuis** resigned Monday, a decision that he said was hard to make and council members said was hard to accept. **Bulthuis**, who has been city manager for almost six years, has accepted the city manager job in Ackworth, Ga.

"I don't want him to go," said Mayor Pro-tem Gayle Reed.

"**Brian** has done a lot for this city," added Mayor Robert D. Slattery Jr. "He's moved us in a positive direction."

Council members said **Bulthuis'** accomplishments included his work on the city budget and bringing new development downtown.

**Bulthuis**, who did not say when his last day will be, said he will help the city find another manager. "I think we've accomplished a lot here, and personally, I feel I need some new challenges," he said.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Brian Martin Bulthuis**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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[CB&A Note: Only the information relevant to **Brian Martin Bulthuis** is listed below.]

Atlanta Journal-Constitution, The (GA)  
August 3, 1996

**PUBLIC AGENDA - WHAT METRO GOVERNMENTS ARE DOING - Poll shows close Senate race**

ACWORTH GETS ITS ACT TOGETHER: Acworth has filled three City Hall vacancies, two created by the continuing struggle between the mayor and a majority of the Board of Aldermen.

On Thursday, the board voted to hire **Brian Bulthuis** as city manager, Doug Haynie as city attorney and Robyn Rogers as downtown development director.

**Bulthuis**, currently a city manager in Mount Morris, Mich., will begin work in September and earn \$48,000.

Haynie is city attorney for Marietta. Within the last year, two city managers and the city attorney have quit over conflicts with the Board of Aldermen, said Mayor Bob Gibson.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Brian Martin Bulthuis**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Flint Journal, The (MI)  
May 24, 1995

**CITY MAY MAKE PARENTS PAY FOR KIDS' OFFENSES**

Author: Michelle Webster

Children in the city who participate in anything illegal could get their parents in quite a bit of trouble - at least financially. The City Council recently proposed an ordinance that would hold parents responsible for any misdemeanors by their sons or daughters ages 16 or younger. The police department would be able to issue a \$50 fine to parents for the first offense, and the penalty could rise as high as \$500 for parents of repeat offenders. Charges could include rock throwing, property destruction, driving with an open alcohol container and curfew violation. "What we're trying to do is to use the ordinance as a positive tool as well as a deterrence," said Police Chief Frederick Thorsby. "We're telling parents: 'You are going to take responsibility for your children.' But, on the other hand, we're also trying to save kids who might be on the borderline of going down the wrong path." The ordinance was presented at last Monday's City Council meeting, but it was tabled before it received a first reading. "Though it's not required, we wanted to have a public hearing so that we could have some input from the community," said Mayor Robert D. Slattery Jr. A public hearing has been scheduled for the June 12 council meeting to allow residents to voice their opinion about the ordinance.

"It's not that kids are doing anything bad, more than ever," said City Manager **Brian M. Bulthuis**. "We're simply concentrating on deterring kids in a time when things are consistently happening. We realize that only a small percent of kids actually cause problems. We also know that most parents are taking the attitude that they are responsible for their kids."

Mt. Morris would issue citations to parents only for civil infractions, unlike Flint, which has a similar ordinance that places a permanent mark on the teens' record as well as the parents. The Flint ordinance requires that if a resident's child commits a delinquent act, the parent will be guilty for that act if it is proven that the parent did not exercise responsibility, encouraged the act or allowed it to occur. If the parent is found guilty, he or she could be ordered to serve 16 hours of community service, fined up to \$500 and sentenced up to 90 days in jail.

In Mt. Morris, a citation would be issued to the minor and parent, but no court records would be involved. "We know that the criminal courts are so bogged down, that it wouldn't be as effective. We wanted something simple where we could get results right away," said Thorsby. "Also, we didn't want them to have the stigma of a permanent criminal mark on their record." Some Mt. Morris residents responded to the ordinance at a community meeting Tuesday night. "I see the ordinance as a kind of wake-up call," said Lori Schulz, the mother of three teen-agers. "If you have a problem with the same kid over and over again, what else can you do? Maybe if you hit the parents in the pocket, they'll prefer to spend money on the supervision of their kids instead of on tickets. The ordinance also will be discussed at 7 p.m. today, May 30 and June 6 during neighborhood meetings in the community room of the public library, 685 Van Buren St.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Brian Martin Bulthuis**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Flint Journal, The (MI)  
April 13, 1995

**VOLUNTEERS WORK SO KIDS CAN PLAY**

Author: Michelle Webster

Instead of pounding pen to paper, some city workers soon will be pounding nails to wood in a community effort to complete the new Kids Kingdom playground. The \$85,000 playground is similar to one built last September in Flushing's Riverview Park.

Mt. Morris received a \$42,000 matching grant fund from the state Department of Natural Resources and has raised about \$37,000 through donations and fund-raising since late 1992. Now it is seeking volunteers to work for a few hours April 25-30 to help construct the playground. Among those answering the call: City employees.

"We believe it's a really positive project for the community," said City Administrator **Brian Bulthuis**. "Our offices will still be open but employees will be able to go down to the playground site and donate a few hours each day."

The city's contribution of volunteer workers will help but organizers say they're still shy of the 1,200 volunteers needed to complete the project. "We have about 500 or 600 people who are planning to volunteer throughout the five days, but we could still use another 600," said Mary Swedorski, coordinator for the Kids Kingdom committee.

Three meals a day and child care will be provided for volunteers. "We need people to volunteer for the child care committee and to help with building; skills or no skills, we can use every hand we can get," said Swedorski. Each day will be filled with festivities for kids and adults, including a visit April 29 from the original Ronald McDonald and a semi-petting zoo with llamas on the playground site in the Mt. Morris Community Park.

"It would help a lot if each person could bring their own hammer and saw," said Stephen Lee, public relations coordinator for Kids Kingdom. Also needed are wheelbarrows, paintbrushes, nail aprons and rakes for the duration of the construction. "What we need most of all right now, besides volunteers, are compound miter saws and Bob Cats to help us with the building," added Swedorski. "We could also use a hotel room for our engineers. Ramada donated four days but we need a total of seven."

On site also will be a first-aid crew and an ambulance in case of any emergencies. "We have everything very organized so that those too young are only helping in certain areas and only those over 18 will be able to operate power tools," said Swedorski.

The actual construction will cap off months of fund-raising, which included Mt. Morris elementary school principals promising to stay on their school building roofs for a day if students in their school raised \$300. "We raised most of the money through grass-root fund-raising," said

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Brian Martin Bulthuis**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Swedorski. "Candy bar sales, pop can drives, swim parties at the high school; the community was very involved in helping to get this far." Swedorski said she has no doubt they will reach the \$42,500 goal. The committee also is focusing on a \$10,000 maintenance fund for the upkeep of the playground.

"We've had a lot of support from the community and many of the businesses," Lee said. "Some have helped with food and others donations. "Our biggest concern now is simply to get enough volunteers to finish up what we've started."

Some of the highlights of the 12,000-square-foot playground include a haunted house, a castle maze, twirly slide and a telephone system that kids will be able to use to speak to one another from each end of the playground.

Those wanting to volunteer their time or tools can contact Swedorski at 686-3543.

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Research Compiled by:        Shannon Farr  
   Colin Baenziger & Associates

COLIN BAENZIGER  ASSOCIATES

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EXECUTIVE RECRUITING

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*Section 5*

*Thaddeus L. Cohen*

*Lake Worth Beach City Manager  
Candidate Report*

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*Cover Letter and Resume*

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## Section 5

Thaddeus Cohen  
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[thaddeus.cohen@earthlink.net](mailto:thaddeus.cohen@earthlink.net)

May 26, 2021

Attn: Recruiting Team

It is a pleasure to submit my resume to be considered as the next City Manager for Lake Worth Beach, Florida. I share the City's vision to strive to be the best community in America to live, work and play. I also support the mission to deliver high quality, best value, public services, programs, and facilities to your residents and visitors. In part the City Manager is tasked with carrying out the policy direction provided by the Mayor and City Commission. The position functions as the CEO, providing leadership and direction for the day-to-day operations and management of the employees of the Mayor and City Commission. I want to take a moment to match my history with three criteria I feel are important for the position of City Manager.

*Leadership and Organizational Direction:* I have been the Secretary of a State Agency, an Assistant City Manager, a CRA Executive Director and a Planning Director. Ensuring that the goals set by elected officials and the community are carried out, takes a team effort. I am a dynamic, energetic individual, someone with character and a passion for excellence.

*Operational Effectiveness:* For me, it is being positive, thinking creatively, and thinking outside of the box to help build consensus on a course of action to effectively deploy organizational resources to achieve operational objectives. I treat operational problems and issues as opportunities to learn and grow rather than stumbling blocks.

*Performance Management and Workforce Development:* I am respectful of others, delegate and encourage an environment where creativity can flourish. I believe in creating relationships to build an environment of trust, which I feel is important. In other words, mentoring and coaching to make a discernible difference in the advancement of our shared goals.

In conclusion, my broad experience has prepared me to be an ideal candidate. My resume reflects a diverse career in local and state government. My private sector experience includes major work for local and state governments. I look forward to having an opportunity to interview with you. Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Thaddeus Cohen

# **Thaddeus L. Cohen**

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

An accomplished senior executive with hands on experience providing oversight to assigned departmental operations, providing direct supervision to departmental managers, to effectively implement goals and objectives. A leader with excellent team building skills to ensure interdepartmental goals are met and to motivate staff to carry out management decisions in the most efficient manner. An innovative and strategic thinker in the development and implementation of policies and procedures; a history of constructively engaging with communities that are diverse, a record of promoting increased cooperation with businesses, community stakeholders, area local governments, State and Federal officials; a proven consensus builder; a seasoned public servant who finds the complexities of municipal government rewarding and challenging and approaches these challenges with confidence and a positive attitude.

## **PROFESSIONAL STRENGTHS**

Policy Formulation and Implementation • Organizational Transformation • Strategic Planning • Citizen Involvement Initiatives • Budget Development / Administration • Economic Community Development Strategies • Service Delivery Methods and Procedures • Program / Construction Management • Contract Monitoring • Negotiation Strategies • Public Speaking Expertise

## **RELEVANT PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

### **Collier County, Florida**

Growth Management, Department Head 2017 – May 2021

*The Growth Management Department consists of nine divisions (Airports to Zoning) with a total budget of approximately \$306M with 600 employees serving a community of 360,000 permanent residents and 60,000 seasonal residents. See attachment for highlights from each Division.*

Responsible for strategic plans, goals and objectives for the Department. Ensures the Department's strategic plans support the broad County mission, goals and objectives. Provides direction and oversight to division directors regarding individual division work plans; ensures the divisions work together to maximize Department performance and the use of resources. Serves as a member of the Executive Management team, making large scale strategic decisions. Highlights of my tenure include:

- At the 30- day mark on the job with Collier County effectively managed the Department's response to Hurricane Irma. Major arterials cleared in less than 3 days; managed the water debris mission; coordinated building assessments; personally, managed the phone bank information center.
- Post Hurricane Irma instituted revisions to vendor selections to support Traffic Operation's Signal section with contracts that are FEMA compliant. Reoriented storm water debris mission in coordination with Big Cypress Basin.
- Managed the establishment of a Storm Water Maintenance Section to move the organization from a reactive to a proactive posture in the maintenance program. Established a five- year KPI metric to measure progress toward an industry standard for Storm Water asset management. Established a fix it instead of patch it philosophy; presented to the Productivity Committee the new strategy which supported increase staffing in the storm water section to meet the community needs. Obtained 60 million in debt funding to support critical infrastructure improvements over the next three years.
- Managed and participated in the completion of three of the major planning initiatives for the County. Golden Gate Subarea Masterplans; Immokalee Master Plan and the Rural Land Stewardship Overlay

## **Section 5**

(RLSA). These restudies are the most extensive rewriting of the areas planning strategies in nearly ten years. Each sets the criteria for further development for the next decade.

- Spearheaded the establishment of the Golden Gate TIF District. Worked to create a vision to increase the economic activity along Golden Gate Parkway through financial and land-use incentives. Created a visual framework for future development.
- Established a working protocol for red tide and blue- green algae information dissemination to the community between Pollution Control, Health Department and Tourism. The Protocol formalized the framework for testing responsibilities and result timelines while providing the technical, clinical and onsite information in a consistent manner for each of the subject matter agencies.
- Currently implementing a Departmentwide budgeting tool to increase awareness for each Division of expenditures and revenues on a daily basis tied to the Agency's SAP system. Its effectiveness is being considered by other Departments as a potential Agencywide tool.
- Continuing to improve our communication strategy through our redesigned website which is customer centric. GMD has taken the lead with a public portal which provides citizens a convenient method to access project information which can be sorted by type, neighborhood or district. GMD has led the Agency in keeping our stakeholders informed by way of our digital newsletter that provides highlights of significant issues regarding our Department.

### **City of Key West, Florida**

*Planning Director and CRA 20015 – 2017*

*A full-service, municipal government with a \$166M annual budget and 489 employees supporting a community of 25,000 permanent residents with 25,000 seasonal and tourist visitors. The City's enterprise units include building department, parking division, and cruise ship port.*

Responsible for the Planning Department to management, elected officials, and outside agencies; created, presented and explained departmental programs, policies and activities; resolved sensitive, significant, and controversial land use issues; managed the development of long range plans for the City; identified complex policy issues and worked interdepartmentally to create, present and implement comprehensive solutions; assessed, operational and internal reporting relationships; created new systems for effective service delivery. Responsible for the development and administration of the department's budget; directed the forecast of funds needed for staffing, equipment, materials and supplies; directed approval of expenditures as necessary. Responsible for the day- to- day management, administration, supervision and strategic direction for the work activities for Planning and Zoning; Community Redevelopment Agency; Urban Forestry; Historic Preservation, Sustainability; Arts in Public Places; and Truman Waterfront Advisory and their respective boards and committee functions. Highlights of my work include:

- Established the City's first simultaneous permitting review process. An inter-departmental process which ensures major and minor development plans approved by the planning board and city commission and project without those approvals are in compliance with city codes and requirements prior to the issuance of a building permit.
- Developed and passed a parking fee increase projected to add over 3 Million in revenue. The increase is 87 percent paid for by tourist. A local resident exemption for four hours of free parking in selected downtown parking locations was a key selling point in its approval by the city commission. The increase will fund a newly created Transportation Alternative Fund, provide dedicated source of funding for the Affordable Housing Trust Fund and additional dollars to the General Fund.

## **Section 5**

- Established the Transportation Alternative Fund (TAP) with the parking revenue increase, 1.14 Million in the first year; created a four bus, 15 minute, service downtown transit loop “DUVAL LOOP” working with an additional 425K in technical assistance from FDOT / South Florida Commuter Services in conjunction with Key West Transit. Created the Car Free Key West Campaign to encourage safer biking, walking in the community. <http://keysweekly.com/42/car-free-key-west-plans-first-view/> The fund will also support a newly established Bike Share program and later in 2017 a Car Share program. Managed the RFQ for a 275K Bicycle Pedestrian Master Plan which is ongoing. These efforts are to connect more closely transportation and land use to reduce the cost of housing.
- Established with the parking fee increase, approximately 800 Thousand annually, a dedicated source of revenue for the Affordable Housing Trust Fund. Possibly being the only city in Florida with a dedicated source of funding for affordable housing.
- Managed and participated in the complete rewrite of the Land Development Regulations which was divided into four themes Affordable Housing; Transportation; Sustainability and Disaster Mitigation. Managed citizen participation and workshops. A significant portion of the work redefines the criteria for affordable housing making housing more attainable for city residents by changing the AMI constraints; increasing density in selected areas; reduction in parking requirements and recommending the creation of an Affordable Housing Incentive Zone.
- Represented the City as a non-voting member on Monroe County’s Affordable Housing Taskforce. Several recommendations with regards to access affordable units; height increase; incentives were accepted by the body and the Monroe County Board of County Commissioners.
- Led and managed with a consultant team the Bahama Village CRA Visioning / Capital Work Plan. The first meaningful update of the CRA plan since 2010. Through workshops established the priorities for projects and funding for community improvements in the short term 1-3 years / medium 1-5 years and long term 5- 10 years and beyond. Established funding criteria for future projects as being Critical, Strategic or Important with appropriate definitions and metrics for success.

### **City of Pensacola, Florida**

*Assistant City Manager and Community Redevelopment Agency Director 2008 – 2011*

*A full-service, municipal government with a \$217M annual budget and 860 employees supporting a community of 52,000 residents. The City’s enterprise units include the airport, seaport and gas company.*

#### **Duties and Responsibilities as Assistant City Manager:**

Responsible for implementing Council policy and Manager directives; Senior budget member developed the city’s operational and capital budgets; accountable for the forecast of funds needed for staffing, equipment, materials and supplies; oversaw the approval of expenditures of assigned departments; and the preparations and implementation of budgetary adjustments as necessary. Provided oversight and approval of expenditures of assigned departments; Departments within scope of responsibility included Parks and Recreation, Housing Department, Planning and Zoning, Building Inspection Services, Neighborhood Enhancement Teams, Saenger Theater, the Community Redevelopment Agency and the Port of Pensacola. Identified and resolved long range issues with management, staff, elected officials, p/z, and environmental boards and historical preservation commissions, and outside agencies; negotiated sensitive issues with public and private sector entities ranging from economic development to growth strategies. Directed, and evaluated the day- to- day efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery methods and procedures. Assessed and monitored workload, administrative and support systems and internal reporting relationships; identified opportunities for improvement and directed implementation. Developed and represented legislative issues to state and federal delegations. Media representation for the City included television and radio appearances, print and webcast interviews, and preparation of press releases.

## Section 5

- Management team participant in developing the City's 30-month budget. Developed Citywide departmental priorities that maintained critical City services while reducing staff positions by 12 percent in conjunction with the City's bargaining units between 2008 and 2011.
- Introduced computerized processes to streamline council meetings and reduce cost; placed the city budget on-line with updates for citizens. Transformed web presence of the Parks and Recreation Department and Community Redevelopment Agency with a modern and engaging range of user-friendly tools which attracted and increased resident participation on the site.
- Developed and led downtown traffic signalization management program which reduced traffic congestion and idling and improved air quality. Oversaw with FDOT State Highway 98 pavement rehabilitation program which improved traffic flow and pedestrian access in the downtown core.
- Led citywide citizen engagement effort during the State-mandated update of the City's Comprehensive Plan. The plan was recognized by the Florida Department of Community Affairs for its innovative strategies in transportation and land use.
- Principal author of the Community Redevelopment Agency's *Community Redevelopment Plan 2010* to create a vision for downtown. The *Plan* achieved the first update since 1985, establishing the downtown strategic framework for the next fifteen years.
- Implemented the traffic management "retail strategy" that increased downtown vehicular traffic by 80 percent and pedestrian traffic by 25 percent in the City's retail core.
- Led the Community Redevelopment Agency and City's participation in financing and development of the 16-acre downtown technology park with EDA, Escambia County, and Pensacola Chamber of Commerce. Established strategic storm water drainage program to convert an underutilized 5-acre park to a retention pond / park in support of the 16-acre technology park funded by storm water fees and MSTU agreements.
- Optimized operations at the City of Pensacola Municipal Golf Course by restructuring and reinvestment efforts resulting in a 35 percent reduction in operational cost as part of an investment strategy to redesign and modernizes greens and fairways and renovate and rebrand the clubhouse concessionaire operations.
- Established the City's New Year's event, the *Pelican Drop*™, gaining regional and national media coverage. The event is now attended by over 100,000 participants, leading to 100 percent occupancy in downtown hotels and increased retail sales.
- Established an annexation framework to create an 864 acre "Midtown" commercial / industrial inland port facility leveraging clean-up of a 60-acre super fund site in partnership EPA and the State of Florida.
- Author of the City of Pensacola's *Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill Long Term Recovery Plan*. The *Plan* established strategies that align with the Economic Recovery portion of the Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus' *America's Gulf Coast Report*. The Secretary's announcement of the *America Gulf Coast Report* in Pensacola and Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Lisa Jackson's decision to host the first Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Task Force meeting in Pensacola were direct results of the *Plan*.
- Principal team negotiator in the development of the \$52M Community Maritime Park, a 40-acre development that includes a minor-league baseball stadium, 7000-seat amphitheater venue, and 500,000 square feet of private mixed-use development. Financing for the project included a City land donation, Build America Bonds, Tax Increment Funds, and New Market Tax Credits.
- Redefined the strategic direction for the Port of Pensacola, and attracted the first major tenant to the Port in five years, Offshore Inland Oil and Marine Services Inc. Incentives included a relocation package provided

## **Section 5**

by the Community Redevelopment Agency with wharfage and dockage relief contributed by the Port. Overall effort produced 50 jobs and \$6.2M in economic activity in the first six months of operation.

- Established an “Enlivening Public Spaces and Branding Strategy” that created a specialty center branded as the “Entertainment District,” credited with the resurgence of the downtown retail core. The Entertainment District increased food and beverage establishments by fifty percent with a twelve percent increase in the labor force over two-and-a-half years.

**Florida Department of Community Affairs**, Tallahassee, Florida  
*Secretary, 2004 – 2007*

*The State of Florida’s 432million, 450 employee land planning, emergency management, housing and community development agency.*

Responsible for the Department’s policies and operations organized into three service areas: The Division of Community Planning develops and administers Florida’s growth management programs; The Division of Housing and Community Development administers State and Federal programs designed to provide community and economic development assistance; and The Division of Emergency Management leads the State’s emergency response team and provides response, planning, and mitigation for manmade and natural disaster.

Reported to the Governor:

- The Division of Emergency Management delivered \$3B in State match for FEMA hurricane disaster dollars in 2004-2005 with minimal State and Federal audit comments. Developed and implemented design of a computerized process to track individual FEMA PWs during the disaster event providing instantaneous status reports to local governments.
- Developed policies and administered \$1.2B in HUD disaster supplemental dollars to hurricane-affected communities in 2004-2005. In coordination with FEMA, the Division of Community Planning prepared the most comprehensive citizen-based, long-term recovery plans to address the catastrophic damages caused by these storms. Asked by HUD to provide training to Mississippi and Alabama on techniques used to provide constituent services.
- Passed SB 360 (2005) “pay as you grow” legislation and associated 1.2 Billion appropriation to ensure that roads, schools, sewer, and water were available to meet the needs of the communities in one of the fastest growing states in the nation.
- Created the Coastal High Hazard Study Commission through an Executive Order from the Governor. The Commission, a blue-ribbon committee, evaluated the State’s regulatory framework related to coastal development polices in the Department of Environmental Protection, the Office of Insurance, the Building Code Commission, the Division of Emergency Management, and other stakeholders.
- Successfully developed and passed legislation with the Florida Building Commission to bring Florida panhandle counties under a unified Building Code, resulting in lower home owner insurance costs under the insurance industry’s community rating system.
- Funded university research on establishing higher residential construction standards to reduce evacuation requirements. The findings have been adopted by the International Building Code Commission.
- Led the State’s first ever development and implementation of fiscal impact analysis modeling and visual planning tools to assist regions in forecasting their community visions and related capital budgets.

## **Section 5**

- Launched the State's coordinated effort of SB 444 (2005), tethering the State's Water Management District's regional water plans to Regional Planning Council's Strategic Regional Policy Plans and ensuring a stronger connection between land development and the use of the State's water resources.
- Spearheaded and funded regional planning efforts like the Sustainable Emerald Coast, Sustainable Treasure Coast, Issues 2005 Southwest Florida, and Orlando's "How Shall We Grow?" visioning efforts. Such initiatives positioned these communities to successfully obtain \$11M in Federal funding from the Sustainable Communities program in 2010.
- Negotiated the 40 million bond offering for wastewater improvements in the Florida Keys between Monroe County, the municipalities, the Florida Keys Aqueduct Authority and the State of Florida.  
[www.myflorida.com/myflorida/cabinet/agenda05/0823/trans\\_082305.pdf](http://www.myflorida.com/myflorida/cabinet/agenda05/0823/trans_082305.pdf)
- Authored and developed with the late Representative Mike Davis Florida's first Workforce Housing Program (2005) which created housing initiatives for essential service personnel i.e. fire fighters, police officers, nurses, teacher etc.

### **OTHER EXPERIENCE**

**MBR Construction**, Fort Lauderdale, Florida  
*Project Program Manager, 2013 – 2015*

*A construction company that delivers infra-structure facilities and related services to municipal governments in the areas of parks; community centers; marinas; administrative buildings; airports; streetscapes; and recreational facilities.*

Managed and oversaw delivery of infrastructure projects to governmental clients; Represented the company to government agencies, industry representatives and trade organizations. Coordinated major projects including governmental development approvals for projects such as Boca Raton Airport Authority Administration Building and the Reconstruction of Taxiway A / E at the Fort Lauderdale Executive Airport which required local, State and Federal FAA approvals. Established and monitored protocols for compliance with M/DBE requirements. Responsible for the development and mentoring of staff. Monitored construction budgets, developed project scopes for subcontractors; contract modifications and requests for change orders; directed resolution of design and construction issues between team members.

**Thaddeus Cohen Architect, PA**, Delray Beach, Florida  
*President, 1984 – 2004*

*President of an award-winning architectural / planning firm providing solution for municipal governments in the areas of housing, economic development, urban design, community planning, transportation, criminal justice, and recreational facilities.*

Spearheaded business development throughout Florida. Expanded client base from municipal government to state agencies. Developed new services and funding capabilities for the market sector serviced by the firm. Accountable for, recruitment, development and mentoring of project teams. Developed capital budgets for project sponsor needs and developed project scopes that efficiently meet those needs; monitor project budgets, contract modifications and requests for change orders; directed resolution of design and construction issues between team members; establish and maintain positive relationships with clients and contractors. Special emphasis was placed on maximizing the taxpayer's dollars.

Housing and Community Planning

- Northwest Neighborhood Housing and Redevelopment Plan; West Palm Beach, Florida

## **Section 5**

- Sistrunk Housing and Redevelopment Plan, Fort Lauderdale, Florida
- Bahama Village Housing and Redevelopment Plan, Key West Florida
- Wilton Manors Redevelopment Plan, Wilton Manors, Florida
- Establishment of Community Redevelopment Agencies in Key West and Delray Beach, Florida

### Community Centers and Parks

- Hadley Park Community Center and Olympic Pool, Miami Florida, Franklin Park Community Center, Fort Lauderdale Fl, Highland Park Community Center, Pompano Beach Fl, Dyer Park, West Palm Beach, Fl. Orville Bathhouse, Orville Ohio

### Transportation

- Developed the architectural design criteria and guidelines for the double tracking and station expansion of the South Florida Tri-County Commuter Rail system. Implemented those system wide designs for the Sheridan Street Station, Hollywood Fl; Opa Locka Station Miami Fl.; Coconut Creek Station

### Criminal Justice

- Designed the award-winning Harry and Harriette T. Moore Museum in Mims, Florida dedicated to Harry T. Moore, the NAACP organizer killed on the Christmas Day 1951 bombing of their home. Provided construction administration services for several criminal justice facilities including the 76,000 sf North Broward County, Florida Courthouse, 750-bed Male Correctional Facility in Moore Haven, Florida, and the 1350-bed Male Correctional Facility in South Bay, Florida.

### Water and Wastewater

- Responsible for architectural design and construction administration for several Florida municipal water treatment facilities including Miramar WTP; West Palm Beach WTP no 2; Belle Glade WTP renovation.

## **SELECTED CIVIC ACTIVITIES**

United Way of Collier County / Florida Keys, Board Member  
Leadership Collier, Class 2019  
Florida Community Trust, Chair  
Florida's Legislative Committee on Intergovernmental Relations, Member  
Florida's Sustainable Treasure Coast, Co-Chair  
Florida's Growth Management Study Commission, Member Governor's Appointee  
Florida's Fiscal Impact Analysis Model Study Group, Member, Governor's Appointee  
Florida's Sustainable Emerald Coast, Member  
Florida Housing Finance Corporation, Board Member  
Florida's Coastal High Hazard Study Commission Co-Chair  
FDEP Land Acquisition and Restoration Council, Member  
Florida Hurricane Housing Work Group, Member  
Florida's Broward Alliance, Board Member  
Urban Land Institute – Florida Committee for Regional Cooperation  
Metro Broward, Florida, Board Member  
Council for Black Economic Broward County Florida, Chair  
Florida American Institute of Architects Florida, Palm Beach Chapter, President  
Florida American Institute of Architects, Board Member  
Delray Beach Housing Authority, Board Member  
Partners in Excellence (Education) Broward County Florida, Board Member  
Palm Beach County Affordable Housing Commission, Chair  
Affordable Housing Task Force, Monroe County, Florida, Member  
1000 Friends of Florida, Board Member  
Saint Andrews School Boca Raton, Florida, Board Member



**ACADEMIC CREDENTIALS**

Bachelor of Architecture, Kent State University, Kent, Ohio

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*Candidate Introduction*

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**Thaddeus Cohen**

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**EDUCATION**

Bachelor of Architecture, Kent State University, Kent Ohio

**EXPERIENCE**

Department Head/Assistant County Manager Growth Management Department Collier County, Florida	2017-2021
Planning Director/ Executive Director CRA, Key West, Florida	2015-2017
Project Manager, MBR Construction, Fort Lauderdale, Florida	2013-2015
Management Consultant, Tallahassee, Florida	2011-2013
Assistant City Manager/ CRA Director, Pensacola, Florida	2008-2011
Management Consultant, Tallahassee, Florida	2007-2008
Secretary, Florida Department of Community Affairs, Tallahassee, Florida	2004-2007

**BACKGROUND**

Collier County is located at the southern end of Florida’s Gulf Coast region. The county has a total area of 2,305 square miles which makes it Florida’s largest county by land area and fourth largest by total area. Framed by 34 miles of sandy beaches, the county accounts for 1/3 of southwest Florida’s region land mass. Interestingly, the entire southern portion of the county lies within the Big Cypress National Preserve. The county encompasses municipalities of Naples, Marco Island and Everglades City. The population is approximately 368,161 permanent residents and another 60,000 seasonal residents.

Collier County has targeted economic sectors which include corporate headquarters; clean tech; manufacturing; life sciences; defense & homeland security; aviation & aerospace; information technology; financial & professional services. The three major industries currently are tourism, development (258 permits per month) and agriculture which are significant economic drivers for the county’s 15,341 business establishments and 151,556 jobs.

Collier County’s general fund is 537 million dollars out of a net 1.5 billion budget supporting 1,973 employees. The Growth Management Department for which I was responsible has an operating budget of 112 million dollars supporting 600 employees in nine divisions and a capital budget of 186 million for construction of roads, bridges, beach renourishment, storm water and landscape improvements.

The three most significant issues facing the County are:

**Local option infrastructure sales tax:** The sales tax is expected to collect 420 million over, its seven- year life. With five years remaining tracking, managing and reporting on

### Thaddeus Cohen

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all aspects related to collecting spending tax proceeds for the enumerated projects within the enabling ordinances.

**Funding Growth:** Future growth is expected to accelerate in eastern Collier County. The Water/Sewer District expansion has begun and is funded by long term bonds in the amount of 76.2 million. Planning phases two and three will necessitate additional funding in excess of 100 million. Need to continue to work with transportation engineering CIP and the MPO's 2045 LRTP for timing of the road network.

**Employee retention/succession planning:** Close to one third of the work force is eligible for retirement in less than five years. The county will need to focus on providing a market-based compensation program that is competitive with other local governments and private sector employers in the region. In particular, entry level positions will need support in continuous training, professional development and enhanced career mobility.

### GENERAL MANAGEMENT STYLE AND EXPERIENCE

I moved to Florida (Delray Beach) in the late seventy's and have watched the growth of South Florida for decades before taking the position of DCA Secretary in 2004 in Tallahassee. For much of that time the history and charm of Lake Worth Beach was under the radar. I am excited to see that Lake Worth Beach is being "re-discovered again". The collective decisions made today will have a far-reaching effect into the future. I welcome being part of and to continue the momentum garnered in being a best-in-class community.

My experience and interest have been in developing and implementing strategies that have helped communities grow and prosper. I have worked with neighborhood organizations, homeowner associations and business leaders to develop plans of action to deploy resources to assist communities realize their dreams from Pensacola to Key West. Similarly, Lake Worth Beach is poised for tremendous growth in the coming decades.

A significant element of Lake Worth Beach's future success will be the vigorous discussions held with engaged citizens and elected officials. My collaborative approach to managing, I believe, works wells in these dynamic environments. When working with all the appropriate stakeholders it is possible to get to the desired outcome that benefits the community.

Within the organization I feel it is important to support key staff when they exercise their judgment. The strength of an organizations lies in the ability of its personnel. I have found when we work from a common plan of action and the right individuals are given room to perform you can maximize the organization's efforts. If asked my colleagues would agree.

The elected officials I have served would characterize my communications as thoughtful; my actions as attentive; and recommendations as trustworthy. Staff would say I am respectful,

### **Thaddeus Cohen**

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supportive, and fair. I sponsor thinking creatively and treat problems and issues as an opportunity to learn and grow rather than stumbling blocks.

A strength has been to bring groups of varying points of view to a consensus on a course of action that provides the greatest benefit to the community at large. Listening skills have been a trait that has held me in good stead. Collier County is one of two communities to implement the Rural Land Stewardship program covering some 195,000 acres of undeveloped land. The plan had been in limbo since 2005. It was important to distill the issues to its core and provide a series of recommendations to the seven significant landowners, citizens and environmental organizations, to find a path forward to update the Comprehensive Plan for submission to the state. The result will provide 45,000 acres of developable land and the protection of 150,000 acres.

Personnel issues can be complicated. The decisions often have ramifications not only for the employee but also their family. Some feel I may go too far to remedy a circumstance to find a fit within the organization. As a result, I have tried to strengthen employee development services in organizations where I have worked. I have worked with managers to cultivate employees and manage on the front-end their career paths to place team members in a position to succeed.

Measuring performance is a team effort and starts with aligning the organizations actions with the City's strategic plan. Empowering team members to have a stake in the outcomes of the organization provides for thoughtful and decisive decision making. This construct also leads to potential problems being identified by staff, evaluated and strategies implemented to avoid them. Recognition from constituents of improved performance provide confidence the organization is heading in the desired direction. In Collier County the storm water maintenance team developed metrics; Key Performance Indicator- KPI i.e., (control structures inspected; lane miles cleaned; inlets cleaned and inspected etc.) in conjunction with the asset management program to monitor year over year performance and against industry standards. Presentations before the County's Productivity Committee garnered a budget increase from 4 million to 8 million. The team was able to add a crew and be proactive in the community to address storm water improvements rather than reactive.

Collier County had been negotiating with a property owner for some five years on a four-thousand-acre new town Rural Land West. In the spring of 2018, the proposal was pulled. The landowner instead moved forward with three villages approximately 950 acres each rather than a town and its resultant employment base. The move to say the least was controversial. I reached out to the landowner to propose a strategy to overcome the issues of affordable housing, transportation i.e., the road network and other infrastructure development using tools to change the Comprehensive Plan's Rural Land Stewardship Program; codifying the MPO's LRTP for future roads and working with Utilities to provided appropriate water and sewer. Over an 18-month period working with the landowner and several environmental organizations we were able to reach an agreement for a framework to transition the proposed Villages of Rivergrass, Longwater, and Belmar to the Town Big Cypress an approx., 3,500-acre community with

### **Thaddeus Cohen**

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appropriate land reserved for economic development and 2.5percent of the gross acreage reserved for affordable housing. At completion, the Town of Big Cypress will have a population equivalent to the city of Naples. The agreement set a framework for future towns and villages as growth continues in eastern Collier County.

Ambitious plans do not always come to fruition during your tenure. I was disappointed that I was not able to establish a ferry service between the City of Pensacola, Pensacola Beach and Fort Pickens. The moving pieces of the local governments, the National Park Service takes patience and more time than I could imagine. The service was eventually established. When I look back, I can be grateful that the idea stood the test of time. It took an awfully long time. Working with the federal government can be a marathon and a measure of one's endurance.

Termination of an employee is often the result of a process. In the organizations in which I have served there are administrative policies that escribe to each team members the expectations of job performance and behavior. I have been a Hearing Officer who has taken testimony to render a decision. The decisions have fallen within the guidelines of the organization.

#### **BEACH – Bold / Exciting / Ambitious / Compassionate / Home**

I see Lake Worth Beach as a dynamic community of neighborhoods not as a challenge but endless opportunities. The town core is redeveloping, how is that balanced with maintaining community character; how will a post COVID environment change the delivery of services; what strain was placed on the social fabric and how can a customer/ citizen centric service delivery model enhance our resiliency. My sense, these may be some of the pressing issues faced by the community.

#### **BEACH – Beautiful / Enthusiastic / Artsy / Confident / Home**

Clearly, Lake Worth Beach has created a framework for its future. My first six months would entail: Meet regularly with the Mayor and Council members to understand their goals and objectives and their insights into the organization's performance; do a deep dive into the soon to be adopted budget to see where the focus has been placed and how it relates to the delivery of exceptional service; meet with community and business leaders, advocacy groups, adjoining local governments to understand our partnerships as a force multiplier to realize the community' goals. Meet with staff to assess how our performance aligns with the Commission's goals and objectives and the City's strategic plan. Reach out to the PBCSO and PBCFR to build a relationship in the public safety arena. Meet with the City Attorney to be briefed on any pending legal issues that affect the City's operations. Regular meetings with CAO and planning staff to be updated on development issues; meet with the CRA to be familiar with the redevelopment plan and the various projects that are ongoing and pending. It will still be hurricane season, review the emergency management plans with staff to have a clear understanding of the team's role, responsibilities and corresponding FEMA approved disaster contracts.

**Thaddeus Cohen**

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During my career I have held press conferences when asked by the elected official; tv and radio interviews; been a keynote speaker at various growth management and disaster preparedness conferences. I have written op-eds to promote a particular issue to promote citizen engagement. I am not aware of any negative information that would arise to the detriment of your client.

Social media has been a slow adoption in the organizations in which I have served. I feel it is a powerful tool to keep residents informed about the working of their local government. The Lake Worth Beach Website is customer friendly; the utility department is able to broadcast power outages through their platform. It appears there is foundation to find various ways to tell Lake Worth Beach's story.

I am not aware of any activist that will contact the City of Lake Worth Beach with negative comments.

In my spare time I read, and travel.

**SIX ADJECTIVES OR PHRASES I WOULD USE TO DESCRIBE MYSELF**

Thoughtful  
Visionary  
Straightforward  
Empathetic  
Knowledgeable  
Honest

**REASON FOR LEAVING CURRENT POSITION**

The County Manager for whom I was hired and worked for retired. The new County Manager re-organized by Department into two separate groups, eliminated my position, divided my duties between two individuals. I was not offered an opportunity to remain with the organization.

**CURRENT / MOST RECENT SALARY**

My final compensation with Collier County was \$156,000 excluding benefits.

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*CB&A Background Checks*

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**Background Check Summary for  
THADDEUS L. COHEN**

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**Criminal Records Checks:**

Nationwide Criminal Records Search	No Records Found
County	
Collier County, FL	No Records Found
Monroe County, FL	No Records Found
Broward County, FL	No Records Found
Escambia County, FL	No Records Found
Leon County, FL	No Records Found
State	
Florida	No Records Found

**Civil Records Checks:**

County	
Collier County, FL	No Records Found
Monroe County, FL	No Records Found
Broward County, FL	No Records Found
Escambia County, FL	No Records Found
Leon County, FL	No Records Found
Federal	
Florida	No Records Found

**Motor Vehicle**  
Florida No Records Found

**Credit** Excellent

**Personal Bankruptcy** No Records Found

**Sex Offender Registry** Not Listed

**Education** Confirmed

**Employment** Confirmed

**Social Media** Nothing of Concern Found

**Background Check Summary for  
THADDEUS L. COHEN**

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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  
THADDEUS L. COHEN  
Personal Disclosure**

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**Personal Disclosure Questionnaire**

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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?  
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
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

Please email this form via PDF DOCUMENT to [Lynelle@cb-asso.com](mailto:Lynelle@cb-asso.com) or via fax to (561) 621-5965 no later than 5:00 PM PST 06/28/2021.  
(Note: Please be sure to sign the form with your actual signature if you are sending Fax or PDF Document)

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*CB&A Reference Notes*

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**Reference Notes  
Thaddeus Cohen**

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**Leo Ochs – Former County Manager, Collier County, FL 239-919-6843**

Mr. Ochs hired Mr. Cohen in 2017 to run the Collier County Growth Management Department, which was one of the County's biggest operations. Mr. Ochs hired Mr. Cohen in a competitive process among other highly qualified individuals, and Mr. Cohen rose to the top of the hiring list. Mr. Ochs was the former Collier County Manager until he retired in 2021.

Mr. Cohen strongly advocated for his team. He stood up for his position while having excellent collaboration with colleagues, internal counterparts, industry leaders, and outside community leaders. He had good interpersonal and public speaking skills, which he used to calmly diffuse potentially hostile situations.

Mr. Ochs and Mr. Cohen shared outstanding interactions. Although they may have had professional disagreements, Mr. Cohen was a pleasure to work with. Mr. Cohen kept Mr. Ochs well informed via primarily verbal and electronic communication, although Mr. Cohen also used phone calls, in-person meetings, and occasional memos. Mr. Ochs continuously knew what Mr. Cohen and his team were doing.

Mr. Cohen absolutely had good experience dealing with the public, whether one-on-one or in groups. He may have been more effective with individuals due to not having to compete with others in a conversation, but he was equally comfortable in differently sized public settings. One of his greatest strengths was how capably he interviewed, most likely due to prior experience with state, county, and local government. He brought a wealth of experience to Collier County.

By the nature of his job, Mr. Cohen was frequently out in the public. His major responsibilities in Growth Management included issuing permits for developing the community and involvement with transportation projects. He managed a number of public meetings with planning and zoning commissions. Additionally, he dealt with members of the public and organizational leaders. He also had experience with elected officials from state, county, and municipal government levels.

Mr. Cohen was quite customer service oriented. He showcased this characteristic when facing challenges the COVID-19 pandemic brought. He searched for new methods to effectively and quickly serve the public while protecting his team from the virus. He moved to electronic formats to protect people during the pandemic crisis.

Generally, Mr. Cohen made good decisions as he applied a specific analysis approach. He also brought in other opinions. Once he listened to those perspectives, he took responsibility for the final decision. He hired well and was responsible for hiring the staff in his division, which included approximately 350 people. He met his deadlines appropriately. For tasks in which he had direct control, he accomplished his tasks in a timely manner. Sometimes planning initiatives were delayed. However, such delays were due the Board deciding to tweak an idea or asking for more work on the plan, which had been submitted to the Board on time.

## Reference Notes Thaddeus Cohen

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Furthermore, Mr. Cohen had good financial skills, though he relied heavily on his financial operations team. While being involved with the budget process, he collaborated well and relied on the expertise of his staff.

As a good problem solver, Mr. Cohen was fair and weighed all sides. He consistently tried to make decisions in the best overall interests of the county and the community. Indeed, he was quite successful with this approach. For example, Mr. Cohen dealt with a fairly controversial situation. Collier County was conducting a study to re-plan its eastern area, which had a rural land stewardship. This somewhat contentious study became more contentious when it resurfaced after initially being shut down during the pandemic. Many conflicting interests arose between environmentalists, conservation groups, and redevelopment communities. Mr. Cohen came up with a long-range sustainable habitat while maintaining good redevelopment land. He also brought the general business community, field leaders, and interested community leaders to find as good a consensus as possible to present to the Board. The Board accepted the proposal, thus demonstrating Mr. Cohen's abilities in bringing people together to find common ground and make a satisfactory plan.

Mr. Ochs is unaware of anything in Mr. Cohen's background or conduct that might concern a future employer. Mr. Cohen had been involved with some professionally controversial issues, such as the eastern land study. He also dealt with a few difficult personnel issues, though he handled these situations adequately. In addition, Mr. Cohen worked on a couple initiatives to bring a stormwater utility to the Board, which was not ready for this initial plan and chose to not implement the initiatives. However, Mr. Cohen's team handled the matter well. When Mr. Cohen worked with his team and the Finance Department to find a different way to find funding for the stormwater initiatives, they were able to leverage that funding into a large bond. Now, the County has one of the best stormwater maintenance programs in Florida.

Mr. Ochs would absolutely rehire Mr. Cohen if possible. Though a couple of individuals might disagree with Mr. Ochs's opinions, such differences may be due to possibly disliking Mr. Cohen on a personal level. Regardless, Mr. Cohen will do well in any environment. He is highly professional. As a leader, he is a strong communicator with excellent interpersonal skills. With these attributes, he is a strong candidate who will make a good municipal manager.

### **Words or phrases used to describe Thaddeus Cohen:**

- Personable,
- Task-oriented,
- Determined,
- Team-oriented,
- Advocates for his team,
- Smart, and
- Innovative.

**Reference Notes  
Thaddeus Cohen**

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**Strengths:** Articulate, speaking skills, writing skills, interpersonal skills, public speaking abilities, handling potentially hostile situations, interviewing experiences.

**Weaknesses:** The only possible criticism regarding Mr. Cohen might be that he did not manage his staff closely enough. However, Mr. Ochs never personally noticed any issues with Mr. Cohen's hands-off management style. Mr. Cohen strongly believed in delegating responsibilities while retaining authority and holding ultimate responsibility. He hired good people and delegated. He supported his staff and redirected them as necessary to ensure the organization approached a matter well.

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**Verdenia Baker – County Administrator, Palm Beach County, FL 561-355-6726**

Ms. Baker has known Mr. Cohen since approximately 2000. He used to live in Palm Beach County and was an architect who had done some work for the County when Ms. Baker was Deputy County Administrator. Later, Mr. Cohen was hired as Secretary of the Florida Department of Community Affairs (DCA). Eventually, he went to work with a Florida county when the elected leaders who had appointed him as Secretary ended their terms.

When Mr. Cohen designed buildings for Palm Beach County, the County was well pleased. He was responsive to their needs. After he began working with the DCA, Ms. Baker worked more closely with Mr. Cohen on a personal basis because she was over planning and zoning. Mr. Cohen was reasonable and worked with the County on issues to accomplish many of the County's goals.

Mr. Cohen kept Ms. Baker well informed via writing or phone calls to give her a heads up. As far as Ms. Baker knew, he had good experience dealing with the public. His one-on-one skills were great, and he performed similarly in the public view.

Generally, Mr. Cohen made thorough decisions and refrained from being rash. He was thoughtful and was customer service oriented with the County. He accomplished his tasks in a timely manner. Sometimes he made difficult decisions, but Ms. Baker was unfamiliar with any situation in which he indicated he was unable to handle stress. Additionally, he had good financial skills, which was critical in his job as an architect.

Mr. Cohen was a combination of an innovative change agent who maintained the organization at a high performance level. Certainly, he was creative as he designed creative facilities for the County. As necessary, he was definitely a change agent. For example, as DCA Secretary, he helped the organization as it changed many of its procedures and streamlined various processes.

Mr. Cohen had fairly good problem solving skills and listened to both sides of an issue. He was quite detailed and thorough. In fact, many faced difficulty arguing with the solutions he found because he tried to be fair. He had multiple instances of leading teams in solving problems, such as being the architect of his own firm and when leading the entire Florida DCA as Secretary.

## Reference Notes Thaddeus Cohen

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Ms. Baker is unaware of anything in Mr. Cohen's background that might concern a future employer. Due to his position with the DCA, he frequently encountered division. However, Ms. Baker cannot remember any controversial issues or major headlines involving Mr. Cohen. She would hire him if given an opportunity. He was dependable and reliable. As a conscientious hard worker, he observed issues from multiple angles and made sustainable recommendations. He possessed compassion, an important characteristic for any Municipal Manager. Mr. Cohen will make a good Manager.

### **Words or phrases used to describe Thaddeus Cohen:**

- Meticulous,
- Dedicated,
- All around good person,
- Compassionate,
- Conscientious, and
- Responsive.

**Strengths:** Responsiveness, detail-orientation, a reasonable person who helped others achieve the overall vision they wanted to accomplish.

**Weaknesses:** Some people might consider Mr. Cohen to sometimes be too detailed. However, this quality was also one of his strengths. Depending on the position he filled, such detail-orientation might be a problem. However, in his roles working with Palm Beach County, Mr. Cohen did well finding missing details that could have caused delays.

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### **Steve Sanderson – President and CEO, United Way of Collier and the Keys, FL 239-261-7112**

Mr. Sanderson has worked with Mr. Cohen since approximately 2018. Mr. Cohen serves on the United Way Board and shares a collegial relationship with Mr. Sanderson. As such, Mr. Sanderson does not have supervisory experience over Mr. Cohen. However, the Board has encouraged and welcomed Mr. Cohen. They are quite happy to have him on the Board.

Mr. Cohen is punctual, prompt, and thoughtful. He speaks up when essential and refrains from speaking unnecessarily. He has kept Mr. Sanderson well informed of his area of responsibility. During the few projects they have worked on together, Mr. Cohen regularly provides updates and calls on feedback. He follows through and is someone Mr. Sanderson trusts to accomplish tasks.

As a thorough customer service oriented individual, Mr. Cohen has continuously interfaced with customers in several roles, such as in his position with Collier County government. Although Mr. Sanderson is somewhat unfamiliar with Mr. Cohen's financial skills, Mr. Cohen has experience



## Reference Notes Thaddeus Cohen

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reviewing part of the United Way's financial documentation and information. Additionally, based on Mr. Cohen's government roles in overseeing several budgets, Mr. Sanderson assumes Mr. Cohen does well with finances.

Though Mr. Cohen is a change agent who capably maintains the organization at a high performance level, he is primarily innovative. Rather than sticking with traditional models, he looks for new and better methods. He seeks for improvement and increased efficiency. For example, he helped advocate for some of the social changes the United Way wanted to create in the community. He met with different community leaders to help them better understand the work the United Way did and acted as a liaison between both parties. Indeed, he tried to be a connector across these different groups.

Mr. Sanderson has only seen Mr. Cohen with the public and rallying others, as opposed to seeing Mr. Cohen in his office. However, Mr. Cohen is unafraid to ask questions. He shares comments to help conversations and is proactive in bringing up topics to improve work tasks. Additionally, Mr. Cohen has good problem solving skills. He wants to solve actual problems instead of simply addressing a symptom. Rather than fixing issues on the surface to receive praise, he seeks substantive solutions that actually work for the long-term. Although his work with the United Way is quite stressful at time, Mr. Cohen is calm and rational. He can be passionate, but he does not exhibit negative reactions to stress. He is unafraid to accomplish goals.

Mr. Sanderson is unaware of anything in Mr. Cohen's personal or professional background that might concern a future employer. Mr. Sanderson is unaware of any United Way positions fitting Mr. Cohen's qualifications, considering how Mr. Cohen's background is somewhat different from what the nonprofit organization specifically does. In fact, Mr. Cohen is overqualified for what the organization does. However, Mr. Sanderson would hire Mr. Cohen if the United Way had an appropriate role open. Most people on the Board would generally mirror Mr. Sanderson's comments regarding Mr. Cohen. United Way Board members have been pleased with his performance. He has been quite transparent, which they appreciate and value.

Mr. Cohen is a great guy for the right fit. His direct team members respect and support him. Mr. Sanderson has honestly had good experiences with Mr. Cohen. Indeed, Mr. Cohen is unafraid to tackle tough issues some people might find to be difficult to handle. He manages well and will make a good Municipal Manager.

### **Words or phrases used to describe Thaddeus Cohen:**

- Thoughtful,
- Thorough,
- A thinker,
- Punctual,
- Prompt, and
- Innovative.

**Reference Notes  
Thaddeus Cohen**

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**Strengths:** Thoroughness, thinking abilities, thoughtfulness.

**Weaknesses:** None identified.

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**Anita Jenkins – Planning and Zoning Director, Collier County, FL 239-825-9322  
239-478-3701**

Ms. Jenkins worked with Mr. Cohen approximately between 2017 and 2021. As Collier County Planning and Zoning Director, she reported directly to Mr. Cohen, who was the Growth Management Department Head at the time. He later left when a new County Manager reorganized all of the departments.

Mr. Cohen was inspiring because of his mentorship. Prior to Mr. Cohen's employment with the County, engineers generally led the Department. Unfortunately, these engineers generally had little vision and gave the planning team little attention. However, Ms. Jenkins' entire team was thrilled to have Mr. Cohen because he connected with the planning team. For example, he was a great mentor in the public sector, an area in which Ms. Jenkins was less experienced. He also understood the team's perspective and helped them formulate a vision of the next 10 years for the County, which the team greatly appreciated. He was politically savvy. Additionally, Mr. Cohen was a great listener and manager. Rather than micromanaging, he led and supported his team. He pulled people aside to discuss how they might improve themselves, such as with project management skills. Ms. Jenkins appreciated the attention he gave the planning team.

Every time Ms. Jenkins approached Mr. Cohen with a problem, he addressed the issue promptly. He was available and open to the planning team. He also worked directly with planning managers. Indeed, Mr. Cohen constantly tried to improve personal connections with every person in his department, which was difficult with almost 1,200 staff. However, Mr. Cohen recognized the challenges between constantly solving problems and finding time to walk around to talk with Growth Management employees.

Mr. Cohen kept Ms. Jenkins well informed of his area of government through biweekly department meetings. During monthly meetings with individual directors, he determined each director's needs, matters he needed to be aware of, and any political issues he needed to know. He was quite informative and transparent. Ms. Jenkins found his willingness to actually share information to be refreshing because previous Growth Management Department heads were generally less willing. When sharing information, Mr. Cohen also stated how he was sharing that same information with his other directors. He sought to change some processes to have greater detail and increased accessibility in providing everyone with the same information.

Mr. Cohen was quite active in the community, such as being on the Board of the United Way and in many other engagements. Though the COVID-19 pandemic made meetings more difficult, he was instrumental in supporting the planning team during hybrid meetings. During the pandemic, if Mr. Cohen or the team were unable to go somewhere, they held remote meetings with county

## Reference Notes Thaddeus Cohen

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commissioners, board examiners, and other groups. For example, the team was part of a large study, which shut down at the start of the pandemic. The study's consultant required hybrid meetings, and Mr. Cohen ensured the County had access. He supported the Department through this transition to hybrid meetings and made sure the County had access to the technology it had purchased. In fact, public participation improved because people had fewer obstacles to overcome in attending meetings, such as having to take off work or drive to the meeting. This remote access transition was a tremendous benefit for the County and allowed a greater extension of public connection.

Generally, Mr. Cohen made great decisions because he worked with his team and analyzed data before making decisions. He refrained from micromanaging. When making decisions involving Ms. Jenkins, he made sure to call her before making a final decision. Furthermore, Mr. Cohen was a collaborative leader who preferred a multidisciplinary team approach. If Ms. Jenkins discussed a problem, they listened as a team. Each individual had an opportunity to share input, and they all debated the solution before coming to consensus.

Mr. Cohen had good financial skills and was quite transparent. He wanted his directors to understand their budget and move forward. He mentored Ms. Jenkins in public sector finances and budgets to ensure she satisfactorily understood the process.

Mr. Cohen did well when hiring directors. He was customer service oriented. He also was an innovative change agent. As a visionary, he foresaw where the County was moving and what the Department might do to sustain the County, such as with affordable housing. Additionally, Mr. Cohen possessed great skills and experience in redevelopment. He recognized which areas needed attention in redevelopment and how the planning team might promote policy for green-field areas, instead of solely looking into residential development. He also looked at economic development. As opposed to simply maintaining the status quo, Mr. Cohen continuously challenged his team to think about how an issue might affect the County and help its growth. He identified what barriers the Department faced and how to change code to break those barriers.

When faced with stress, Mr. Cohen was calm and collected. If the planning team did not present at a meeting, Ms. Jenkins asked her staff to watch the hearing to observe how Mr. Cohen responded at board meetings. When a topic became contentious, he jumped in to provide further explanation to board members. Moreover, Mr. Cohen recognized when others needed a little extra coaching, such as with nervous younger planners. He took the time to help coach these individuals on the side. Mr. Cohen was a calming force during stressful situations.

Due the nature of his position, Mr. Cohen was involved with controversial matters regarding land-use planning. With Florida being a private property state, property rights were an especially argumentative topic. However, Mr. Cohen consistently followed the code and comprehensive plan. He followed the Board of County Commissioners as far as the state laws, policies, and code said. He recognized the planning staff as the official interpreters of that code, and he presented their recommendations. He encouraged staff to provide professional recommendations and move

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Thaddeus Cohen**

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on after commissioners made their final decisions. Throughout several exceptionally controversial issues, Mr. Cohen capably led commissioners and staff.

Ms. Jenkins and Mr. Cohen frequently used sports analogies to describe their relationship, such as him being her blocker to move obstacles out of the way so they might move projects to the end zone. Mr. Cohen was responsive and supportive. No responsibility was beneath him. He was inspiring and funny.

Ms. Jenkins is unaware of anything in Mr. Cohen’s background or conduct that might concern a future employer. If possible, she would hire him. In fact, she would greatly consider working for him again if he were to call her. He is a great leader and a great team builder. He will absolutely make a good Manager.

**Words or phrases used to describe Thaddeus Cohen:**

- Mentor,
- Informative,
- Politically savvy,
- Transparency,
- Visionary, and
- Responsive.

**Strengths:** Mentorship abilities, sharing information, promptly addressing problems, availability.

**Weaknesses:** None identified.

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**Chris Johnson – Growth Management Department Financial Operations and Support  
Manager, City of Key West, FL 239-252-5812 239-572-1393**

Mr. Johnson began working with Mr. Cohen in 2018 when Mr. Johnson became the Collier County Manager of Financial Operations and Support for the Growth Management Department. Mr. Cohen later left the County in 2021 due to a management change. Because Mr. Cohen’s position as Growth Management Department Head was close to the County Manager, the reorganization affected his position.

Mr. Cohen empowered his staff. Instead of micromanaging, he allowed employees to come up with ideas and plans to solve solutions. He fostered creativity in his team. Mr. Cohen was a good speaker and was well tempered. He capably and articulately conveyed messages. Because he empowered his staff and relayed their mission, he allowed his staff to achieve a common goal. He adeptly used others’ strengths to address the needs of the organization.

## Reference Notes Thaddeus Cohen

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Mr. Johnson had friendly, professional, and cordial interactions with Mr. Cohen. Communication between the two men was good over the phone and through emails. Mr. Cohen also physically stopped by the office to brainstorm and to let people know about a project's direction. When staff members had an issue, Mr. Cohen listened and helped his employees formulate a plan. Even though a team might not agree with the plan completely, these efforts were collaborative. Mr. Cohen strongly supported the importance of making team decisions. As a department head, he made the final decisions and did well on issues with which Mr. Johnson was involved.

Typically, Mr. Johnson worked with Mr. Cohen on internal issues and had little experience seeing Mr. Cohen out with the public. However, based on how well Mr. Cohen treated his staff, he most likely had good interactions with the public. He did well with groups or one-on-one.

Most of Mr. Cohen's work with Mr. Johnson was customer-oriented, especially regarding development services dealing with the public. Mr. Cohen was customer service oriented, as seen with his internal customers. For example, he had worked with Mr. Johnson on implementing a software program. Mr. Cohen even went out of his way to work with other departments to demonstrate how they might also utilize the program. Although he did not need to do so, he wanted others to see how this program might benefit different departments.

Depending on the situation, Mr. Cohen was a change agent who capably maintained the organization at a high performance level. If the organization functioned well, he upheld the status quo. However, if he discovered an opportunity to increase efficiency, he at least explored that option. Mr. Cohen was a leader who rallied his employees around the organization's vision.

As a problem solver, Mr. Cohen used his people appropriately. He recognized how he was not an expert in everything and instead trusted his team, who collectively were experts. During various projects of building roads, doing water samples at the beach, and handling airports, he relied on his staff's specialties to address issues and solve problems. For example, he saw an opportunity to improve the Department's financial aspects when he first arrived at the County. The Department managed its budgets solely with paper, and Mr. Cohen looked at which software to integrate with the Department's current System Applications and Products software program. He wanted to find a method of allowing others to see dashboard updates in real time. In another area, Mr. Cohen wanted to increase efficiency with asset management. Prior to Mr. Cohen's arrival, the asset management team had daily maintenance work assignments. However, Mr. Cohen helped the team integrate a schedule to help staff provide more proactive maintenance on the system, rather than delivering mostly reactive maintenance.

Mr. Johnson is unaware of anything in Mr. Cohen's personal or professional background that might concern a future employer. Mr. Johnson would hire Mr. Cohen if given an opportunity. Mr. Cohen was a pleasure to work with because he trusted his staff and valued their opinions. Indeed, he clearly displayed how much he valued their opinions and trusted their work because he refrained from micromanagement. These attributes are great for someone in his leadership position. Mr. Cohen will make a good Municipal Manager.

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Thaddeus Cohen

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**Words or phrases used to describe Thaddeus Cohen:**

- Friendly,
- Strong leader,
- Motivated,
- Knowledgeable,
- Willing to learn something new,
- Leadership skills,
- Punctual, and
- Ability to trust and work with a team.

**Strengths:** Attention to detail, punctuality, prioritization, a team player, management skills, leadership skills.

**Weaknesses:** Initially upon coming to Collier County, Mr. Cohen was new to the financial system. The County had a specific accounting structure, which forced new county employees to initially face a steep learning curve. However, Mr. Cohen overcame this weakness. Being astute, he learned quickly and was sharp as he went over which funds were restricted.

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**Michael Dalby – President, Greater Naples Chamber of Commerce, FL 239-403-2901  
614-371-6265**

Mr. Dalby worked with Mr. Cohen between 2017 and 2021 when Mr. Cohen was the Collier County Growth Management Department Head. As president of the Greater Naples Chamber of Commerce, Mr. Dalby lobbied for businesses and the community. He typically interacted with Mr. Cohen on policy issues and was otherwise unfamiliar with Mr. Cohen’s daily operations. Additionally, Mr. Cohen participated in the Chamber’s leadership program, which involved 10 full-day sessions where individuals learned more about the community and how to help the community be more engaged in decision-making. Mr. Cohen left his position after county leadership changes.

Mr. Dalby and Mr. Cohen shared professional interactions. Mr. Cohen thought innovatively. He diplomatically grappled with difficult challenges regarding planning, development, and growth as he creatively found solutions. Most people held negative opinions about community growth because such growth usually involved crowding people within an area or using practices that harmed the environment. However, Mr. Cohen demonstrated how these results were not inherently true. He showed how growth might positively impact a community and address problems if dealt with properly.

When working together, Mr. Cohen kept Mr. Dalby well informed of his area of responsibility via phone calls, personal meetings, and email. Because of the proximity of the Chamber and Mr.

## Reference Notes Thaddeus Cohen

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Cohen's experience with the leadership program, Mr. Cohen comfortably communicated directly with the Chamber. He provided updates, sought feedback, and asked if the Chamber supported certain initiatives.

Mr. Cohen appeared to have good experience working with the public, both with individuals and in groups. Mr. Dalby infrequently saw Mr. Cohen out in the community amongst its many meetings and gatherings. However, Mr. Cohen was certainly present whenever the community needed him for growth management. For example, he dealt with an issue on a storm water maintenance fee. Mr. Cohen both developed an approach to the issue and dealt with the public during this especially contentious issue. He constantly worked with the Chamber and the public to help everyone understand the concepts behind the issue. He presented the facts. Eventually, his plan was overwhelmingly voted down, and the advisory board Mr. Dalby sat on was asked to look at the issue. However, the board came up with essentially the same conclusion as Mr. Cohen and his team. Though decision makers chose to not support Mr. Cohen's plan, Mr. Cohen accepted their decision and moved forward.

Mr. Cohen was customer service oriented. He tried to be innovative, although such innovation was difficult in his position where he deferred to the larger decision-making body. He presented ideas to that body, but policy makers were sometimes unreceptive. Mr. Cohen was calm under stress. He had a sense of humor under pressure, usually seeing the irony of a situation and being able to laugh at the challenges he faced.

Mr. Dalby is unaware of anything in Mr. Cohen's background or conduct that might concern a future employer. Mr. Dalby would hire Mr. Cohen if possible because Mr. Cohen is a bright, insightful person whose knowledge and experience can improve Mr. Dalby's organization. Mr. Cohen has a strong presence due to his height and great voice. Because he is well spoken and communicates clearly, he conveys how he is a leader in his organization. He seeks the best interests of the community. He will make a good Municipal Manager.

### **Words or phrases used to describe Thaddeus Cohen:**

- Smart,
- Calm,
- Clear communicator,
- Strong presence, and
- Serves the best interests of the community.

**Strengths:** Good communication skills, calm in the face of challenges, knowledgeable in his field.

**Weaknesses:** None identified.

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**Reference Notes  
Thaddeus Cohen**

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**Eddie Todd – Architect, Pensacola, FL 850-434-0325**

Mr. Todd first met Mr. Cohen approximately in 2006 when Mr. Cohen was serving as Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) Director for the City of Pensacola. Although they worked professionally together until 2011, they have since kept in touch.

Mr. Cohen is a good person who is a true pleasure to work with. He is professional and quite courteous with everyone. Possessing good ideas, he does well with presentations and organization.

Overall, Mr. Cohen had a fantastic work performance. With his creativity, he analyzed problems and produces satisfactory solutions. During city projects, he took multiple facets into consideration, such as dealing with the needs of each particular project, financial aspects, and community impacts.

When working together, Mr. Cohen kept Mr. Todd well informed. For example, Mr. Cohen tested and balanced numerous projects he developed for the City as CRA Director. He invited Mr. Todd and other professionals to come by and do preliminary work. If these professionals recommended adjustments, Mr. Cohen took their suggestions with great consideration. Mr. Todd and Mr. Cohen also worked closely on a water development for the City. During this project, Mr. Todd was chairman of the board for that development team. Mr. Cohen's CRA team was responsible for the 30-acre property and financial aspects of the project.

Generally, Mr. Cohen made excellent decisions because he analyzed several perspectives of whatever situation or problem occurring. He worked well alongside his staff, who enjoyed working and being on his team. Mr. Todd worked with Mr. Cohen's staff, who praised Mr. Cohen without complaints. Mr. Cohen's staff were sharp and astute.

Mr. Cohen was most definitely customer service oriented. He recognized the needs of the community, the neighborhood, and any agencies with which he was involved. He was particularly conscientious of these groups' needs.

As a leader, Mr. Cohen rallied whatever resources he needed, whether people, supplies, or equipment. He handled stressful situations quite well. Whereas some employees let stressful coworker interactions or home circumstances negatively impact their professional life, Mr. Cohen effectively handled each situation he encountered. For example, he dealt with the public during the water development project. This project involved much controversy due to split public support. However, Mr. Cohen dealt well with the public on this 30-acre development as he handled each situation properly and in order. Even several years after the project's completion, the development is still a success, and people love the development.

Mr. Todd is unaware of anything in Mr. Cohen's background or conduct that might concern a future employer. Mr. Cohen left the City due to incoming administration board leadership. Typically when a new governor or mayor came into office, many staff changes occur as new



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leadership bring in personnel. Mr. Cohen's departure was a loss for the City because the prior administration had performed well. He set many projects into motion before leaving, which the incoming administration picked up and followed through. Although the projects were successful, Mr. Cohen must be credited with putting everything into place.

If possible, Mr. Todd would hire Mr. Cohen. They accomplished quite a bit together during the water development project. The project was quite successful, pleased the public overall, and won the City many awards. Mr. Cohen truly is a good professional. He will make a good Manager.

### **Words or phrases used to describe Thaddeus Cohen:**

- Seasoned professional,
- Competent,
- Personable,
- Excellent team player,
- Excellent leader, and
- Good person.

**Strengths:** Creativity.

**Weaknesses:** None identified.

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### **Enid Torregrosa - Historic Preservation, Senior Planner, City of Key West, FL 305-809-3973**

Ms. Torregrosa worked with Mr. Cohen from 2015 to 2017. He did a fantastic job as Planning Director. In fact, in the several years Ms. Torregrosa has worked for the City of Key West, she has reported to five different Planning Directors. Mr. Cohen has been by far the best.

While Mr. Cohen was strict with his staff, he was also flexible. He willingly listened to them and their ideas. He allowed those who were capable of performing their tasks with little supervision to do so, but he required progress reports frequently. When he first came to the City, he came off as shy and quiet. It took a little time for people to get to know him. Once they did, they found that he was outgoing and a great person to talk to. He hired at least two individuals for the department, both of which have done a terrific job for the organization.

Working in historic preservation, Ms. Torregrosa has had a difficult time connecting with other planners and even directors. However, Mr. Cohen's background in architecture meant that he understood the topic and was able to communicate with her intelligently about specific projects. His leadership was refreshing because she knew that her boss understood what she was doing and could offer positive insight.

## Reference Notes Thaddeus Cohen

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Mr. Cohen was very much involved in what happened in his department. He was a manager but more so a leader. He did not just give direction and then hide in his office to complete his own tasks. Rather, he walked around and was involved.

Through Mr. Cohen's past position with the State Department of Community Affairs, he accumulated a great deal of experience working with other agencies. The need to work with outside agencies did not arise during his time with Key West. He did work well with land developers and even provided workshops for them to get to know their goals and explain the City's goals.

Key West is an extremely laid back community. Employees come to work in sandals and business casual. On Mr. Cohen's first day he showed up in a full suit and continued to dress more professionally than the majority of the staff. He had a difficult time assimilating to the culture. Additionally, he struggled with the culture of friends asking friends for favors. If a developer wanted something to happen, he/she went to their friend on the planning commission or council to help push it forward. These actions resulted in some illegal work being done. Although Mr. Cohen was unable to completely stop the favors game, he did put an end to everything that was not in accordance with the policies and procedures of the organization.

Mr. Cohen has the ability and skill level to oversee a large and complex department. He knows every function that is associated with growth management and planning. He will make a phenomenal Municipal Manager, and Ms. Torregrosa recommends him for a position like that. He is well qualified, and Ms. Torregrosa's experience with him was just amazing. He might start shy, but once he starts he does a great job.

### **Words or phrases used to describe Thaddeus Cohen:**

- Initially shy,
- High integrity,
- Accessible,
- Become outgoing,
- Laid back, and
- Professional.

**Strengths:** Vision, promoted professionalism, listens to staff and available to staff.

**Weaknesses:** None identified.

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### **Maren DeWeese – Former Councilmember, City of Pensacola, FL 850-316-7671**

Ms. DeWeese worked with Mr. Cohen from 2009 to 2011. Mr. Cohen is a brilliant man. He visualized how all aspects of the City worked together and how they affected each other. Mr.

## Reference Notes Thaddeus Cohen

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Cohen first became acquainted with the City of Pensacola when he was the State Secretary of Community Affairs and collaborated on hurricane disaster relief efforts. When the City hired him, he was already familiar with many of the issues and jumped right in. He is a fantastic public speaker. Capturing an audience's attention came easy to him.

Pensacola is a historic city, so zoning and land use issues are complex and difficult to grasp. Because Mr. Cohen understood this mindset, he set up an open house every Wednesday night for developers or homeowners who wanted to start a project. They sat down with all of the appropriate department heads and laid out their plans to receive input on what they needed in order to proceed. They left with the knowledge of whether their idea was plausible and what changes they needed make.

Mr. Cohen was instrumental in turning the downtown around. He developed a plan, convinced the Council to approve it, and moved forward. The City now has outdoor family movies on the weekend, a restaurant district, and great retail shops. The downtown has been transformed and enlivened due to his efforts. Additionally, Mr. Cohen was helpful in completing the largest Community Redevelopment Agency project in the City's history. He worked closely with the City Manager and Council to construct the Maritime Park, which consisted of a minor league baseball stadium, private mixed-use development, and an amphitheater. The total price for this project was over \$50 million. Mr. Cohen's background in architecture was especially useful, and he thought of superior ways to design the complex that had not been identified before. His leadership in this project was an accomplishment for Pensacola and for all the residents in the region.

Mr. Cohen shared his vision for the future and rallied employees to achieve that vision. He explains his vision in a way that it became real to those listening. Because of his architectural background, one might almost have photographic conversations with him. Pensacola was transformed through his wisdom and leadership.

While he was in Pensacola, the City went to an emergency finance mode because the Finance Department had miscalculated parts of the budget by millions of dollars. Mr. Cohen was irreplaceable as he helped put in place a 30-month budget to alleviate these damaging effects. His knowledge in finance was surprisingly good. He knew all the functions of the process, and along with the City Manager, guided the Council through the process.

The only reason Mr. Cohen is no longer with the city is because of restructuring. If she could, Ms. DeWeese would hire him back. Mr. Cohen will make an incredibly good Municipal Manager and will be perfect for the job.

## Reference Notes Thaddeus Cohen

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### **Words or phrases used to describe Thaddeus Cohen:**

- Firm,
- Listens to ideas,
- Community oriented,
- Confident, and
- Can be intimidating.

**Strengths:** Multifaceted, problem solver, consensus builder and sees the big picture.

**Weaknesses:** None identified.

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### **Sherry Morris – Planning Services Administrator, City of Pensacola, FL 850-436-5655 850-435-1670**

Ms. Morris worked with Mr. Cohen from 2008 to 2011. He did an excellent job in the City of Pensacola as he brought bold initiatives and spearheaded the downtown revitalization.

Mr. Cohen believed in following the rules. He was open about everything he does, so he was unable to be dragged into any controversy. He was team oriented and did not pay strict attention to the hierarchy of the departments. For example, if he knew that Ms. Morris had a problem that someone in the Parks Department might address, no matter what their title was, he invited them to be a part of the discussion. Previous to Mr. Cohen's leadership, the departments were closed off from one another. However, he opened the departments up to one another as he encouraged people to talk and become involved with each other's projects.

Public speaking was a definite strength of Mr. Cohen's. He capably took an audience with differing opinions, put together a good argument for his side, and in the end found a compromise that fits everyone's needs. He kept Ms. Morris and others well informed because he was in constant contact with them without micromanagement. One of the most amazing things Mr. Cohen did for Pensacola was help them realize that even though they are not a big city, they still were capable of doing things that big cities did. For instance, he created the City's signature New Year's Eve Pelican Drop event, which has continued to grow in popularity every year.

When Mr. Cohen started, the City was in the midst of a land development code amendment process that had become very heated. Mr. Cohen was instrumental in interjecting rational conversation and mediating between the City and developers. Without his help, the debate might possibly still be raging today. Furthermore, he helped the City overcome its fear of changing traffic patterns. The downtown was made up of one-way streets that were confusing for tourists and difficult for pedestrians to navigate. Merchants were afraid for how deliveries might be made, among other concerns. Mr. Cohen explained all the benefits for changes and convinced the Council to take a chance. The streets are now two-way with improved pedestrian crossings,

## Reference Notes Thaddeus Cohen

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and businesses have seen a difference in their visibility to passersby. He knew this project would improve the City, and he did an incredible job of bringing people together to making this project work.

Mr. Cohen is on par with any top-level administrator. He is skilled in letting elected officials see his point of view and expressing his opinion. Even if they end up disagreeing with him, they respect him for his courage to stand up for what he thinks is the best strategy. Mr. Cohen will make a good Municipal Manager.

### **Words or phrases used to describe Thaddeus Cohen:**

- Energetic,
- Passionate,
- Open,
- Friendly,
- Direct,
- Honest,
- Calm, and
- Knowledge of wide range of subjects.

**Strengths:** Sees the big picture, thinks outside the box for fresh new ideas, and takes what people think they cannot do and makes it happen.

**Weaknesses:** Moves quickly and does not always size up the political barriers.

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Completed by: Danielle Dayton and Lynelle Klein  
Colin Baenziger & Associates

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**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Thaddeus Cohen**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Marco Eagle  
March 22, 2021

**Collier County files \$1.2M lawsuit over delayed completion of Marco Island airport terminal**

Author: Omar Rodríguez Ortiz

Collier County has sued a contractor over the delayed completion of the Marco Island Executive Airport terminal building that opened earlier this month. The lawsuit filed March 17 in Collier Circuit Court against West Construction and its insurance company Philadelphia Indemnity demands \$1.2 million plus other costs and fees. "Despite being responsible for planning, organization, supervision, management, control and coordination of work performed on the project, West continually failed to satisfy these responsibilities in breach of the agreement," the lawsuit states.

The lawsuit alleges other contract violations like failing to protect internet and sanitary utilities during construction, failing to maintain permits necessary for the work, and "attempting to manipulate the schedule and the project's critical path to obtain additional time to achieve substantial completion and, in turn, limit exposure to liquidated damages." The lawsuit alleges that West Construction and Philadelphia Indemnity have failed to pay liquidated damages allegedly owed to the county. "Collier County does not comment on pending litigation," wrote county community liaison Connie Deane in an email Monday. West Construction and Philadelphia Indemnity did not immediately respond to requests for comment Monday about the lawsuit.

**Collier, contractor keep tight lid**

The Florida-based contractor West Construction received a notice to proceed with the construction of the terminal on April 30, 2018, and was required to achieve substantial completion in 320 calendar days, according to the lawsuit. Substantial completion is the date when construction is sufficiently complete so the county can utilize the building for its intended use. The lawsuit states West Construction achieved substantial completion on Jan. 22 of this year.

**Thaddeus Cohen**, who oversees the airport as growth management department head with Collier County, said prior to the lawsuit being filed that the county had difficulties in finishing the project on time, but he declined to go into detail about the reasons for the delay. "Clearly this has taken longer than what the contract documents have for completion," **Cohen** said March 2. The contract with West Construction states the county will suffer a financial loss if the contractor fails to complete the project on time, and that the county is entitled to assess \$3,645 in liquidated damages for each calendar day until substantial completion is achieved.

**Cohen** also declined to go into detail about the contractor's performance and said his focus was to finish the project. "I'm not in a position to discuss either our position as to the contractor's performance. That will be adjudicated on a later date," **Cohen** said. **Cohen** said the county

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches*****Thaddeus Cohen****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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provided communications to West Construction "to have the contractor understand the importance of being able to move this project forward."

Matthew West, vice president of West Construction, declined an interview request last week. "We are currently in discussions with the county and at this time have no other comment," West wrote in an email March 19. **Cohen** said the county will do a self-assessment, which will include the evaluation of the performance of county employees, to prevent long delays in other county projects. He said he is hopeful that the company in charge of improving the airport's apron, Quality Enterprises USA, will finish in April before a ribbon-cutting ceremony. "We are focusing on trying to meet a completion date so that we can have a ribbon cutting in mid April. The issues as to how we got to where we are, it will be something that we will point to in the future," **Cohen** said.

**Marco Island airport expands**

The new \$9.5 million terminal opened its doors to the public on March 8 after almost two years of delays. The two-story, 16,000-square-foot terminal was built to make the airport compliant with Federal Aviation Administration safety regulations, said Andrew Bennett, interim executive airport manager with Collier County. "The primary objective of the project is pertaining to safety to allow more room for aircraft to maneuver in and out, while also addressing capacity needs to accommodate a greater number of aircraft during the peak season months," Bennett said.

A second phase costing an additional \$3.7 million is underway to improve the airport's apron where aircraft are parked. The old 4,500-square-foot terminal built in the 1970s was demolished earlier this month to make room for the new apron space. Bennett said the terminal includes features such as pilot and passenger lounges, flight planning stations, rental car concessions, airport administrative offices and office space for flight schools and other companies. The first phase also included construction of new parking spaces, landscaping, lighting and stormwater retention features.

The lobby of the new terminal at the Marco Island Executive Airport, photographed on Monday, March 1, 2021. County Commissioner Rick LoCastro, who represents Marco and surrounding communities, said the upgrades increase the airport's capability and safety. "I'm not happy with the late delivery of the final product, but I'm glad once we pulled the team together and provided tighter oversight we were able to ensure the job was finished," LoCastro said last Friday.

**Tenants settle in at new terminal**

Alan Davis, president of Career Flight Training and Aircraft Rental, said his flight school students now have a bigger and quieter space to study. "It was always so noisy in the old office because the airplanes would park right outside our office. You had to put ear protection on and off sometimes," Davis said. Davis also said the improvements will make the airport safer. "It makes it a safer environment because the building is further away from the runway," Davis said.

Jim Fogarty, owner of the flight school Fogarty Flying, said the construction of the terminal took longer than expected but that he likes the final product. He said he now has double the space



**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

***Thaddeus Cohen***

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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office he had in the old terminal. "It took a long time but as you can see it is a beautiful terminal," Fogarty said. Fogarty said the expansion will increase his school's business and improve aircraft traffic flow at the airport. Davis said he has never had so many flight students outside summer, when high school students are out of school. He attributes the business to the airport expansion and COVID-19. He said many adults are taking flight classes to buy and fly their own planes instead of flying in commercial flights. "It seems like things are picking up," Davis said.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Thaddeus Cohen**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Naples Daily News  
February 21, 2021

**Development - Collier planning board delays vote on concept for new town**  
Author: Laura Layden

The Collier County Planning Commission has put off hearing about a new town proposed east of Golden Gate Estates. The commission voted Thursday to kick an information-only presentation planned by the county's head of growth management down the road after the concept stirred up controversy. The unanimous vote came after about an hour of debate by planning commissioners on how to handle the presentation, in part due to "last-minute" information they received from the League of Women Voters of Collier County and the Conservancy of Southwest Florida, which both vehemently oppose the town proposal by Collier Enterprises. The town would link the developer's three new rural villages.

The opponents have raised concerns about everything from how the town would impact traffic to how much money it would cost taxpayers. Commission chairman Edwin Fryer led off the discussions, saying he wanted the advisory board to have a formal hearing and vote on the town agreement, not just to merely hear a presentation on what county planners and the developer ironed out behind closed doors. Collier county commissioners are scheduled to vote on what's been dubbed a framework agreement for the town in April.

Fryer argued the planning commission and the public should weigh in on the "deal points" in the agreement – and that the agreement between the county and the developer is "quintessentially a planning matter" for the advisory board to formally take up. He said he felt as though the planning commission had been circumvented in the negotiation process. "It is our responsibility to hear this," he said. "Today is premature."

Other commissioners had their own ideas about how the issue should be handled. **Thaddeus Cohen**, who oversees the county's growth management department, explained that there isn't a requirement for the planning commission to vote on the town agreement, and that it can go directly to county commissioners without its input, as part of the normal approval process. With the presentation, **Cohen** said he was just trying to keep the commission informed about the negotiations.

The agreement that has been negotiated will benefit all of the county's residents, he said. He also noted that after a formal application and plan for the town is submitted to the county for review, it would go to the planning commission for a public airing and recommendation before a final decision by county commissioners.

Naples land use attorney Rich Yovanovich, who represents Collier Enterprises, objected to the planning commission's discussions about some of the points in and objections to the town agreement, arguing that it was not officially on the table for a public hearing. He urged the

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

***Thaddeus Cohen***

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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commission to move forward with its hearings as planned for two of the three villages that would be melded together with the town.

The county has already green-lighted one of those villages, known as Rivergrass. The commission agreed to follow the order of its agenda – and not to discuss the town agreement any further before separately hearing and voting on the remaining petitions by Collier Enterprises. Yovanovich criticized the Conservancy and League of Women Voters for submitting their point-by-point letters of objection at the last minute, when they knew they were required to share the information with staff seven days in advance of the planning commission's meeting. He said it wasn't given to him, leaving him in the dark and forcing him to make a public records request to get it.

In a statement, Rob Moher, the conservancy's president and CEO, said its comments and concerns about the developer's town concept and two other villages – Longwater and Bellmar – were "timely submitted." "Moreover, the conservancy's analysis shows that Longwater and Bellmar will cost taxpayers millions of dollars and will severely exacerbate traffic congestion in Collier County," he said.

In their letters to planning commissioners, both the league and the conservancy accused Collier Enterprises of using the prospect of a town to gain favor on the two villages. "Don't be swayed," they urged. While planning commissioners intended to take up Longwater at Thursday's meeting, they ended up not hearing it, moving it to their next meeting after Yovanovich said he'd rather they do that than proceed because of the late hour.

The debate about the town proposal – and the subsequent hearing on an unrelated village proposal – took hours. Knowing that the Longwater presentation, discussions and debate would take hours longer, Yovanovich suggested that it be taken up March 4. The developer's other petition, for Bellmar, is also scheduled to be heard on that date – and now possibly the town agreement.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Thaddeus Cohen**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Naples Daily News  
December 7, 2020

**Rivergrass lawsuit filing, internal county memo raise conflict of interest questions**  
Author: Patrick Riley

A lawsuit against Collier County over a controversial 1,000-acre village proposed east of Golden Gate Estates has taken another turn following allegations of conflict of interest involving a county official. The Conservancy of Southwest Florida, which sued the county in March after county commissioners approved plans for Rivergrass Village, on Monday filed a motion to exclude testimony from the county's planning and zoning director in the case because her son receives a college scholarship with ties to landowner Collier Enterprises, which is looking to develop the property, according to the motion. "This is an obvious conflict of interest," lawyers for the Conservancy wrote in the motion.

A June memo from County Attorney Jeff Klatzkow addresses the same questions about the scholarship but found only the appearance of a conflict of interest that Klatzkow advised represents a "very fine line." The environmental group's lawsuit contends that the planned village, which would sit in the county's 185,000-acre Rural Lands Stewardship Area, does not follow the county's growth management plan. The RLSA provides for a voluntary program that allows developers to build towns and villages in areas with lower conservation value in exchange for preserving more environmentally sensitive land.

Collier County commissioners to consider final approval of changes to rural growth plan  
In its motion to exclude testimony from Anita Jenkins, the county's current planning and zoning director, the Conservancy references Klatzkow's memo from June 12 titled "Ethics inquiry." The three-page memo details the following: Jenkins, then a community planning manager, contacted the county attorney's office via email on June 3, seeking guidance "on a potential conflict of interest." "My son receives a substantial college scholarship each semester from the Collier Family Office, Inc., established by Miles Collier," Jenkins wrote. "Mr. Collier is also affiliated with Collier Enterprises."

Jenkins wrote that our "ethics direct us to avoid projects where we have an associated financial interest with the applicant, therefore I am not directly involved in commenting on individual Collier Enterprises projects." She added that she occasionally sees emails on their projects where she's copied "as part of the supervisory chain of command." Jenkins wrote that Collier Enterprises is "a property owner involved in larger planning efforts that affect multiple property owners," such as the RLSA. She wrote that her review of the county's planning ethics policies finds working on projects that affect multiple property owners equally would not constitute a conflict. "Please advise," Jenkins wrote.

According to the memo, Jenkins' adult son is a student at Eckerd College in St. Petersburg with an academic scholarship. "The scholarship does not include the additional costs of room and board, so Ms. Jenkins' son applied to Mr. Collier for an additional scholarship which he was

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

***Thaddeus Cohen***

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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awarded," the memo states. It is not clear from the memo the value of the scholarship, how Jenkins' son qualified or how many are given out each year. Efforts to reach Jenkins were unsuccessful as of late Monday afternoon. A Collier Enterprises spokeswoman said in an emailed statement to the Daily News Monday that there is "no connection whatsoever between the scholarship initiated two years ago by the Collier Family Office and the businesses of Collier Enterprises."

"We understand that Mr. Miles C. Collier has made a number of educational gifts to deserving students over the years," the statement from Collier Enterprises continues. "These are private initiatives of Mr. Collier and are unrelated to Collier Enterprises. We also understand that Ms. Jenkins proactively and transparently sought advice from the county attorney regarding Mr. Collier's contribution to Eckerd College, as her adult son was an ultimate beneficiary. We understand that she received an opinion that there was no conflict of interest and no breach of the ethical code."

The county attorney's memo notes that the inquiry "raises potential issues with respect to both the State Ethics Code and the Collier County Ethics Ordinance." However, as far as the state ethics code is concerned, the executive director of the Florida Commission on Ethics advised that there is no state ethics issue, the memo states. State law regarding unauthorized compensation "specifically applies to an employee of a local government, like Ms. Jenkins, however the restriction does not include her adult child," according to the memo. "In addition, there is no indication that the scholarship was provided to Ms. Jenkins' son in an attempt to influence a vote or other action by Ms. Jenkins," the memo states, noting that Jenkins has never met Collier.

"The Executive Director of the Florida Commission on Ethics advised that given these circumstances, there is no legal conflict, though arguably there might be the appearance of a conflict," Klatzkow and his assistant county attorney wrote. "Ms. Jenkins is aware to not provide any special consideration to Collier Enterprises as a result of her adult son's scholarship." Jenkins should continue to work with others when possible so that the recommendation is a department one rather than the recommendation of one person, the memo states.

The county's own ethics ordinance is more stringent than the state's code. The county attorney's office found that as long as Jenkins continues to work as a community planning manager, "there is no violation" of the county's ethics ordinance, "although one could argue that there may be the appearance of impropriety." But the memo further notes that during conversations between Klatzkow and **Thaddeus Cohen**, who heads the county's growth management department, "we were notified that Ms. Jenkins is being considered for a promotion to Interim Director of Planning." That could change things, the memo notes, because Jenkins would then be considered a public official.

And per the county's ethics ordinance, a public official shall not solicit or accept, directly or indirectly, anything of monetary value from someone who the public official knows is seeking zoning, permitting or inspection approval from the county department or board with which the official is affiliated. Although Jenkins herself is not accepting anything of value from Collier,

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

***Thaddeus Cohen***

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Klatzkow wrote that he "views this as a very fine line," especially considering the "broad prohibitions" intended by the county's ordinance. He urged Jenkins and **Cohen**, even though there is no legal conflict of interest, to review the matter with County Manager Leo Ochs "in an abundance of caution" before Jenkins accepts the position of interim director of planning and zoning.

By June 20, Jenkins was made interim planning and zoning division director and by Nov. 14 she was made the permanent director. Voicemails left for Ochs were not immediately returned Monday. Klatzkow declined to comment Monday beyond what his memo says. "The opinion stands for what it stands for and we'll leave it at that," he said. In addition to asking for Jenkins' testimony in the court case to be excluded, the Conservancy's motion requests a "brief 60-day reopening of fact discovery limited to allowing the Conservancy to conduct any other discovery necessary to understand whether there are additional financial payments made from Miles Collier to County officials (or their families), or other conflicts of interest related to Rivergrass Village."

The motion also requests to allow the county to name a "new corporate designee" to cover the topics previously covered by Jenkins. "The citizens of Collier County deserve to have confidence that County employees are making objective, disinterested judgments about proposed development in this County, free from conflicts of interest and free from appearances of impropriety," Conservancy President and CEO Rob Moher said in an emailed statement, echoing the motion. "Unfortunately, in the case of Rivergrass Village, this is not the case, and thus, the Conservancy had no choice but to file today's motion."

The memo at the heart of the motion has also drawn concern from at least one county commissioner. Commissioner Penny Taylor said in a phone interview late last week that she intends to discuss the matter at Tuesday's commission meeting. "The appearance of a conflict is terrible," she said. "And we can't let this stay." The planning and zoning director touches everything and makes final decisions oftentimes on zoning issues that may not be as clear as they should be, Taylor said. She said she didn't know how a planning and zoning director could recuse herself from major projects. Taylor said Jenkins' promotion should not have happened. "I think that the county manager has to reconsider his decision in the light of our own Collier County ethics ordinance," she said.

Taylor said one can't separate Miles Collier from Collier Enterprises. "You can't," she said. Collier Enterprises, in an amendment to its original statement to respond to Taylor's comment, said that Collier's private initiatives were "made without the company's prior knowledge." "Mr. Collier has not been involved with the day-to-day management of Collier Enterprises for a very long time, having retired as its CEO in 1993 and then from its board of directors in 2011," the revised statement continued. The county's ethics ordinance was written in the wake of the Stadium Naples scandal that rocked the commission two decades ago and is a "strong" ordinance, Taylor said. "But it's there so the public has confidence" in how we run our business, she said.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Thaddeus Cohen**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Naples Daily News  
October 22, 2019

**Commissioners approve growth plan changes for eastern Collier County**

Author: Karl Schneider

Collier County Commissioners approved proposed changes Tuesday to a plan that outlines growth and development in the eastern part of the county. “From here, the benchmark only improves,” said **Thaddeus Cohen**, head of the county’s growth and management department. The amendments were moved forward with a land development plan and a water policy. All three will ultimately be sent to the state for approval before coming back to the commissioners for a final vote.

The Rural Land Stewardship Area Overlay Program, or RLSA, is an incentive-based way to develop lands in eastern Collier County while protecting wildlife corridors and habitat and maintaining natural flow ways for water. The RLSA was created after the state issued a final order in 1999 that found the county was not doing enough to protect the environment. Commissioners adopted the RLSA in 2002 in response to the state’s order and planned a five-year review. When the five years were up, and amendments were suggested, disagreements arose over funding and the RLSA restudy was shelved until now. It’s become a controversial point for some conservation groups in the area. The changes commissioners approved Tuesday didn’t sit well with representatives of the Conservancy of Southwest Florida. The RLSA program offers developers a credit system. Credits for preserved land are then able to be used to develop other land within the RLSA’s boundary. Nicole Johnson, the Conservancy’s director of environmental policy, asked the commissioners not to pass the amendments and called the credit system the real issue. “The credits were rarely talked about,” Johnson said. “It’s such a complex crediting system and the math is critical.”

Part of the problem, groups opposed to the amendments say, is old data used to determine where primary panther habitat was located. Land is rated differently depending on the location of endangered species or water flow ways. The credit system is based on this rating and old data may not fairly represent where wildlife is located. **Cohen** said the approval of the amendments is a step in the right direction. “We’re trying to move forward,” **Cohen** said. “We can only encourage and do those kinds of things if we move forward.” A representative of a consortium of landowners in the RLSA had urged the commissioners to move forward with the amendments. Neale Montgomery said she represented the Eastern Collier Property Owners and said the county cannot take away landowner rights. “Adopt this five-year review and reevaluate that and come back with any changes,” she said. Brad Cornell, a policy advocate with Audubon of Western Everglades, was a member of the five-year review committee. “If we cannot figure out how to protect land and make large private landowners part of the conversation, we will fail to protect species in wide-ranging habitats,” Cornell said. “We will fail to solve water quality and quantity problems.” Commissioner Andy Solis called the RLSA incredibly successful. “(The RLSA) preserved 55,000 acres at zero cost to the tax payer,” he said. “This is a successful program by any stretch of the imagination.”

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

***Thaddeus Cohen***

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Naples Daily News  
November 14, 2018

**Tax fatigue? Collier to continue studying stormwater fee**

Author: Patrick Riley

Despite concerns from one commissioner about tax fatigue, commissioners on Tuesday gave county staff the green light to continue revising a potential stormwater fee and come back with additional alternatives. Commissioners voted 4-1 to allow staff to tinker with a stormwater fee that made waves among residents earlier this year. Commissioner Burt Saunders cast the lone dissenting vote. After residents flooded commissioners with complaints about the proposed fee during a September budget hearing, commissioners decided to put it off for a year.

Tuesday's move preserves the county's ability to meet deadlines for legal advertising should commissioners ultimately decide to want to move forward with a revised fee, said **Thaddeus Cohen**, who heads the county's growth management department. Moving ahead with the advertising does not obligate the commission to proceed with the fee. "We now have that opportunity to go back out and talk to the community about what we think we can be able to do," he said.

Collier County owns and operates an extensive stormwater management system that is designed to control flooding, protect personal property, manage water quality and keep up with regulations. The county had proposed the fee to provide what supporters said would be an equitable and dedicated funding source to maintain the aging stormwater system. Commissioner Bill McDaniel, a longtime opponent of the fee, suggested Tuesday that county staff work with the county's Productivity Committee to come up with alternatives to fund Collier's stormwater needs and come back before the board. "I don't want to foreclose an idea that might be out there that we haven't yet explored," he said.

But some commissioners questioned what, if any, alternatives could be found. "We're asking the Productivity Committee to do something that I'm not so sure is possible," Saunders said. Saunders said he was in favor of ditching the fee altogether, saying it was too complex, and pointing to voters' approval Nov. 6 of a 1 percent sales tax increase he said could free up money for the county by covering other unmet needs. "I think our citizens are starting to get a little fatigued with tax increases," he said. "And this is just another tax increase."



**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

***Thaddeus Cohen***

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Naples Daily News

June 30, 2018

**Commentary: Why not use road impact fees, gas taxes instead of extra sales tax?**

Author: **Thaddeus Cohen**

Question: With a local-option sales tax proposed for the November ballot, the Naples Daily News editorial board asked Collier County staff which road and intersection projects would be pursued and why road impact fees and gas taxes won't cover the cost of these. Below is the answer provided by **Thaddeus Cohen**, department head for Collier County Growth Management.

Answer: The road and intersection projects on the list for the 1-cent sales tax are a mix of operational and capacity improvements. These improvements are those that enhance the flow of traffic along a roadway or at an intersection leading to reduced traffic congestion and a more efficient road network.

These improvements would allow the transportation network to handle more vehicles. Adding lanes to existing roadways and new roadways would help alleviate the demand on existing roadways. The road and intersection projects that would be constructed include:

Vanderbilt Beach Road extension (Collier Boulevard to 16th Street Northeast)  
Pine Ridge and Livingston roads intersection  
Randall Boulevard and Immokalee Road intersection  
Airport-Pulling Road widening (Vanderbilt Beach Road to Immokalee Road)  
Triangle Boulevard

Impact fees may only be used to fund capacity improvements necessitated by growth; for example, added lanes, new roads, etc. Several projects on the list are not eligible to receive funding from impact fees. Backlogged projects, operational improvements or stand-alone bike lanes or sidewalk projects cannot utilize impact fees. In 2007, impact fees collected for roads were approximately \$70 million. Following the recession, these impact fees have averaged just under \$12 million annually, a reduction of approximately 75 percent, resulting in project deferrals and an increased backlog of projects.

Current impact fee collections aren't keeping pace with the need and don't cover the cost of these roadway projects, which have an approximate total shortfall of \$114 million. It would take 9.5 years to cover this shortfall with impact fee collections, assuming no new projects. Gas taxes are a flat per-gallon cost that haven't been indexed for inflation and don't fluctuate with prices. For years, car manufacturers have been mandated to develop more fuel-efficient vehicles. These vehicles produce the same wear and tear on the roadways as less fuel-efficient vehicles, but with the fuel-efficiency generate less revenue from gas taxes.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

***Thaddeus Cohen***

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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In Collier County, more than half of the gas tax is utilized to pay off debt from the major transportation network construction from the 2000s. The remaining revenue doesn't cover the cost of ongoing operations and maintenance, nor the backlog of projects that were deferred during the Great Recession. The revenue generated from the 1-cent sales tax would allow the county to construct the needed infrastructure sooner. It takes approximately seven years to have roadway improvements open to the public. In the current environment, roadway demand exists before the funding can be collected and the needed infrastructure can be built. The sales tax would allow the advancement of projects that are needed now or the immediate future, rather than waiting to accumulate funds or issue debt.

**Cohen** is the department head for Collier County Growth Management. Throughout the summer, the Daily News editorial board is posing questions to government and civic leaders about the sales tax referendums on the ballot in November in Collier and Lee counties.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
***Thaddeus Cohen***  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Naples Daily News  
July 4, 2017

**Collier County hires former Bush appointee to lead growth management**

Author: Greg Stanley

Collier County Manager Leo Ochs has hired **Thaddeus Cohen**, former secretary of the Florida Department of Community Affairs, to fill one of the county's top jobs. **Cohen** will lead the Growth Management Department, which runs much of the daily operations of the county, including construction, road maintenance, engineering, zoning and urban planning. **Cohen** will be paid a base salary of \$145,000 a year to oversee the department's \$119 million budget and almost 500 employees. He will be responsible for implementing the county's growth plans. Many of those plans are being revised for the first time in more than a decade as the population continues to surge, especially in the east.

**Cohen** led the Department of Community Affairs from 2004 to 2007 under Gov. Jeb Bush. The department was tasked with managing growth and development in the state, and reviewed county and city comprehensive plans before it was shut down under Gov. Rick Scott. **Cohen** is an architect and ran his own firm for 20 years before joining the state. After leaving community affairs, **Cohen** worked as the assistant city manager of Pensacola. In 2015, he was hired as the planning director of Key West. He served there until March, when he was asked to resign by the Key West city manager, according to local news reports.

**Cohen** was found through a national headhunting firm, Ochs said. His appointment was approved unanimously in June by county commissioners. "His extensive local and state government experience make him an ideal candidate," Ochs told commissioners. **Cohen** said he is ready to start. "Great things are happening in Collier County," he said. "I'm excited and I look forward to being a part of the process."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
***Thaddeus Cohen***  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Key West Citizen (FL)  
March 8, 2017

**Lopez: Revisit planning director firing**  
Author: Scott Unger

Key West City Commissioner Clayton Lopez made a public plea to city staff to revisit the recent termination of Planning Director **Thaddeus Cohen** at Tuesday’s meeting. After a proposed add-on to the agenda addressing the firing didn’t obtain the required unanimous vote to have the issue heard (commissioners Billy Wardlow and Jimmy Weekley voted against), Lopez took his portion of the commissioners comments to address a situation that he said could’ve been handled better.

Since arriving two years ago, **Cohen** worked with various commissioners on projects including affordable housing and the trust fund associated with it, the bike and pedestrian master plan and the downtown circular bus, Lopez said. Lopez acknowledged issues within the planning department but took issue with the characterization that **Cohen** was “aloof.” “If you know him, he just doesn’t have much to say until you ask him about planning,” Lopez said. “He’s taken the hits and responsibilities that a leader of a department should take.”

“It’s never too late to reconsider, we can get through this. I ask that we please look at reconciliation or reconsideration.” Under Key West city charter, City Manager Jim Scholl is given the responsibility of staff management decisions but the opinions of commission members can be shared with the manager.

The resolution sponsored by Lopez included 22 letters from community members supporting **Cohen**. “The firing of Planning Director **Cohen** must be a mistake,” wrote Beverly Mingo. “No one releases a professional of his character in such a short period of time.” The board also unanimously approved the second reading of an ordinance banning the practice of sexual orientation “conversion therapy” in Key West. Although there are no known practitioners of conversion therapy in Key West, the ordinance was brought forth to establish standard practices of protecting the city’s youth, said sponsor Jimmy Weekley.

The ordinance will apply to licensed professionals covered under the Florida statute and violations will be classified as a civil penalty, according to City Attorney George Wallace. Issues over placement of solar panels at City Hall were also addressed by Scholl, who said the planning and engineering departments recommended leaving them where they are after an evaluation of the issue. “The staff’s evaluation was that (the panel’s placement) met every one of the milestones necessary for approval and location where they are,” Scholl said. “The staff’s recommendation obviously is to leave them where they are and not to move them.” Scholl’s response came after an inquiry from Commissioner Margaret Romero, who has frequently questioned the decision to mount the panels on carport structures as opposed to the roof of the building.

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**Thaddeus Cohen**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Key West Citizen (FL)  
March 2, 2017

**City fires planning director**

Author: Scott Unger

Key West Planning Director **Thaddeus Cohen** has been fired after holding the position for two years. Ineffective day-to-day management of the department and a lack of customer service were cited by City Manager Jim Scholl as reasons for **Cohen's** termination. "There's just been a lack of support for the day-to-day operations," Scholl said. "We've had some very good success on some big picture items ... but I'm just lacking that day-to-day customer service piece."

"We were just not keeping up with all of the more mundane planning staff requirements." The planning department's failure to properly issue public noticing for proposed zoning changes on College Road last week was a factor, Scholl said. "That was an issue, one issue in a series of minor things, but it adds up," he said. "It was just time for a change." **Cohen** will remain on-call until his official end date on March 31. Senior Planner Patrick Wright has been named interim director of the department until a permanent replacement is hired, Scholl said.

City Commissioner Sam Kaufman expressed frustration at last week's planning board meeting over the planning department's handling of this year's Building Permit Allocation System allocations that determined only 22 of the 91 available units will be used for affordable housing. A commission resolution allocating 100 percent of BPAS units was shot down by the Department of Economic Opportunity in November for contradictions with the city's comprehensive plan and inconsistencies with guidelines in the Florida Administrative Code.

The ruling delayed the release of the 2016-17 BPAS units and attempts by **Cohen** and planning to correct the inconsistencies were also denied, leading to the current allocations. "We've been asking for development plans for moving forward with affordable housing and the BPAS units (and) I had a big problem with the allocation for this year," Kaufman said. "Quite frankly when the City Commission directs that 100 percent should be affordable and the end result is 36 percent, I think that's a poor result."

"I just think that the Planning Department could use improvement and I'm very optimistic that city management is moving in the right direction." Before coming to Key West, **Cohen** was secretary of the Florida Department of Community Affairs under former Gov. Jeb Bush and assistant city manager of Pensacola. As Planning Director, **Cohen** received an annual salary of \$122,500, according to city officials. The search for a replacement will begin quickly and while the position will be open to all candidates with proper credentials, those familiar with local issues such as hurricane evacuation would be a benefit, Scholl said. "It helps to have somebody that had some Florida Keys credentials because (it's) an area of state critical concern," he said. "It's helpful; it's certainly not required, but it's helpful."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Thaddeus Cohen**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Key West Citizen  
December 16, 2016

**Housing plan changes cause rift**

Author: Scott Unger

Proposed comprehensive plan changes were met with confusion by members of the Key West Planning Board and allegations of unfair practices by members of the community. The changes were proposed to satisfy the Department of Economic Opportunity's objections to a city ordinance allocating all Building Permit Allocation System units to be used for affordable housing for the 2016-17 allocation cycle, instead of the previously stated 50 percent, according to Planning Director **Thaddeus Cohen**. "We have an objection from the DEO and what we're to do is to clear that objection," **Cohen** told the board. "We are specifically responding to a point that they made ... and that's what this language does."

The DEO complaint centered on restrictive language and a table displaying the BPAS allocation schedule, **Cohen** said. The city doesn't agree that the changes are necessary, but accepted recommendations from the department in order to move the process along ahead of the deadline to release BPAS units on June 30, 2017, **Cohen** said. "Internally we are confident that we could appeal DEO's decision," **Cohen** said. "We do not have the time to do that. We have a need to move forward with affordable housing. That's why we accepted the DEO language."

The legislation moves to the city commission, then will be sent to the DEO and other interested municipalities, which will then have 60 days to approve (the DEO has indicated it would expedite the process to 30 days). It will then go back before the commission where public readings will take place over two meetings, before going back to the DEO for final approval, according to Planning Staff Patrick Wright.

The changes also allow the city to pool units between allocation periods and gives the city the option to allocate units to itself without going through the application process. Board member Greg Lloyd said he was concerned the pooling of units could lead to a major developer taking all the units for a massive project. "I'm concerned about unintended consequences, I'd really like to be careful," Lloyd said. Community members raised concerns over the public notice and lack of relevant data given to support the changes, a possible violation of a memorandum of understanding between the city, Monroe County and the DEO that stipulates unused BPAS units go to other municipalities and language that nullifies current applications for the 2017 BPAS allocation cycle.

The cycle doesn't begin until the DEO approves, **Cohen** said. "In essence there is no year four application cycle right now because we don't have final approval from the DEO." **Cohen** said the MOU is not violated because it only applies to unused units, which the city won't have once the allocation cycle commences. Board members Cristy Spottswood said pooling units and city self-allocation are good things. "Hopefully we can get some more affordable projects on the books soon," Spottswood said.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

***Thaddeus Cohen***

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Board member Michael Browning urged the planning department to clarify the language and reasoning before presenting the changes to the city commission. “I don’t have a problem voting for this because of our alleged timeframe, but I again urge you guys to better articulate (the changes),” he said. The board also approved plans to renovate a Duval Street property into four commercial units and seven residential units. The estimated \$2.7 million renovation of 725 Duval St. will partition the first floor into four separate businesses and construct four market rate and three affordable residential units on the second and third floors, according to plans.

Construction on the 10,892-square-foot building will begin as soon as the project is approved, with an expected timeline of one year, plans say. The board also approved a parking variance for the property, reducing its off street parking lot from 20 spaces to nine.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches*****Thaddeus Cohen****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Key West Citizen (FL)

August 27, 2016

**City looks into micro-units**

Author: Scott Unger

To solve the city's big housing problem, officials may need to think small. Micro-unit apartments of 400 square feet or less are gaining in popularity in cities like San Francisco, Seattle and New York and some Key West officials say the idea could work locally. "I think they're very interesting and if we had a space going forward that'd be great," said Mayor Craig Cates.

The Key West City Commission recently voted to allocate all 91 of the annual Building Permit Allocation System (formerly known as Rate Of Growth Ordinance) units to affordable housing and the Planning Board recently approved easing density limits to 40 units per acre for city-owned property on Stock Island. That land could be a good place for micro-units, according to Cates. "I'd like to use (BPAS) for that and they'd be affordable," he said.

The idea is being discussed during Land Development Regulations revisions, but there are still questions to be answered, according to Planning Director **Thaddeus Cohen**. "I still believe a unit is a unit so I would be disinclined to go to fractionalized units, but it's something we're trying to consider," **Cohen** recently told members of the Planning Board. "I understand the point, which is you can get more of them, but our living style doesn't say that because you have a smaller unit that there is a smaller impact necessarily."

Board members Michael Browning, Sam Holland and James Gilleran agreed the idea is worth exploration. "Every time I turn on (the TV) there's something about this trend for people in small housing now. Instead of McMansions, people are figuring out ways to build in a storage container and all these other things," Holland told **Cohen**. "I would just encourage you to think outside the box. Obviously this has been an ongoing crisis situation."

"I think it really deserves more review because other communities that have this type of issue of extreme high density and lack of affordable housing, these type of micro units are pretty amazing and they would provide some relief," Gilleran said. "I would like to see us move forward on that." The idea would help solve the shortage of efficiency units, but other strategies need to be in place for families, according to CITY Commissioner Clayton Lopez. "I'm a proponent of the micro-units but I don't want to invest everything we have in micro-units and ignore the fact that there are full families that also need houses," Lopez said.

Commissioner Sam Kaufman called micro-units "a great idea" as long as plans are in place for hurricane evacuation. "We're limited to our allocation anyway and as long as the state approves of the development plans... then it's good," Kaufman said.



**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

***Thaddeus Cohen***

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The idea was discussed in the LDR 2015 workshop presented by consultants Calvin, Giordano and Associates. Those plans called for 300-400 square foot units that would account for half of a BPAS unit, although no official zoning has been determined for micro-units. A 49-story, 328-unit tower was recently proposed in Miami by mogul Moishe Mana, according to the Miami Herald. Utah tycoon David Hall wants to take micro-units a step further, with plans to spend \$250 million on a micro community with 20,000 residents in 200-square foot apartments, according to the Wall Street Journal.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

***Thaddeus Cohen***

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Key West Citizen (FL)

July 14, 2016

**Controversy over art at City Hall**

Author: Scott Unger

Several art projects for New City Hall are being included in Art In Public Places funding, despite not being approved, according to members of the AIPP board. Under city ordinance, 1 percent of new projects costing more than \$500,000 and renovations costing more than \$100,000 are required to be set aside “for the commission and installation of works of art to be placed on the site.”

Three pieces of art for the \$18.8 million New City Hall have been called into question by the AIPP board: the tiger sculpture that has called the site its home for more than 30 years; the historic murals that were preserved for the project; and a city-owned piece of art by Antonio Jacobsen. AIPP Chairman Richard Tallmadge said the costs of all three pieces — totaling more than \$100,000 — are being attributed to the AIPP fund despite the board not approving any of the works.

The six-foot-tall, 15-footlong steel tiger was refurbished pro bono by Key West artist Cayman Smith-Martin. Now the city is charging \$16,000 for the refurbishment out of the AIPP fund, according to Tallmadge. “A pro bono refurbishment has turned into a \$16,000 renovation bill,” he said.

Commissioner Margaret Romero said the refurbishment deal was made with the Monroe County School District so they should be in charge of any payments for the work. There is also an ongoing argument over where the statue should be placed. City Hall Architect Bert Bender originally wanted to move it to the corner of Varela and United streets, but earlier this year city officials directed it back to its original perch at the corner of White and United streets after receiving public input. AIPP members want the sculpture at the Varela Street location or the new butterfly garden at the western end of the property.

In a recent meeting with City Planner **Thaddeus Cohen**, Assistant City Manager Greg Veliz, Engineering Director Jim Bouquet and Senior Construction Manager Kreed Howell, Tallmadge said it was made clear that the final location of the sculpture hasn’t been decided. However, in an April 18 information bulletin from Bender, it states, “The tiger will be installed by the City at the NE corner of the site at a future date,” meaning the White Street location. Mayor Craig Cates confirmed the location.

The preservation costs of \$75,000 for two 1936 murals by William H. Hoffmann were included in the April 2013 Executive Summary approving the contract of Bender and Associates Architects. In the AIPP ordinance it states that the 1 percent set aside will exclude architectural fees. Cates said the public should be able to decide how the money is spent. “I can understand

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

***Thaddeus Cohen***

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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that's in the contract already but it's a question for the taxpayers and how they want to spend their money," he said.

In the minutes of an April 28 meeting between city officials, Bender and Associates and Contractor Burke Construction, it was stated, "The question of whether the money spent on restored murals counts against the AIPP money has not been resolved. (City Manager) Jim Scholl will write a memo to City Planner **Thaddeus Cohen** stating the City's position." At Monday's AIPP meeting, **Cohen** indicated that Veliz has a ruling from the legal department that the mural restoration can be applied to part of the one percent.

Veliz wanted to be at the meeting but is currently on vacation, **Cohen** said. "It is his intent ... to come and say what he told (Tallmadge), which is their perspective of their view," **Cohen** said. The AIPP board expressed the most collective disgust over the inclusion of a city-owned painting by Antonio Jacobsen.

The picture was found on Mallory Square and is owned by the city, according to Tallmadge. At the Monday meeting, **Cohen** indicated he was unsure if the painting is owned by the city or was gifted to them. The "phantom picture," currently hanging in a hallway at the Habana Plaza offices is an attempt by city officials to save money on the project by over-appraising it and attributing it to AIPP funds, according to Tallmadge. "They're grasping at straws trying to make some savings on the project," he said. "It's stupefying to me that in an \$18-plus million renovation ... they are using the 1 percent as a form to come in under the budget."

"I think it's our collective view that it's a non-issue, it's a nonstarter, it doesn't even belong in this conversation." AIPP members haven't seen or had a chance to vote on the inclusion of the painting, according to board member Connie Gilbert. "I have not seen it, this board has not seen it, I am offended we are expected to pay for something when we haven't seen it," she said.

The painting shouldn't be included in the one percent and more attention needs to be paid to appointed boards, according to Romero. "Whatever the value of it might or might not be, it is already in the city's possession and should not in any way be counted towards the one percent fee. If we have boards who have been appointed by commissioners ... we should be listening to what they have to say and listening to their ideas."

The AIPP board is drafting three separate resolutions concerning the projects to bring before the Key West City Commission at the August 7 meeting. **Cohen** recommended the board bring each issue individually to the commission. Tallmadge said he is working to bring all art enthusiasts in town to the meeting to express their opinions. Repeated calls to **Cohen**, Scholl and Assistant City Attorney Ron Ramsingh were not returned. Veliz and City Attorney Shawn Smith are currently on vacation.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches*****Thaddeus Cohen****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Key West Citizen (FL)

September 4, 2015

**City planners hash out new zoning laws**

Author: Gwen Filosa

In Key West, locals pride themselves on living on a tropical island that doesn't resemble the typical South Florida tourist town, city planning director **Thaddeus Cohen** said this week. "We don't want to be like 'name that community'," **Cohen** said during a workshop on updating the land development regulations that govern development, outdoor signs, landscapes and other aspects of urban design.

The problem is, **Cohen** said, aerial photographs of Key West neighborhoods show that the island is headed in the direction of mainland mainstream development. "When we look down on us, we're slowly becoming that type of place we don't want to be, because of the pressure to continue to build and build and totally build out our lots," **Cohen** said. "As we write this code, we will wind up with a community we want to have." The workshops Wednesday and Thursday, held at the Florida Eco-Discovery Center on the Truman Waterfront, are being recorded and videos will become available at [keywest.cgasolutions.com](http://keywest.cgasolutions.com), the consultants' website where the videos of two workshops held in July - on affordable housing and parking - are posted.

Under state law, Key West must update its land development regulations (LDRs) to make them consistent with the city's comprehensive plan, which the city updated in 2013. The consultants and planning departments will host a fifth community workshop in December. By March 2016, the planning board will hold public hearings on the proposed updates and by May, the city commission will take the final look at it at two meetings. During the workshops, the city's hired consultants have been frank about naming Key West's shortcomings they say come from inadequate zoning. "In New Town, we see that there are signs everywhere," said Gianni Feoli, of Calvin, Giordano and Associates, at Wednesday's workshop. "So much signage is competing against each other that at the end of the day you don't see it. It becomes visual white noise."

The solution, Feoli said, is to install size requirements for signs in New Town and offer business owners up to 10 years to comply. Other zoning laws can prevent Key West from paving over land needed to soak up rainfall, said consultant Richard Cannone. During Wednesday's workshop, the consultant team showed one aerial photograph of a New Town home at an undisclosed address. From above, almost the entire lot appears paved over. "I apologize if this is your house," Cannone said. "It's almost all completely paved over. I'd be willing to bet \$100 the majority of [rain runoff] from that roof is going onto the neighbors' property."

**Cohen** urged locals to drive around their neighborhoods and participate in the process. "What we put down in this code is going to last for the next 35 years or so," **Cohen** said. "It's very important as to how we treat the spaces on our properties, between our properties and what happens on the public part of the properties."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

***Thaddeus Cohen***

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Key West Citizen (FL)

February 5, 2015

**City names top planner**

Author: Gwen Filosa

A former state official who was a finalist for the city manager's job in 2012 is Key West's new planning director. **Thaddeus Cohen**, an architect who was secretary of the Florida Department of Community Affairs under former Gov. Jeb Bush and later assistant city manager of Pensacola, starts March 30. "He has verbally, formally accepted," city manager Jim Scholl said Tuesday night. "I spoke with him yesterday." **Cohen's** annual salary will be \$122,500, Scholl said.

**Cohen** succeeds Don Craig, who resigned last year but was hired back as a consultant. Craig attended Tuesday's commission meeting. **Cohen**, of Delray Beach, recently has been working as a consultant and director of operations at MBR Construction of Fort Lauderdale. He has also been job-hunting in various city governments since being fired without explanation in Pensacola. "The new administration is moving in a different direction, that is all I was told," **Cohen** told the Pensacola News Journal in May 2011.

"I left on good terms with the city," **Cohen** wrote in his 2014 application for Oakland Park's city manager job. In 2013, **Cohen** had been a finalist for Miramar city manager. The next year, he made the short list for Delray Beach's city manager.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Thaddeus Cohen**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Pensacola News Journal - Pensacola, Fla.  
May 19, 2011

**Mayor terminates city official's job**

Author: Jamie Page

Pensacola Mayor Ashton Hayward on Monday fired **Thaddeus Cohen**, a top city department head, as part of what the mayor says is a streamlining of city government. **Cohen's** last day is June 3. "The new administration is moving in a different direction; that is all I was told," **Cohen** said. "I am an at-will contract employee, so it's not unusual that this happens when an administration is going in a different direction." **Cohen** was hired in January 2008 to manage both the downtown's Community Redevelopment Agency and its Community Development Department.

Mayor's Office Spokesman Travis Peterson sent the PNJ this response about **Cohen's** termination: "As the mayor has indicated in past public statements, he is initiating a reorganization and streamlining of city government. As part of this process, there will be personnel and departmental shifts, promotions, and deletions," Peterson wrote. "Out of respect for the individuals impacted by this process, the mayor will reserve comment on personnel matters until these decisions are finalized and the appropriate staff and employees are notified. "Under the new city charter, the mayor has the ability to "remove a department head with or without cause, and without the consent of City Council."

**Cohen** came to the city after serving as secretary of the Florida Department of Community Affairs from 2004-07. Prior to that he owned an architectural firm for 20 years in Delray Beach. **Cohen** is a registered architect in Florida, Pennsylvania, Ohio and New Jersey and has more than 33 years of private and local government experience in Florida, and experience in urban planning and growth management. Within months of being hired, **Cohen** began launching new programs. He asked permission from former City Manager Tom Bonfield to use \$50,000 in CRA funds set aside for downtown events to create a downtown entertainment scene. This created events such as Sunsets at Plaza de Luna, Friday Family Flicks, Live After Five, and the Palafox Farmer's Market.

"I enjoyed the opportunity I have had in Pensacola," **Cohen** said. "I would like to think we have made some significant improvements in our downtown and neighborhoods. I have an outstanding staff who contributed greatly to any of the successes we had. They are creative and those are the things you are supposed to have to progress at any organization." **Cohen's** compensation is a \$105,000 annual salary, plus \$35,893 in fringe benefits.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Thaddeus Cohen**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Pensacola News Journal - Pensacola, Fla.  
June 28, 2010

**City, county eye old cleanup site**

Author: Jamie Page

The Pensacola City Council wants to annex 831 acres into city limits surrounding the old Escambia Wood Treating Co. Superfund site off Palafox Street. The mound of polluted soil known as Mount Dioxin -- which stood on the Superfund site for 18 years -- is gone and the soil has been cleaned. The plan for what to do with the site after it's clean, for the past 10 years, has been to build a commerce park. A county-contracted study about 10 years ago cited 117 acres -- which includes the 31-acre Superfund site and adjacent residential areas -- as ideal for industrial development.

But Community Redevelopment Director **Thaddeus Cohen** envisions something much grander: annexing an 831-acre area around the Superfund site that includes mostly commercial or vacant properties already. Few occupied residential properties remain. And the site is relatively close to the airport, rail lines and Interstate 110. "So it's really an ideal location for creating a very large commerce park area," **Cohen** said.

When the City Council heard **Cohen's** presentation earlier this month, it agreed and asked city staff to begin moving forward in concept with the effort. "I am ecstatic about this," Councilman P.C. Wu said. "I am looking at taxes and jobs. Personally, I don't see a downside. I am in support of the whole thing."

Meanwhile, Escambia County -- which will act as the developer and eventually the primary owner of the land surrounding the Superfund site -- is in the process of obtaining ownership of roughly 117 acres owned by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. This area already is within city limits. But hearing of the city's much larger annexation plans came as a surprise to Keith Wilkins, the county's deputy chief of the Community Services Bureau, who has been handling the Superfund property issue for the county. "We could not get a response from the city on this project so we were moving on without them," Wilkins said. "For the community, as long as it gets redeveloped it doesn't matter, as long as it's for the benefit of community. But the county has put several million dollars in getting this thing turned around, and it seems once the hard work is done then the city can come in and scoop it."

The area proposed to become the MidTown Palafox Commerce Park is bounded by a CSX rail line to the east, Fairfield Drive to the south, North Pace Boulevard to the west, and Brent Lane to the north. Councilman Sam Hall's initial reaction was that the city should not only annex the larger area but consider making it a Tax Increment Financing District. TIFs are for low-income areas in great need of revitalization, which allows a city government to collect additional property taxes there. "District 5 is the poorest district," Hall said. "You are looking at having a piece of property that is worth basically nothing right now that we could make into a TIF before it becomes valuable property."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

***Thaddeus Cohen***

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Without a TIF, the city and county would benefit from property taxes. But under a city TIF, only the city would collect taxes. If that approach is taken it is likely to create a problem for county officials, whose plan to develop the property relies entirely on collecting county taxes from the site, Wilkins said. "If they do vote to annex it, obviously we could still move forward but we would have to rethink our development plan and our marketing strategy," Wilkins said. "This really takes it back several years."

Annexation area

The 831 acres the city is looking to annex includes 581 parcels of land. Here's how they are currently zoned:

- 181: Vacant
- 161: Residential (mostly vacant)
- 166: Commercial
- 37: Industrial
- 36: Church/school/hospital



**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Thaddeus Cohen**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Pensacola News Journal - Pensacola, Fla.  
May 24, 2010

**ECAT seeking ways to make service quicker**

Author: Jamie Page

A plan is afoot to cut wait times to only 15 to 20 minutes for most Escambia County Area Transit bus routes in order to boost ridership. Long waits for bus service is the primary reason the local public bus system is underutilized by residents, a city official said. Right now, riders wait between 35 minutes to an hour and a half to catch a bus. And most routes take an hour to run full circle.

"Today the ECAT system is discouraging at worst and inconvenient at best, characterized generally by long waits and long trips," said **Thaddeus Cohen**, the city's Community Development director. Instead of just complaining about it, **Cohen** has written what he's calling a transformational plan that slices and dices ECAT's traditional routes into a streamlined system that will make most have a 15- to 20-minute wait time. Perhaps the dangling carrot here is that the changes, he says, will not cost the county additional money.

The poor, the elderly and the disabled are often cited as the only people filling the seats of the public bus system in Pensacola because they often don't have a choice. City and county officials have recognized this for years, but say they don't have the money to add buses and new routes to the ECAT system to create more efficient wait times where more average working people can justify taking the bus. The City of Pensacola withdrew its funding for ECAT in 2008, and left all local transit funding to the county.

There is a version of **Cohen's** plan adding one more bus route. However, ECAT has a fleet of 42 buses and currently only runs 28. An additional bus may not have to be purchased, **Cohen** said. County commissioners will discuss the proposed transit plan at Thursday's committee meeting. The goals of the proposal came from the Mass Transit Advisory Committee. They were fleshed out by stakeholders polled throughout the community, then gelled into a proposal by **Cohen**. "A rider-centric transit model would encourage a more diverse population to become transit dependent," **Cohen** said. "In other words, transit would become their first choice for mobility."

Warrington resident Shari Drew is one. She's a full-time student at Virginia College and relies on the bus to get to her classes on Garden Street in downtown Pensacola. Her trip from her home near the Navy base to downtown takes five hours to attend a single class that lasts less than two hours. Between waiting on the bus and travel time, she spends three hours en route to one class. And if she misses her bus, it will be an hour wait until the next one arrives. Having a shorter wait time would ensure she continues to use the bus system, she said.

"The drivers are friendly and helpful, the bus is always on time, the fares are reasonable and cheaper than owning a vehicle, but the wait time is just horrendous," Drew said. "Otherwise, I

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches*****Thaddeus Cohen****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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don't mind taking the bus. That's the only thing I hate about the bus is the wait time. "But they could cut out the stops on the small side streets and make the routes faster."

Actually, that's primarily how **Cohen's** proposal achieves shorter wait times: By avoiding side streets and minor stops, and mostly keeping routes focused on major thoroughfares. "We have what some may call a peanut butter spread approach to transit "[broken bar] same level of service spread thinly throughout the area," **Cohen** said. "This approach is not necessarily conducive to building ridership. The current headway of 60 minutes is a nonstarter if we want transit to be a first choice for mobility."

Interim County Administrator Larry Newsom's initial look at the plan was positive. "I think his plan has a lot of merit," Newsom said. "He is looking at this from an economic development standpoint, and I commend him for that. Still, it does have to be a cost benefit analysis. We have to be able to justify these changes."

The proposal comes just as commissioners on Thursday approved a new ECAT route change plan, which will be implemented within 45 days. These route changes -- entirely separate from **Cohen's** plan -- were mostly to improve on-time performance and safety, and reduce complaints, ECAT General Manager Kenneth Gordon said. "The routes were scheduled so tight that bus drivers were driving too aggressively to maintain the schedules," Gordon said. "These changes will provide slightly more time on the routes to make it safer, and we have tried to modify routes with as little inconvenience as possible."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

***Thaddeus Cohen***

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Pensacola News Journal - Pensacola, Fla.

April 28, 2010

**Cohen's vision of future**

Author: DeeDee Ritchie

The regional commercial real estate family gathered last week to hear Community Redevelopment Agency Director **Thaddeus Cohen** present the blueprint for Pensacola's future. Joe Buehler, Bo Johnson, John Tice and Florida House of Representatives candidate Doug Broxson were among those at the impressive presentation.

**Cohen** has been responsible for many innovative downtown programs, including the New Year's Eve Pelican Drop, Sunset Concerts at Plaza De Luna and Friday Flicks. If he can pull off this plan, he has my vote for strong mayor. If he moves here, that is.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

***Thaddeus Cohen***

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Outdoor Movie Events

May 18, 2009

**Pensacola, Florida: Friday Family Flicks Come Back to Pensacola**

By Open Air Cinema on in

When **Thaddeus Cohen** came to work as the city’s Community Redevelopment Agency director in December 2007, he immediately started identifying ways to bring people downtown.

One of those ideas was “Friday Family Flicks,” a series of free outdoor family-friendly movies shown on a three-story inflatable screen every third Friday from May through August, at Commendencia Slip Pier. And it worked. The average crowd at last year’s Friday Family Flicks was about 900 people, **Cohen** said. Last year’s final showing in August drew 1,400. This year’s flicks start Friday.

It takes about \$5,000 a year in CRA funds to offer the movies. Vendors sell popcorn and snacks. Families, teens and older couples alike bring yard chairs and blankets and have a picnic while watching a G- or PG-rated movie. Some folks just sit in their parked cars and pretend it’s a drive-in. “We think the downtown restaurants did well because of it last year, too,” **Cohen** said. “We would see a lot of people with takeout boxes before and after the movie.” Music and activities start at 7:30 p.m., and the PG movie, “Bedtime Stories,” starts about 8 p.m.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

***Thaddeus Cohen***

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Key West Citizen (FL)

December 20, 2006

**County sends bad tier maps to state to meet deadline**

Author: Ann Henson

The Monroe County Commission has agreed to submit incorrect development maps to the state, with the promise that the state will correct 147 improperly designated parcels before approving the documents. Property owners fear the corrections - mostly to allow development where the maps now prohibit it - will fall through the cracks after a new governor and state department heads take over Jan. 1. If the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) overlooks the detail, the county must go through a process that can take up to nine months to change each lot one by one.

Several property owners who attended the second and final public hearing on the issue Monday asked the county to submit corrected maps and questioned why commissioners were rushing the vote. Even freshman Commissioner Sylvia Murphy, the lone board member to vote against sending the incorrect maps, questioned the hurry. "I understand that a great deal of the 147 lots have come from the Upper Keys and we have not had a public hearing there?" she asked.

Debra Harrison, the World Wildlife Fund's Keys manager, said 105 of the 147 lots are in the Upper Keys. "You are costing the taxpayers thousands of dollars and are denying public participation," she told the commission. "[DCA Secretary] **Thaddeus Cohen** called each of you and told you to do this" now, so he can claim credit that it was done during his tenure, she said. "You have never said we will not hear from the people of the Upper Keys."

The state required that the maps be sent no later than today, and that they match the draft set DCA already has on file, according to County Attorney Suzanne Hutton and County Administrator Tom Willi. Gov. Jeb Bush, frustrated that the county kept changing the maps after DCA gave them preliminary approval, ordered Monroe to stop tweaking them. "Ideally it would be better to have one [public hearing] in the Upper Keys, but that's not legally required," Hutton said during Monday's meeting.

The maps, part of the county's new growth management system, divide all land into three categories, or tiers: buildable, not buildable and buildable but with more restrictions to protect native habitat. Once DCA approves the maps, the Tier System and its maps will become a part of the county's comprehensive plan that guides development. Tom Wyatt of Upper Sugarloaf Key owns one of the misidentified lots. "It's important to me, my wife and our family that this error gets corrected," he said. "I've heard that it will not fall through the cracks, but I urge you to correct it now."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

***Thaddeus Cohen***

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Key West Citizen (FL)

December 13, 2006

**Gov. Bush reviews debated meeting**

Author: Ann Henson

The governor is reviewing the Florida Cabinet's Dec. 5 approval of an annual report assessing Monroe County's progress on state-mandated environmental and housing goals, as well as statements county officials made before the vote, according to Jeb Bush's spokeswoman. "We understand that there are concerns and we are reviewing the report of the Cabinet meeting and may have more to say later this week," Kristy Campbell said.

The accuracy of County Administrator Tom Willi's statements about wastewater funding and hurricane evacuation times has been questioned since the meeting. Willi told the Cabinet an 18-hour hurricane evacuation time had been incorporated into the county's comprehensive land-use plan after public hearings, and he denied that the county used Key Largo wastewater funds to purchase a waterfront restaurant and help fund an artificial reef project.

County documents appear to contradict both statements, and two former county officials who wrote the phased hurricane evacuation ordinance dispute Willi's interpretation and time calculations in the evacuation issue. A spokeswoman for Department of Community Affairs Secretary **Thaddeus Cohen** said the state agency stands behind Willi's conclusions, despite an agency attorney acknowledging the county's comp plan does not specifically cite an 18-hour evacuation time. "The plan is what guides the evacuation process and has been accepted into the comprehensive plan, when we run the models the number [18] comes out," Alexis Antonacci said.

The state requires Monroe County to be able to evacuate in less than 24 hours before it can build more homes. Willi said a staff report explained the county could shave 3.5 hours by eliminating tourists, as they must leave 48 hours before the general residential population, and another three hours because mobile home residents must leave 36 hours in advance. Although the report states no total hours, Willi told the Cabinet it refers to 24 hours and that time could be saved "if we early evacuate these two groups."

Marlene Conaway, a former county planning director, and Tim McGarry, a former county growth management director, said mobile home residents never were meant to be counted in the hours saved through a phased evacuation for hurricanes of Category 3 or greater. Further, a document summarizing what county and municipal emergency managers approved during a 2004 hurricane symposium did not refer to mobile home residents in their endorsement of the phased evacuation plan.

Conaway and McGarry said the 18-hour time frame is far-fetched, considering the intent of the ordinance, which Conaway said she worded specifically to include mobile home owners in the general population of full-time permanent residents. "You can ask them to leave early, but you

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***Thaddeus Cohen***

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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cannot force them," she said. "It's in the language very clearly. And if you cannot force them, you cannot include them in your calculations [to reduce clearance time]. And I will testify to that in court."

Comments she made during an April 2005 Planning Commission meeting support her perspective. She told planning commissioners the phased evacuation clearance time "will drop from 24 hours to 21 hours and 41 minutes," indicating only tourists were to be eliminated from the calculations. "Sounds like her opinion, not the view of the people that she works for," Willi wrote in an e-mail to The Citizen last week. He has not returned repeated phone calls seeking comment.

McGarry said Willi's interpretation involves legal and policy issues. "If you want to count the mobile home residents as leaving early, you will have to amend the comprehensive plan" to say they are something other than full-time permanent residents, McGarry said, referring to the term "Keys residents" in the ordinance. "Residents and tourists are two different things -- tourists are in hotels that you can close down." He said the evacuation plan becomes more dangerous with every group that is eliminated, as it increases the margin for error. "It becomes a safety issue," he said.

The legal issue stems from what constitutes a resident, he said. Because evacuation and growth management are tied, if mobile home residents are classified as less than a full-time permanent resident, the building allocation earned by their early evacuation would be less than a full building allocation, McGarry said. He also noted that all of the calculations would be meaningless if a storm were to form quickly off the Keys coast.

The topic of updating the county's hurricane evacuation time arose in September 2004 when **Cohen** called a hurricane symposium. "As I came into office, it appeared that the only issue that is still out there is the hurricane evacuation component," he told the group of county and municipal emergency managers assembled at the time. The ensuing series of meetings focused on developing a hurricane plan for the county and municipalities to adopt.

**Cohen's** concern stemmed from the fact that the Keys technically were built out, because the evacuation time was 23 hours and 38 minutes. To continue with that time frame would mean cutting off all building permits. But with the new 18-hour evacuation time, the county theoretically could add as many as 12,000 building permits to its yearly allotment, as it could gain 2,000 permits for every hour under 24. At the Department of Community Affairs' suggestion, officials formally approved a phased evacuation plan that informally had been executed for years.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches*****Thaddeus Cohen****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Tampabay.com  
October 17, 2006

**Growth law will protect way of life****A Times Editorial by Thaddeus Cohen**

Every citizen values something and holds those values over something else. The family over the job, the job over the ball game; we all live within a pyramid of values that help define us as a society. Florida's new growth management law passed last year, formerly known as Senate Bill 360, has given local government officials a new opportunity to show citizens what values they hold dear as well.

Local officials should have a good idea about what residents value and what growth challenges have emerged during Florida's recent population boom. The values piece comes into play when these two factors are added into proposed changes by a local government to add new development to communities, known in the world of community planners as changes to a comprehensive plan.

This landmark growth legislation requires local governments to consider much more seriously how they plan to pay for services like water, sewers, schools and roads. Not surprisingly, most local officials have responded to these new requirements with enthusiastic efficiency. After all, why shouldn't they? The new growth management legislation is in synch with what most Americans value most.

For example, say a development is built in your community for 2,500 new single-family homes. They'll need services, won't they? Has the local government figured out how to make the changes in its comprehensive plan to accommodate this new development, including how these services would be paid for? If not, how can they even approach the state in good conscience and ask for approval?

Should a new homeowner in this community have to send his or her children miles from home to get them to the closest school? Are the homes built in an area that will make the cost of building sewage facilities and providing clean drinking water a drain on the pocketbooks of these new residents? Will the roads be able to accommodate all the cars, or will all the members of this community regularly miss their child's soccer games and school plays because they're stuck in traffic on the way home from work?

Regardless of age, income or political affiliation, don't we all hold these values dear? Helping to ensure that all of these elements are accounted for is what makes the legislation a great contribution to our state. It helps provide new and former residents with a way of life that continues to make our state the best place to live and work in the country. Local governments are getting on board, taking the steps necessary to make concurrency a reality, to ensure that all major development impacts are accounted for and ensuring that the local plans are financially feasible, with meaningful links to local budgeting.



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***Thaddeus Cohen***

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Of course, this requires more work for local governments, but they don't have to face this work alone. The state Department of Community Affairs is not just enforcing the new growth management law; it is also working hand in hand with local governments to provide technical assistance to help them meet the challenges that come with growth. Using the new law, local governments can focus on development that provides services necessary to ensure that Florida families enjoy the best possible day-to-day living conditions. What value can a local government hold above that?

**Thaddeus Cohen** is secretary of the Florida Department of Community Affairs.

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***Thaddeus Cohen***  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Ledger  
August 25, 2006

**PCOC to Try to Avoid Legal Fight**

Author: Rick Rousos

BARTOW -- The chairman of the Polk County Opportunity Council says he will attempt to mend the rift with the state agency that is attempting to pull \$911,000 from PCOC's budget. PCOC boss Kevin Roberts said he would rather talk things over with the head of the state Department of Community Affairs before a formal legal proceeding begins.

Roberts said Thursday night during a PCOC meeting that he and Executive Director Gary Hartfield will ask state Department of Community Affairs Secretary **Thaddeus Cohen** to hear their contentions that the agency has vastly improved and the withdrawal of funds is unnecessary. Roberts is asking for a meeting in Tallahassee, on **Cohen's** turf, "before the whole legal route" of fighting the pulling of funds takes place. Hartfield said he will send a letter to **Cohen** next week requesting the meeting.

The \$911,000 that the DCA is attempting to take away from PCOC is used for job training and tuition for poor people. The DCA will continue to fund the program until all of PCOC's legal appeals have been exhausted, and if the money is taken from PCOC, the state will find another agency to provide those services.

Roberts also said Thursday night that he and Hartfield were scheduled to meet today with U.S. Rep. Adam Putnam, a Bartow Republican who has been a frequent critic of PCOC. Roberts said he was grateful for the opportunity to meet with Putnam and will attempt to demonstrate to the congressman that PCOC has come a long way. PCOC has been without a finance director since April, but that's expected to change Monday when Gail Adderley starts as finance director. For the past five years, she has served as the finance chief for a community action agency in Lake County.

During an interview Thursday, Hartfield declined to divulge her salary, saying her contract has not been completed and won't be until the paperwork is filled out and signed, either today or Monday. The salary range for job is between \$49,000 and \$73,000. During the meeting, board member Ozell Wilson mentioned that Adderley will be paid \$72,000. Wilson wondered what would happen a year from now when Adderley can't get a merit raise of more than \$1,000 because she's reached the top of the salary scale. PCOC is also attempting to set up a meeting, at Roberts' insistence, to learn more about the state's open meeting and open records laws.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches*****Thaddeus Cohen****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Key West Citizen (FL)

April 14, 2006

**DCA head mum on lawsuit backing**

Author: Ann Henson

The Department of Community Affairs secretary wants to assure Florida Keys residents that his department is always watching for signs that Monroe County has run amok. **Thaddeus Cohen** heads the agency that has overseen growth management in Monroe County since it was declared an Area of State Critical Concern in the 1970s. On the phone from Tallahassee Thursday, **Cohen** said he understands residents' concerns and apprehension about a proposal to lift the designation. He freely discussed how the state-county partnership would continue, but said he'd have to consult his attorney before answering one of the most important questions: Would the state back the county in lawsuits that property owners file when they can't do what they want with their land Monroe officials have said that could cost the county hundreds of millions of dollars.

"What the future looks like, I don't want to speculate," he said. "We feel there's been a real change, from a regulatory oversight role to a partnership where we crafted a framework that works for everyone. It has been a struggle to get to where we are today, but with time we can both look back at the accomplishments we have made. "But we're not done; we need to continue to be vigilant, review the actions of local policymakers, and citizens can still express concern to the state when actions are not consistent with the land-development regulations," he said. The state seized control 30 years ago when the county was failing to control development. The state has mandated that the county upgrade wastewater systems to clean nearshore waters; provide affordable housing; protect habitat for endangered species; and control growth enough to evacuate the Keys within 24 hours of a hurricane. State Rep. Ken Sorensen, R-Key Largo, said he believes Monroe is complying with state regulations now, and should be set free to handle its own affairs. A year ago, county officials asked the governor and Cabinet to lift the designation, but the state denied the request. This year, Sorensen, now in his last term, sponsored a dedesignation bill.

Weeks of wrangling brought a compromise between the state, environmentalists and Sorensen, who will add the resulting amendments when his bill is heard on the House floor sometime before the session ends May 5. The amendments allow the county to retain the benefits afforded to critical-concern areas, such as letting the county tap into special funds and keep its Land Authority. **Cohen** said he believes the county is in fine shape and will continue to work toward meeting a list of goals the state set. "I'm not talking of being completely sewerred, but of making meaningful progress in changing nearshore water quality," he said. "That had been of great concern to the department." **Cohen** doesn't think future administrations, either state or county, will renege on the growth management plan after the designation is lifted. "We feel the schemes we have in place and the issues the bill talks of, the interlocal between the county and Florida Keys Aqueduct Authority," he said, "all these things provide for folks to move forward regardless of who the players are."

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***Thaddeus Cohen***

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Naples Daily News (FL)

February 8, 2006

**Florida growth management law, Thaddeus Cohen local  
State official defends new growth management law**

Author: Larry Hannan

No one can fully explain a growth management law that went into effect in Florida in 2005. But **Thaddeus Cohen**, secretary of the Florida Department of Community Affairs, knows the new law better than most. **Cohen** believes, despite vociferous criticism from Collier County officials, the growth management law has a chance to be beneficial to all of Florida. On Tuesday he met with the Naples Daily News editorial board. The law has been roundly criticized by Collier officials, who believe it will damage their concurrency management system of collecting impact fees and prohibiting growth until capacity improvements are made to an area. DCA will be responsible for enforcing the new law.

**Cohen** said the law, often referred to as Senate Bill 360, needs time to work before changes are made. He said the county commissioners have some valid concerns, but they haven't looked into some of the benefits of the new law. "We don't think this is a straitjacket," **Cohen** said of the law. Throughout most of the state, the new law has been received positively. Collier is the exception. "You are unique," **Cohen** said, speaking of Collier County. "We have not had this in other places." Collier's main complaint is that the law doesn't let the county create a tougher growth management program than the state allows. Collier County's current program is tougher than the state's, so commissioners fear the local program will become moot and they'll have to abide by weaker state requirements under the new law. If the law is given a chance to work, Collier might be surprised at how much the county benefits, **Cohen** said. The key to the new law is the paying of proportionate fair-share mitigation. That means a developer or homeowner has to pay a fair amount to the local government so capacity improvements can be made to offset the effect of the new development. If the fair-share payment is made, development can proceed, even if the capacity improvements have not yet been made. "This says everybody pays because everybody impacts the system," **Cohen** said.

"Under proportionate fair share, local governments can handle backlogs" of infrastructure needs. Impact fees can't do that because by law they only can pay for future infrastructure needs, not existing needs. "A lot of people were unhappy with growth management throughout the state" before this law was passed, **Cohen** said. "There was a sense that people were taking advantage of the system." Under the new law, it will be easier to get funding for schools, water and road improvements needed because of the growth within the state, **Cohen** said.

Collier officials are pushing for a glitch bill in the next legislative session that would make changes to Senate Bill 360. That bill would address their concerns and allow them to keep collecting impact fees. **Cohen** isn't thrilled about the idea of a glitch bill. He thinks it's too soon. If a glitch bill is passed, he'd like it to be narrowly focused.

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***Thaddeus Cohen***

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Collier Commissioner Fred Coyle has been vocal in his criticism of the new growth management law. Coyle believes it will decimate the county's concurrency management system. Coyle said he wants two things from a glitch bill. "We want to retain our impact fee system," Coyle said. "We also want the ability to have a concurrency system that guarantees transportation capacity before development is approved." The existing law prohibits Collier from doing both, Coyle said. If the county can get those things, it will be fine with the rest of the growth management law, he said. Coyle said sacrificing impact fees for proportionate fair share makes no sense. "We know our impact fee system works," he said. "Why should we give it up for something that we're not sure works?" Coyle also said the proportionate fair-share system isn't as effective. If one development pays \$1 million for proportionate fair share, that's not enough to make a road improvement. But that development could be up and operating before they get money from other developers, Coyle said.

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**Thaddeus Cohen**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Sun Sentinel  
January 27, 2006

**State Paid FEMA Without Checking  
Audit Criticizes Lack Of Oversight**

Authors: Megan O'Matz and Sally Kestin

Florida paid \$155 million for its share of federal disaster aid to residents after the 2004 hurricanes without checking the legitimacy of the claims, a state audit has concluded. The Federal Emergency Management Agency regularly provided the state with details of individual payments, yet for more than seven months Florida "did not perform any sampling or verification" on roughly 471,000 awards, according to the report released Thursday by Florida's auditor general.

Only after the audit began did the state's Division of Emergency Management make any attempt to check out the claims -- by calling 2,000 people. "We just paid the bill without any accountability or oversight," said state Sen. Ron Klein, one of three legislators who requested the audit after a South Florida Sun-Sentinel investigation revealed waste and fraud in FEMA payments in Miami-Dade County.

The county was spared the devastating effects of Hurricane Frances, which struck 100 miles to the north on Labor Day weekend 2004. Yet the president, at the request of the governor, declared Miami-Dade a disaster area. The designation allowed residents there to collect \$31 million from FEMA. The audit focused on the Division of Emergency Management's oversight of aid payments by FEMA statewide.

Each month, FEMA billed Florida for 25 percent of the aid given for damaged belongings, medical and dental costs, transportation, funerals, clothing, tools, generators, chain saws and other clean-up items, according to the audit. From September 2004 through June 2005, FEMA paid \$618 million to residents for the losses. Of that, Florida paid FEMA \$155 million but did nothing to verify the accuracy or appropriateness of the payments until May 2005, after the audit began, the report states.

At that point, the state sampled 3,500 claims, reaching 2,000 of the applicants by phone, the report states. Officials asked claimants to confirm, "both the type and dollar amount of assistance received," the audit states. Florida determined that only 10 claims required additional scrutiny. At the close of the audit, emergency officials still had not taken steps to verify the remaining 1,500 claims in the sample, according to the report. "The state has done a terrible job, just like FEMA, in making sure that there's verifiable payments of losses," said state Sen. Walter "Skip" Campbell, D-Tamarac. "They're choosing not to get involved intentionally, but that's the wrong way to spend the state's dollars."

In a written response to the audit, **Thaddeus L. Cohen**, secretary of the Department of Community Affairs, which oversees emergency management, said it would cost the state more to

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***Thaddeus Cohen***

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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further verify the FEMA claims and could slow payments to disaster victims. "The Division will continue to review and revise as necessary, its verification of the process," he wrote. "This verification process involves contacting applicants for each disaster and determining if they have actually received FEMA financial assistance ..." Klein said Thursday that he would push for additional funds for the department to ensure that it has the resources to properly oversee the program. "Why are we just writing a check for 25 percent of the cost of this program without even knowing where this money is going?" the Boca Raton Democrat said.

State Sen. Nan Rich, D-Weston, also called for greater accountability by the state, citing problems with the automobile reimbursement program. The audit criticizes the state's policy for replacing destroyed automobiles, saying that it resulted in some people collecting more in aid than their vehicles were worth. "We have people who received nothing, and yet we're giving someone \$6,500 for a vehicle that's worth \$850. It's kind of outrageous. We obviously need to revise these procedures," she said.

Auditors suggested that the state work with FEMA to come up with a more reasonable method of paying for destroyed automobiles than setting a standard amount, which in 2004 was \$6,500 per vehicle. A U.S. Inspector General audit in May of Miami-Dade claims found more than a dozen recipients collected \$6,500 even though the value of the destroyed car was less. That same month, Florida revised its agreement with FEMA, lowering the rate for destroyed cars to \$4,000.

**Cohen**, in response to the state's audit, wrote that his department is reviewing its practice for setting standard amounts for cars and other items, such as generators. The Sun-Sentinel reported in December that FEMA reimbursed numerous Floridians a set amount -- \$836 each -- for generators after Hurricane Wilma, even when people paid less. The state is considering discontinuing the reimbursements for generators altogether, **Cohen** wrote.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches*****Thaddeus Cohen****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Key West Citizen (FL)

December 9, 2005

**DCA- County doing OK on growth**

Author: Ann Henson

The county's growth management report card from the state shows that of 17 requirements, the county has completed 12 items and nearly completed another three. But one of the key requirements for the county -- that everyone be able to leave prior to a hurricane -- may become an obstacle over which the county has no control, due to the growth in South Florida. The state Department of Community Affairs and the state Division of Emergency Management will take a regional look at hurricane evacuation with a report out by September 2006 that considers evacuation behavior and population growth of the entire area, according to the state's report card on Monroe County. Overall, DCA Secretary **Thaddeus Cohen** said the county has made substantial progress, and recommends giving the county a passing mark. However, **Cohen** said he believes the designation as an Area of Critical State Concern should continue. And he did not make a recommendation on how long the designation should remain. "I recommend that we continue the designation in order to ensure completion of the work program recently adopted by the Governor and Cabinet," **Cohen** stated. The governor and Cabinet will make the final determination on whether or not the county has made substantial progress in its yearly plan as well as the critical concern designation. It will also decide how many new housing units should be allowed in the county. Should they find the county in compliance, the nutrient reduction credit program would be eliminated.

That program requires eliminating a cesspit or improperly functioning septic system for each building permit the county issues. **Cohen's** report also included challenges that lie ahead for the county -- aside from the hurricane evacuation issue, the county must continue to find funding for construction of wastewater facilities, for land acquisition and preservation and for affordable housing. What the county has not completed includes:

- Completing the new growth management plan called the Tier System. Overlay maps for the Tier III Special Protection Areas have not been finalized. However, following a joint field trip to review some of the areas, this item should be finalized and adopted in January.
- Amending land development regulations to prohibit natural areas as receiver sites for development that is exempt of county regulations and to limit clearing. This item, too, should be complete in January, according to **Cohen's** report.
- The county has hooked up only 28 percent of the homes in the Key West Resort Utility service area on Stock Island. **Cohen** wants these hookups completed as soon as possible.
- Assuring that affordable housing will remain affordable. The county has met a portion of this requirement.
- Providing \$10 million in bond financing from the Tourist Impact Tax for acquisition of land for workforce and affordable housing. The county has done its part but awaits approval from the state for the bond issue.



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***Thaddeus Cohen***

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Key West Citizen (FL)

December 7, 2005

**State DCA secretary hears concerns about sprawl**

Author: Robert Silk

LAYTON -- Meeting with the Layton City Council Thursday, Florida Department of Community Affairs Secretary **Thaddeus Cohen** sought to assure officials that his department weighs regional hurricane evacuation when making rulings that will impact growth in South Florida. "It disheartens me to read the articles that say the DCA is not concerned about evacuation issues, when to me that was the first thing I was concerned about," **Cohen** said in reference to his early days as head of Florida's lead oversight agency for growth management. **Cohen** became DCA secretary in the spring of 2004.

But the secretary stopped short of agreeing with the suggestion of Layton City Councilman Scott Shamlin that the DCA should not approve any expansion of Miami-Dade County's Urban Development Boundary until the department develops a tool that quantitatively measures regional evacuation times. For years the DCA has used a similar tool, called the Miller Model, to measure Florida Keys hurricane evacuation time and to set Keys growth-related policies. Shamlin, echoing the view of many officials countywide, told **Cohen** that the rapid development in Homestead and Florida City could make all considerations of Keys evacuation moot. Once on the mainland only the Florida Turnpike, U.S. 1 and Krome Avenue provide evacuation routes to points further north. "Unmanaged growth is putting families in the Keys in danger and I mean that in the most literal sense," Shamlin said.

**Cohen's** visit to Layton City Hall, which was arranged on short notice, came the day after the Miami-Dade County Commission decided to forward for DCA review nine applications for expansion of that county's UDB. Development is restricted to one home per five acres in areas outside the boundary. The boundary is designed to provide a buffer between urban, agricultural and environmentally sensitive land.

On Friday, Miami-Dade County Mayor Carlos Alvarez vetoed the commission's decision. The commission was to weigh an override at its meeting on Tuesday. Lennar Corp.'s plan to build a 6,000-home development near Card Sound Road, south of Miami-Dade's UDB, is not among the nine applications in question. In August the South Florida Regional Planning Council told Lennar officials that its application for the so-called Florida City Commons project was incomplete. The company has until the middle of this month to resubmit the application, or it can ask for additional time.

**Cohen's** Layton visit also came on the heels of a decision by the DCA to allow 2,616 new homes in Homestead despite the fact that the South Florida Regional Planning Council recommended against approval of the homes. Under Florida Statute, the regional planning council reviews large development plans, called Developments of Regional Impact, and makes a recommendation to the DCA. The Miami Herald first reported on the DCA's Homestead decision

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***Thaddeus Cohen***

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Nov. 17. Shamlin told the secretary that the DCA's Homestead decision gave reason for pause. "Judging from what we saw in Homestead, we are concerned that the DCA might approve these [Developments of Regional Impact] without lengthy review on the impact of evacuation on the Florida Keys," he said.

But **Cohen** said that despite the ruling, the DCA does want Homestead to consider the regional impact of developments in the city. "It seems to be prudent policy for them to think about how their actions will affect their neighbors," he said. **Cohen** also hinted at a planning tool that the state Division of Emergency Management is devising to measure regional evacuation times. He provided no details but said he hoped to know more about the matter in the near future. He defended the Homestead decision as just one frame of a much bigger picture. "You can focus on each decision as it is made," he said. "But you can also look at it as a large puzzle and some of the puzzle units can be more beautiful than others."

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***Thaddeus Cohen***

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Florida Keys Keynoter (Marathon, FL)

December 7, 2005

**Cohen: Bus tour to check parcels goes 'very well'**

Author: Alyson Matley

Monroe County Commissioner Murray Nelson and state growth chief **Thaddeus Cohen** are calling a bus tour of the Keys a success. Friday, Nelson, county staffers and **Cohen**, secretary of the state Department of Community Affairs, set out to "ground truth" up to 200 lots that Nelson has argued do not belong categorized with larger unbuildable properties. "We were looking at lots one acre or less," he said, "and agreed not to have them fall in the [most protected areas.]"

"The trip went very well. It was a constructive fact-finding mission," **Cohen** said Tuesday. "I had an opportunity to talk with Monroe County officials and review the maps before our bus tour. The bus tour enabled the group to visualize some of the concerns Commissioner Nelson has. DCA will continue to work with local officials to build consensus on important habitat preservation issues."

In an agreement with DCA, county officials agreed last year to designate contiguous parcels of sensitive native habitat of more than one acre as protected. In October, Nelson began pushing to change the agreement, saying many lots, especially in the Upper Keys, would be unfairly restricted from development. The mapping of lots is part of a larger agreement between the county and DCA. It commits the county to invest millions in sewer projects and land acquisition. In return, DCA agreed to provide additional building permits as well as reinstate past permits the county lost because it was not complying with state mandates to protect the Keys environment.

Nelson challenged a provision in the agreement that does not allow most roads to count as breaks in vegetation. As it stands, a somewhat wooded lot across the street from a wooded parcel of more than one acre would count as part of that acre and likely be nearly impossible to build on.

After looking at each lot, Nelson said, "Everybody agreed there was no connectivity." Overall, he said the tour addressed about 11 acres, some 200 lots. "They are still protected," Nelson told the Keynoter. "They are restricted to a maximum 40 percent clearing." Nelson said county staff is drawing up the maps to document the lots this week. He hopes to have them in hand Monday when he plans to attend a meeting with state Cabinet aides in Tallahassee.

"We hope to present them at the Cabinet board meeting Tuesday for their approval," he added, though the maps are not part of the Cabinet agenda. "Then they will come back to County Commission for adoption. After that they will go to [the U.S] Fish & Wildlife [Service] as our habitat protection program."

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**Thaddeus Cohen**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Reporter (Tavernier, FL)  
August 4, 2005

**DCA Secretary plays broker**  
Author: Ann Henson

The county mayor and water utility chairwoman met with state officials in Key West to hash out their wastewater differences. **Thaddeus Cohen**, Secretary of the state Department of Community Affairs (DCA), said the purpose of the meeting was to encourage both sides to come together and get the relationship between the Florida Keys Aqueduct Authority and the county back on track. "Both acknowledge that the relationship is not where it needs to be," he said following the meeting. "They recognize that there has been too many voices so they cannot see clearly what their goals are."

County Mayor Dixie Spehar said the meeting was productive. "He concentrated on the partnership and gave us some tasks, which I cannot talk about, to take back to our boards for the August meeting," she said.

**Cohen** said his goal is to reunite a marriage between the county and the Florida Keys Aqueduct Authority (FKAA). At last month's county commission meeting, Spehar's motion to withhold future funding from FKAA unless it would guarantee "reasonable rates" for sewerage passed in a 3-2 vote. Commissioners George Neugent and David Rice voted no. **Cohen** won't settle for that. "If the goal is to get pipes in the ground and connected, they can work through the issues," **Cohen** said in a phone interview last week. **Cohen** sees his role as more marriage counselor than referee. "They have lost the ability to talk to one another, lost their vocabulary," he said. "Direct conversations are the best because you don't have intermediaries to skew the message," he added. "The goal is to get sewers built efficiently, cost effectively and expeditiously."

During the luncheon meeting held on Wednesday, Aug. 3, the two women agreed to pick one individual each to resolve the issues and confer with **Cohen**. Spehar said that County Manager Tom Willi will be her point person. Last week Spehar was frustrated by the chain of events. "I want to see the most affordable and efficient project and I don't mind who does it as long as it's affordable and efficient," she said. Spehar said that she sent her resolution to Mary Rice in time to put it on the FKAA meeting agenda, but it was not added. "That's the second time she's refused to put our resolution on their agenda," Spehar said. Rice said last week that she would try to be cooperative and discuss the issues at this week's meeting, but it was clearly **Cohen's** agenda. "Historically, the county's two roles were to locate and purchase the sites and to assist in funding," Rice said. "It kind of got corrupted from there into the county wanting the authority to approve the project and telling what the project would be."

Rice said the two entities need to stop the fighting and spreading misinformation. "Second, we need to work out something that's equitable to all the county - it's not fair to give Key Largo \$20 million and not give Big Coppitt the same." Rice could not be reached for comment Wednesday evening.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches*****Thaddeus Cohen****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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During the meeting, **Cohen** laid out the ground rules that there would be no finger pointing. Instead, **Cohen** said the focus was on how the two agencies could partner and provide the best possible service to Keys residents. The county could face dire consequences if it doesn't resolve its differences with FKAA. An attorney for DCA contacted the county attorney's office and raised the spectre of non-compliance if the county continues on its present course. **Cohen** acknowledged responsibility for the DCA's deputy general council's comments and the big stick the state wields on such matters.

The governor and Cabinet meet in September to review the county's progress. Should the county be found lacking, the state can withhold building permits. And, the county may be on a short timeframe to work something out with the FKAA. "Often it takes folks time to work their way to possible solutions," **Cohen** said. "But there is a sense of urgency to makes these things happen, that's why we offered our office to get on track and do what they feel is necessary."

Spehar said the Secretary told her he must update the governor on the situation in late August. **Cohen** initially asked for time to speak to the commission at its July meeting, but was turned down by Spehar. Spehar said it was simply a timing issue, that **Cohen** wanted an hour and the agenda was already packed. **Cohen** said his discussion with Spehar was not about the agenda. "The fact of the matter is that the mayor said that she had made a commitment to bring the [FKAA funding] issue forward," **Cohen** said. "If that's the direction she needs to go, to explore her concerns with the colleagues, maybe the time was not right to have our conversation," he said.

The DCA's other concern with the county is its tier system for controlling growth and protecting endangered species and habitat. **Cohen** said he was looking at the two-tier system submitted by the county. A three-tier system was originally proposed, but commissioners found tier two to be too ambiguous. Instead, commissioners approved two tiers -- build and no build. **Cohen** said he had concerns that some of the sensitive land and habitat may fall through the cracks in new system. "We think there is more work that needs to be done so all will feel comfortable," he said. He proposed ground truthing lot by lot any questionable areas. "Our goal is to provide required protection for habitat," **Cohen** said. "We have \$93 million to buy land that the county has identified as sensitive."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Thaddeus Cohen**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Englewood Sun (FL)  
June 7, 2005

**Hurricane recover, funds filtering down**

Author: Steve Reilly

PUNTA GORDA -- Charlotte County Commission Chairwoman Sara Devos and Punta Gorda Mayor Steve Fabian were more than happy Monday to accept a token check for \$9 million from Lt. Governor Toni Jennings and Department of Community Affairs Secretary **Thaddeus Cohen**. "Every time I see (**Cohen**) he's bringing us money," Devos quipped. "He's my new best friend. We really do (appreciate the) support we've been getting," she added in a note of seriousness.

The check symbolized the county and city's share of \$100.9 million in federal community development special reimbursement grants for hurricane recovery. The state DCA was given the authority to distribute the money statewide. The actual money wasn't deposited into county and city coffers Monday, since county and city staffs have to work out details with state officials on what projects and how the money is to be spent. County and city officials will divide the \$9 million equally.

Jennings and **Cohen** are actually touring the state and meeting with officials from the hurricane-damaged counties. Besides Charlotte, DeSoto, Hardee, St. Lucie, Indian River, Santa Rosa and Escambia counties all received a \$9 million share of the money. Brevard, Martin, Palm Beach, Polk, Orange, Okeechobee, Volusia and Osceola counties received \$4.4 million each for their hurricane recoveries. To date, state officials estimate \$780 million has been distributed for public assistance and reimbursement for debris removal, emergency response and other recovery projects. "I said we weren't coming with bags of money, but what we would be doing is coming with ways you could access money," **Cohen** said, referring to a recent statewide workshop on grant applications.

The city and county are now anticipating another \$20 million in July, specifically for affordable housing, when the state's budget goes into effect. When asked whether the first hurricane of this season or state housing money will be seen locally first, Jennings said she didn't want to think about any more hurricanes hitting Florida. She also said the state will not be just be handing the city and county \$20 million. "They will have to have plans," Jennings said.

Bob Hebert, the county's disaster recovery director, said county and city officials are already working on those plans. But while state officials say they see recovery funding being processed at faster than normal bureaucratic speed, Hebert said after his most recent meetings with state and federal officials, he thinks the processing of that funding may be slowing down a bit. "I think (federal and state officials) may be getting nervous about all the money that was promised in the beginning," Hebert said.

**Cohen** said after the \$20 million, the state plans to work with Charlotte and other local officials in identifying funding sources to make long-term recovery plans a reality. Much has been done

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***Thaddeus Cohen***

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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to recover from the damages left by Hurricane Charley and last year's hurricane season, but Hebert said he could see Charlotte County ultimately facing \$100 million in recovery costs. "You can see places that are all new and rebuilt, but you go two streets away and it's just like the day after the storm," he said. "Those are the hard-core problems."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

***Thaddeus Cohen***

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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North Port Sun (FL)

May 14, 2005

**Time to look forward**

**New hurricane season approaching**

Author: Bob Reddy

TAMPA -- It became clear very quickly that a different approach to recovery would be needed after Hurricane Charley blew through Southwest Florida nine months ago. "Helping desperate people at the moment of need became the focus, and we need to do better," Florida Department of Community Affairs Secretary **Thaddeus Cohen** said Friday during the last day of the 19th annual Governor's Hurricane Conference. William Gray, a renowned hurricane forecaster, also hinted he might increase his forecast for the upcoming hurricane season.

**Cohen** said communities that had their economies destroyed by the hurricanes of 2004 needed to recover quickly, and a long-term recovery process was established on the fly thanks to the efforts of many people. With the bleak forecast of two decades of increased hurricane activity, the lessons learned this past season need to be applied to the next community that suffers from disaster. With the help and initiative of Derek and David Dunn-Rankin and the Charlotte Sun, **Cohen** said, the state and Federal Emergency Management Agency created a housing strike team and started the long-term recovery process. "If you had one thing that you would want your community to do, it is to move forward with your future plans right away," he said. "Using the existing comprehensive plan, which is your list of future goals and wishes, is the ideal place to start." **Cohen** repeatedly cited examples in Southwest Florida about how to plan for the future after disaster based on the plans created thanks to the collaboration of a government and public cooperation. "In DeSoto County, we are trying to develop the tourism of the Peace River," he said. "In Charlotte County, we have the community group called Team Punta Gorda, which is planning the revitalization of that city."

Southwest Florida should be commended because of the amount of public input into the process, what **Cohen** calls the "silver lining" to the storms. More than 1,100 people attended a FEMA planning meeting in Charlotte County, and 400 went to meetings in DeSoto and Hardee counties. "We don't want to restore a community to where it was," **Cohen** said. "We need to take it beyond that point and make each community better and stronger for the next storm."

Gray warned the next storm may hit Florida this year, but then again, it may not hit Florida for another decade. "Think of how lucky you've been for the past four decades," Gray said. "We are in a new era -- with more major storms than ever before," He also said he believes the Atlantic is in the type of environment when more land-falling hurricanes are likely. "It's a bleak picture which could last another 15 to 20 years," he warned. Gray said that if anyone says he can predict a hurricane can hit any one point on the U.S. coastline, he is lying. "Nobody can tell for sure, but I can give you the odds," he said.



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***Thaddeus Cohen***

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Those odds, based on extensive research of salinity levels in the ocean, water temperature and a look back at history, do not look good for the upcoming season.

Gray forecasts a busier-than-normal season, with 13 named storms, seven hurricanes and three intense storms forecast. A normal season sees 10 named storms, 4.5 hurricanes and 1.5 intense storms. An intense hurricane is a Category 3 or greater, with maximum sustained winds of 111 mph or higher. The hurricane season runs from June 1 to Nov. 30.

Gray said there is a 73 percent probability a major hurricane will strike the U.S. mainland. He gives the U.S. east coast, including the Florida Peninsula to just north of Tampa, a 53 percent probability. Gray and his team at Colorado State University will come out with their next forecast on May 31 and he said he will likely increase the numbers then. "Right now, the Atlantic looks very favorable for hurricane development," he said. "A weak El Niño and above normal sea surface temperatures and the numbers do not look favorable for a slow hurricane season." Gray's team updates its forecast three times during the season on Aug. 5, Sept. 2, and Oct. 3. The National Hurricane Center issues its own seasonal forecast Monday.

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***Thaddeus Cohen***  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Business Wire  
February 3, 2005

**Department of Community Affairs Secretary Thaddeus Cohen to Address the South Florida Regional Planning Council at its February 7th Council Meeting**

Dateline: HOLLYWOOD, Fla.

South Florida Regional Planning Council, Hollywood Isabel Cosio Carballo, 954-985-4416  
On Monday, February 7th, Florida Department of Community Affairs Secretary **Thaddeus Cohen** will meet with the South Florida Regional Planning Council Board at its monthly Council meeting to discuss the Department's recommended growth management reforms for the 2005 Florida Legislative Session. The Department's "Principles for Reform" of Florida's Growth Management System include focusing state activities on priority state interests; increasing local government accountability in local land use decisions; emphasizing citizen role in community forums, rather than in judicial forums; updating the Development of Regional Impacts review process and removing duplication; and improving regional coordination. Secretary **Cohen's** biography follows below.

The Council Board will also hear from Commissioner Sidney C. Calloway of the Florida Transportation Commission regarding Florida's Transportation System and needed investments that are needed to manage congestion and keep South Florida's economy growing. Commissioner Calloway is South Florida's representative on the Florida Transportation Commission. The Commission was created by the 1987 Legislature to provide policy guidance and public accountability for the Florida Department of Transportation. Commissioner Calloway was appointed by the Governor in December 2001 and is serving a four-year term. He is a Partner in the law firm of Shutts and Bowen, LLP, and a member of the Urban League of Broward County, the Broward League of Cities, and the Port Everglades Trade Association.

The South Florida Regional Planning Council's meeting will begin at 10:30 a.m. on Monday, February 7th and will be held at the Council's offices at 3440 Hollywood Boulevard, Suite 140 in Hollywood, Florida. For additional information please contact Isabel Cosio Carballo, Legislative & Public Affairs Coordinator, at 954-985-4416.

About Secretary **Thaddeus Cohen**

**Thaddeus Cohen** was named by Governor Jeb Bush as Secretary of the Department of Community Affairs on March 10, 2004. Secretary **Cohen** has over 30 years of experience in architecture, urban design and community planning. He has provided economic and development strategies for public and private clients. His areas of design expertise include urban planning, health care development, educational, recreational and water treatment facilities. In his approach to planning, Secretary **Cohen** will place specific importance on the need for comprehensive planning in order to achieve a working relationship between public and private sectors.

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***Thaddeus Cohen***

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Secretary **Cohen** has a history of proactive involvement in his community through professional and community organizations. Secretary **Cohen** is the past chairman of the Council for Black Economic Development of Broward County; past chairman of the Commission on Affordable Housing for Palm Beach County, a former member of the board of directors of the Broward Alliance, and a former Broward Workshop member. On a state level he served on the boards of 1000 Friends of Florida and the American Institute of Architects Florida Chapter.

Prior to his appointment as DCA Secretary, he was asked by Governor Jeb Bush to serve on the 2000 Growth Management Study Commission. He quickly garnered the respect and admiration of his fellow board members establishing himself as a creative thinker and charismatic speaker. Born in California and raised in New Jersey Secretary **Cohen** attended Kent State University in Ohio where he graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Architecture. He currently resides in Tallahassee, Florida with his wife, daughter and grand daughter.

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***Thaddeus Cohen***

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Palm Beach Post (FL)

January 22, 2005

**Push for growth changes envisions power locally**

Author: Hector Florin

When it comes to managing Florida's explosive growth, the state should play the role of "marriage counselor," not judge or referee, while local and regional governments set the stage for their futures. That's the crux of the statewide growth initiative that **Thaddeus Cohen**, Department of Community Affairs secretary, presented Friday to the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council. **Cohen** said he hopes the bill that has been drafted will pass in the state legislative session that begins in March.

This year, **Cohen's** first as the state's top land-planning official, is also the 20th anniversary of the state's Growth Management Act that **Cohen** hopes to tweak. The initiative urges local and regional bodies to collaborate with citizens and among themselves and forecast growth trends, while working within the state's priority interests. With available technology, "there's the opportunity to think about where we might want to go," **Cohen** said, adding that planning should start "when you're thinking about thinking about a road."

The initiative is currently being discussed at House committee meetings. State Rep. Mike Davis, R-Naples, who sponsored the bill's draft, said the measure would reverse the current "top-down approach" of growth plans, in which the Department of Community Affairs sits atop of the organizational chart. Responsibility should lie at the local level, in particular with citizen involvement, Davis said. "This initiative seems to be turning that around," Davis said. "If there's more of a regional approach, you're looking at the bigger picture to maintain and develop the character of an area in a certain way."

Davis said the initiative's language is still a work in progress. The draft does not spell out how the state and local governments would forge common goals. But like **Cohen**, Davis is optimistic the initiative will be heard. Warren Newell, Palm Beach County commissioner, said the Department of Community Affairs should act more as a partner with local and regional bodies. "Land-use issues are really local issues," Newell said. "Local governments really have the resources and the connections with the people."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

***Thaddeus Cohen***

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Englewood Sun (FL)

December 22, 2004

**Task force launches weekly hunt for recovery money**

Author: Barry Millman

Members of a high-level task force representing dozens of federal and state aid agencies scattered from Washington, D.C., and Atlanta to Tallahassee and Orlando have begun weekly teleconferences to find money for the ambitious projects outlined in hurricane recovery plans for Charlotte, DeSoto and Hardee counties. The task force, co-chaired by **Thaddeus Cohen**, secretary of Florida's Department of Community Affairs, and Todd Davison, mitigation division director for the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Region IV, met for the first time last week and scheduled continuing meetings every Thursday to devise and develop funding packages to finance long-term recovery plans.

"There was a multitude of agencies and groups on the line," Davison said Tuesday of the first meeting, at which he estimated more than 40 government and municipal entities participated. "It lasted about an hour and was largely spent on introductions, getting familiar with one another and what everyone has to offer, and setting up a schedule and strategies for getting the job done."

"I'm enthusiastic about the level of commitment shown by our state and federal partners as we continue with the recovery process," said **Cohen**, who attended the Dec. 7 formal presentation of the long-term recovery plan to Charlotte and Punta Gorda officials. "I'm looking forward to more productive meetings as we continue to find solutions to the issues facing the communities impacted by this hurricane season."

Davison, who led similar task forces following widespread weather-related disasters in North Carolina and North Dakota in 1996 and 1997 respectively, was flown in to mobilize and run FEMA's Port Charlotte "Charley Command" center in the weeks after the August storm. He said the long-term recovery process he now helps oversee is the most sophisticated he has experienced to date. "The level of public outreach, input and participation has been quite cutting edge," Davison said. "And with the Tri-County Recovery Collaborative in place, we should really be able to address the counties' needs on an individual and regional basis effectively." The collaborative is a nonprofit agency formed by public and private interests in the three counties to leverage and coordinate relief and recovery efforts within Charley's impact zone. Davison said FEMA is taking its commitment to the long-term aspect of the recovery seriously, having already made provisions to staff its Port Charlotte office through August 2007, and to train and transition local county employees to take their places to continue recovery efforts.

Meanwhile, as the task force gears up to find the funds for rebuilding the storm-struck counties, DCA and FEMA representatives are huddling with local officials to draw up job descriptions and strategies for three full-time managers who will be stationed in each of the hurricane-ravaged counties to guide their rebuilding efforts. The managers will be employed by the DCA with salaries paid by FEMA.

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***Thaddeus Cohen***

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The managers and a regional coordinator are expected to be in place early next month. Bob Hebert, Charlotte's former grants manager who has been drawn by the post-storm scramble for relief funds into his current role as county recovery director, said he welcomes the additional firepower that a full-time recovery manager plugged directly into state and federal financial resources will bring to the county's recovery battle. "I think it's critical for each county to have a full-time DCA recovery manager on board to streamline the process," he said. "I'm sure they will benefit from our work as we benefit from theirs, and together we'll be able to get the county everything it needs in the most efficient way."

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***Thaddeus Cohen***

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Palm Beach Daily News

December 5, 2004

**Architects win awards for design**

Author: Robert Janjigian

On Nov. 16, architectural professionals from Palm Beach County gathered in The Breakers' Circle Dining Room for drinks, dinner and the presentation of the Palm Beach chapter of the American Institute of Architects' annual honor awards for design. The organization has held the annual competition and awards ceremonies for the past 57 years. There were 21 entries in this year's competition, in three categories: built projects, unbuilt projects and renovation. Smith Architectural Group of Palm Beach won two awards. The firm was cited for its renovation of the Graff diamond salon on Worth Avenue and for its design of a Mediterranean-style residence in Naples.

Also receiving honor awards were: Currie Sowards Aguila Architects of Delray Beach for their proposed design for the Savage Creatures of the Ancient Seas Museum in Boynton Beach; Jupiter architect Thomas Kirchhoff for his design of a Jupiter Island residence; Retzsch Lanao Caycedo Architects of Boca Raton for their design of The Ellington, a town house block in Fort Lauderdale; and REG Architects of West Palm Beach for their unbuilt Bay Shore Golf Clubhouse in Miami Beach.

After the design awards were presented, Delray Beach architect **Thaddeus Cohen**, now serving as secretary of the Florida Department of Community Affairs in Tallahassee, received the AIA Gold Medal, the highest honor an AIA chapter can bestow on one of its members.

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***Thaddeus Cohen***

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Palm Beach Post (FL)

April 1, 2004

**Friends of Florida's loss of Cohen is Florida's Gain**

About the March 22 article "Governor's choice for growth chief seen as curious," on the appointment of **Thaddeus Cohen** of Delray Beach as secretary of the Department of Community Affairs: I write to express 1000 Friends of Florida's appreciation and support for one of its own.

As an officer and valued member of our board of directors, and as an architect and officer in the American Institute of Architects, he is an ardent proponent of smart growth, citizen involvement and good urban design. We know he will work to keep the best interests of all Florida's residents in mind as he assumes this critically important leadership role in helping improve the state's growth management programs.

We always have known him to encourage people to speak out and make their ideas known, as he did while a member of the governor's Growth Management Study Commission. Pa County should be proud that his local knowledge will be brought to bear on the far-reaching Scripps Research Institute project now under way. We look forward to his stewardship and pledge our support in working together for a better Florida. 1000 Friends of Florida's loss will be Florida's gain.

CHARLES PATTISON,  
Executive director  
1000 Friends of Florida  
Tallahassee



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***Thaddeus Cohen***  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Florida Keys Keynoter (Marathon, FL)  
March 24, 2004

**New DCA chief has Keys links**  
**Thaddeus Cohen worked with Bahama Village**  
Author: Alyson Matley

Calling the Keys "romantic," the newly appointed secretary of the state Department of Community Affairs is heading to Tallahassee this week to look for a place to live. "There's a lot of romance associated with the Keys, and everyone has a special place in their heart for what they see them as," said **Thaddeus Cohen**, an architect from Delray Beach who was tapped by Gov. Jeb Bush to fill the shoes of outgoing Secretary Colleen Castille. Bush moved Castille, who has worked closely with Monroe County, to head the state's Department of Environmental Protection. Although **Cohen** doesn't begin officially until April 14, he has a steep learning curve ahead of him, especially when it comes to the intricacies of the Keys. Add to that the stress of finding somewhere to live and closing down his architectural firm.

Despite it all, the easy-going **Cohen** is amiable. He took a few minutes Monday to talk with the Keynoter before heading north. **Cohen** is no stranger to the Keys. In the early 1990s, his firm worked on the Bahama Village Redevelopment Study, and later the Neighborhood Preservation Plan. "From a professional standpoint," said **Cohen**, "it got me into the Keys, working with Norma Jean Sawyer. An outgrowth of that plan is the [Bahama Village] Community Development Corp., and that moved forward to the land trust. At that time, it was the only one in the state." The Bahama Conch Community Land Trust, which **Cohen** calls successful, is a system of keeping local homes affordable in Key West through various rules.

Connection to the Keys apparently runs in the family. **Cohen** tells the tale of his father who drove straight through from New Jersey to the Southernmost Point before turning around and visiting his son in Delray Beach - just to stand in the Keys and see if he could see Cuba. "He was a merchant seaman," said **Cohen**, "and he remembered the ferry that ran to Cuba." **Cohen**, 53, grew up in New Jersey and moved to Florida in 1978.

He has served on several boards, including the environmental group 1000 Friends of Florida, a position he will resign before taking over DCA. He formerly chaired the Commission on Affordable Housing for Palm Beach County and the Council for Black Economic Development of Broward County. Although he says he needs more time to study the details, he is well aware of a recent agreement drawn up between Castille, Monroe County, Marathon and Islamorada. That agreement is aimed at bringing the county into compliance with the state's requirements to protect habitat, provide affordable housing and protect nearshore water quality. It provides a mechanism for the state to begin funding some of the projects as well as an impetus for the county to begin raising some of its own money to reach those mutual goals. Balance, says **Cohen**, is the key. "What happens when the world becomes your market?" He said. "That creates pressures. How do you handle those pressures and keep that special place in your heart so your grandchildren can stay there?"

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***Thaddeus Cohen***

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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He says he hopes, with the help of the recent strides made through Castille, to find a balance in the Keys. He says working with local government is a key to dealing with what he calls "the inevitability" of what happens in the Keys. "We need to have a balance between accommodating more folks, the issue of affordability of housing, and infrastructure issues. How can you manage all those things and still preserve the romance? I don't think anyone on any side of the issues is in favor of losing the essence of the Keys. If you do, then it's Plain Jane Anywhere."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches*****Thaddeus Cohen***

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Palm Beach Post (FL)

March 22, 2004

**Governor's choice for Growth Chief seen as curious**

Author: Jane Musgrave

Less than a month ago, **Thaddeus Cohen** was doing what has consumed him since he hung his shingle on a Delray Beach storefront 20 years ago. "I was just down here toiling away, trying to make a living," said the architect, who has a staff of one. Three weeks later, he found himself at a news conference standing next to Gov. Jeb Bush. **Cohen**, the governor announced as news cameras flashed, was to become the secretary of the Florida Department of Community Affairs, a far-reaching agency that has roughly 360 employees and a \$625 million budget. "I'm basically having an out-of-body experience," the 53-year-old said last week of the dramatic turn his life has taken in what alternately feels like a nanosecond and a lifetime. **Cohen** is far from the only one stunned by his appointment.

Unlike his predecessors, who were well-known in political circles, **Cohen** is barely known in southern Palm Beach County, much less the state. "Never heard of him," said state Sen. Ron Klein, who was miffed that Bush didn't alert him that someone from his district and his political party was being considered for the powerful post. Still, the Delray Beach Democrat said that since the surprise March 10 announcement he has heard good things about **Cohen**. "He has a reputation as a very committed person," Klein said. "As an architect, he's very well respected."

While not questioning **Cohen's** ability, others question Bush's motives for tapping an unknown to head the agency that has long been at the apex of the state's ongoing war over development. The appointment bears an eerie similarity to Bush's decision to name Mary Hooks head of the Department of Labor and Employment Security six years ago. Like **Cohen**, Hooks was a black Democrat from Palm Beach County who ran her own business and had no statewide political experience. Ten months after Hooks' appointment, the Labor Department was torn apart, 3,800 of its 5,712 full-time jobs cut and many of its programs eliminated. Hooks died March 4.

In the months before he appointed Hooks, Bush made no secret of his desire to revamp the Labor Department, and he's making no secret now of wanting to revamp the Department of Community Affairs by merging it with the Secretary of State's Office. Mindful of that history, some wonder whether **Cohen's** appointment is merely a way to seal those goals. "The agency's under a lot of pressure," said Lance deHaven-Smith, a public policy professor at Florida State University. "There's an obvious need for someone with a strong hand to lead it, that is, unless you don't want it to go anywhere."

Speaking both of **Cohen** and his Department of Community Affairs predecessor, Colleen Castille, a former Cabinet aide whom Bush shifted to head the Department of Environmental Protection, deHaven-Smith said: "Not to put world-class talent in these positions, at the base of it shows a lack of dedication to growth management and environmental protection." The only others interviewed for the post, according to Bush's staff, were Charlotte County Commissioner

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*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Matt DeBoer and Ginny Myrick, a former Jacksonville city councilwoman who is a land-use and business consultant.

Not regarded as yes man. Those who have watched **Cohen** say that if Bush thinks he appointed a yes man, he tapped the wrong guy. Hank Fishkind, an Orlando economist, said he was impressed with **Cohen** as a member of the Governor's Growth Management Study Commission, created in 2000. Surrounded by such political heavyweights as then-Orange County Commission Chairman Mel Martinez, who went on to head the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, former Florida Agriculture Secretary Bob Crawford and J. Allison DeFoor, the governor's Everglades policy director, **Cohen** did more than hold his own, Fishkind said. "He was really a powerful figure," Fishkind said. "He has good problem-solving skills. He's articulate. He's a strong guy. That's what we want in a secretary." Most, including **Cohen**, say his role on the commission caught Bush's attention and led to the appointment.

As he has done in his architectural work throughout South Florida, **Cohen's** focus on the commission was the need to keep cities vibrant, to meld buildings into their surroundings so they become part of the larger community. As a member of the study panel, **Cohen** said, he saw his philosophy reflected in residents' frustration. "The citizens in the state, in many cases, are not happy with what they see, what they drive through, what they experience," he said. "A lot of that is to do with how we design physical spaces." By focusing on the impact of development, growth-management laws often fail to address what buildings will look like and what effect they will have on a community. The laws often inhibit urban redevelopment at the expense of rural areas. "If we have cities that are more functional, then rural areas can be more successful because there will be less pressure on them," he said.

Scripps project on his watch

Ironically, two of the biggest projects **Cohen** will face when he takes over the agency on April 12 at a salary in the \$107,000 range are the antithesis of his passion for urban development. He will oversee the plans for the development of an expansion branch of The Scripps Research Institute on thousands of acres in rural northwestern Palm Beach County and of the St. Joe Paper Company's plans for its 1-million-acre holdings in the Panhandle.

While some suggest **Cohen** was tapped because Bush wanted a Palm Beach County resident to shepherd the Scripps project through the regulatory process, **Cohen** said Bush never mentioned the biotechnology research park. Charles Pattison, executive director of 1000 Friends of Florida, said the job of Department of Community Affairs secretary is too far-reaching to appoint someone solely on the basis of one, albeit massive, project. Like others, Pattison said he wishes there was more on which to judge **Cohen**. But, he said, that might have been one of things that made **Cohen** attractive. "Others might have had more baggage," Pattison said. Still, he said, it's difficult to predict what a person will do once they are in power. "Look at Tom Pelham," he said, "when he became secretary of DCA everyone said he was just a developer's attorney. He turned out to be one of the strictest directors we've ever had."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

***Thaddeus Cohen***

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Rosalind Murray, a program director for the Delray Beach Community Redevelopment Agency, said one thing she has learned about **Cohen** over the years is that he is unflinching in his beliefs. "He doesn't march to your drummer or my drummer," she said, "he marches to his own drummer."

**Thaddeus Cohen**

Education: Kent State University, B.A., architecture.

Professional: **Thaddeus Cohen** Architects, president, Delray Beach.

Civic involvement: Governor's Growth Management Study Commission 2000-2001; board member, 1000 Friends of Florida; past member, Delray Beach Housing Authority; past chairman, Palm Beach County Affordable Housing Commission; former board member, Broward Alliance; past chairman, Black Economic Development, Broward County.

Selected projects: Spady Elementary School, Delray Beach; Anne Kolb Nature Center, Hollywood; Spanish Courts, Riviera Beach; High Ridge Family Center, West Palm Beach; Loxahatchee Preserve Nature Center, Palm Beach County; Bahama Village/Southwest Neighborhood Preservation Plan, Key West; Northwest Neighborhood Study, West Palm Beach.

Personal: Married to Sylvia, a researcher at the Center for Urban and Environmental Solutions at Florida Atlantic University; 19-year-old daughter.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Thaddeus Cohen**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Sun Sentinel  
August 7, 1998

**Delray Housing Board earns B+ - Federal agency raises grade after visiting the site**  
Author: Brad Bennett

The Delray Beach Housing Authority has risen above its "troubled" status, HUD officials announced on Thursday. The local agency, which supervises the 200-unit Carver Estates public-housing project, is now classified as a "standard performer" and has raised its management score above failing, officials with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development said. The score will not be final until next month. "We are happy with the tentative scoring that we've received," said **Thaddeus Cohen**, the Housing Authority's vice chairman. "I wasn't concerned. I knew we would do well."

Thursday's announcement concluded a visit this week by HUD officials to the Delray Beach agency, where they spent three days poring over documents to determine whether the agency actually made the improvements it claimed. A 1996 HUD audit designated the management as "troubled" for keeping sloppy records, mismanaging finances and improperly maintaining public-housing buildings.

Last year, the agency improved its tentative score to 60.88 out of a possible 100, or a D, but that was based largely on a self-evaluation. Despite the apparent improvements, HUD officials continued to list the agency as "troubled" until they could confirm the score with an on-site review. Following this week's review, **Cohen** said the Housing Authority has a new score of 89.72, or a B-plus, a marked improvement over the 54.40 score in 1996.

HUD officials would not confirm the new score until it is final. "We can hardly wait until it becomes official," said Dorothy Ellington, the local agency's executive director, in a news release. "This is excellent news. The staff has worked hard over the past 18 months to reach this point, and they are to be congratulated." HUD sent in consultants last year after learning that Ellington was receiving applications for the director's job \_ a position for which she was applying.

The Housing Authority gave the permanent job to Ellington last month, crediting her with overseeing the improvements as interim director. Previously, two directors were fired for illegal check-writing schemes. Former interim Director Ronald Range was accused of writing agency checks for personal business and was fired in 1996. He was arrested earlier this year and sentenced to three years' probation. To avoid jail time, he agreed to pay back the \$2,296 he stole from the agency and do community service. Range was under house arrest for the first year of probation. On Tuesday he pleaded guilty in Palm Beach County Court to charges of violating his house arrest by visiting a Broward County pawnshop in April, court records show. He was given 36 months of house arrest for that charge.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
***Thaddeus Cohen***  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Palm Beach Post  
July 31, 1998

**Delray agency balks at architect's high fee**  
**CRA won't sign contract for redoing historic home**  
Author: Mary Lou Pickel

The city's Community Redevelopment Agency says it won't sign a contract with an architect to design and manage the renovation of the Solomon D. Spady house because the price is too high. "It's a lot of money for a little project," CRA Executive Assistant Diane Hervey said of the architect's \$31,500 price tag. CRA Executive Director Chris Brown was unavailable for comment. The CRA board unanimously chose architect **Thaddeus Cohen** earlier this year over two others based on his qualifications. **Cohen** later asked for \$31,500 to design plans to renovate the home of former educator S.D. Spady. He also would supervise an estimated \$275,000 in renovations.

The house is slated to be a multicultural history museum. The entire project is expected to cost about \$560,000. Vera Farrington, president of EPOCH, the non-profit group that began the preservation effort, said her board had some questions about **Cohen's** contract. "Naturally, we're trying to keep the cost down," she said. But Farrington said the group wants **Cohen** as the architect because it likes his work. The group needs an architect on board before it can take advantage of a \$150,000 state historic preservation grant it will get this year. The CRA board is expected to approve paperwork at its next meeting to get the money.

**Cohen** and the two architects who bid for the job but didn't get it said renovating a house is more time-consuming and expensive than building a new one. But **Cohen** said he's flexible on his price, which equals 11.45 percent of the estimated construction cost.

Architect Jeff Silberstein said he would probably charge 8 percent to 15 percent for designing a house although he wouldn't say how much he'd charge to do the Spady job. Architect Gary Eliopolous, said he would ask 8 percent for the Spady House job, or \$22,000. The local Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity hopes to raise \$25,000 this month toward efforts to renovate the 1926 Mission Revival house. And pastors began asking for donations during sermons on Sunday.

EPOCH has received \$25,000 from the Delray Beach Historical Society, and \$5,000 from the Forrest C. Lattner Foundation. About \$20,000 has come from memberships and community donations, Farrington said.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

***Thaddeus Cohen***

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Palm Beach Post  
March 18, 1998

**BRIEFLY**

DELRAY BEACH - Police honored **Thaddeus Cohen** and Zane Emerson Tuesday for the parts they played in solving separate crimes - a homicide and an armed robbery - during the past two months. **Cohen**, a Delray Beach Housing Authority board member, heard shots outside his home Feb. 15, saw 21-year-old Eric Schunk on the ground and spotted someone riding away on a bicycle. **Cohen** stopped Brian Glatzmayer, 19, of Delray Beach and held him for police, officer Jeff Messer said.

Glatzmayer and three other teens were charged with murder. Emerson, a retired Boca Raton fire lieutenant, witnessed an armed robbery, chased a suspect and took him back to the police station, Messer said.



**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Thaddeus Cohen**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Sun Sentinel  
February 20, 1998

**I'm no hero, hero says, after nabbing Delray slay suspect**

Author: Steve Nichol

When **Thaddeus Cohen** collared a bulky teen-ager attempting to flee on a bicycle, he hastened four arrests in the murder of a popular construction worker, police said on Thursday. "His willingness to get involved, to have enough presence of mind to keep him there, was tremendous in helping us," Delray Beach Police Detective Ed Flynn said. "He definitely saved us a lot of footwork."

**Cohen**, awakened by gunshots, snagged Brian Glatzmayer, 18, at 2 a.m. on Sunday as he pedaled away from the Rainberry Woods park where Eric Schunk, 21, was shot to death. Glatzmayer later confessed to calling Schunk to meet him for a drug deal that was meant as a robbery but ended in murder, police said. A white substance was found on Schunk that could be cocaine but police have not tested it.

Statements by Glatzmayer, of Delray Beach, led to arrests and confessions on Tuesday of three teen-agers from Boynton Beach, including Ramon Franco, 15, identified as the shooter, police said. Glatzmayer, Franco, Carlos Umana, 16, and Charles Israel, 17, face attempted armed robbery and murder charges. All were in jail before Schunk's funeral on Wednesday. Flynn said he plans to nominate **Cohen** for an award. "If we didn't have [department awards] I'd get him something," Flynn said. "I was glad to help," **Cohen** said.

An architect in Delray Beach for 20 years, **Cohen** serves on the city's Housing Authority board. He has been married for 26 years and has a daughter, 13. "He's basically a good guy. He's not perfect," said his wife Sylvia.

The **Cohens** were asleep when they heard a "pop, pop" sound of gunshots outside of their Rainberry Woods home. **Thaddeus Cohen**, looking from his bedroom window, saw a car speeding away. He went outside and saw a young man standing near a body in the swale. **Cohen** told his wife to call 911 and went back to the house to get a flashlight. That's when he saw Glatzmayer leaving on a bicycle.

**Cohen**, who is 6-foot-1 and 230 pounds, said he reached out and stopped the inch-taller, 220-pound Glatzmayer. "I grabbed him around his neck and shoulder. His bike fell. He fell. I had a hold of him. I told him to get up. I started dragging him back," said **Cohen**, 47. "That's when I asked him what happened," **Cohen** said. Glatzmayer told **Cohen** that Schunk was a victim of a drive-by shooting. **Cohen** said he ordered the boy to "get down on one knee and don't move" until police arrived. "It happened so fast," **Cohen** said. Glatzmayer told police the same story he gave **Cohen**, Flynn said. Physical evidence did not match the story, police said. Schunk's wounds indicated a close-range shooting. Eventually, Glatzmayer changed his story and the arrests resulted, Flynn said.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches*****Thaddeus Cohen***

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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**Cohen** and his wife said that four days after the shooting incident, they were not thinking of **Thaddeus Cohen's** personal danger or heroism but the lives of Schunk and the four teen-agers charged in his death. Friends of Schunk have erected an elaborate memorial to him across from the **Cohen's** home. "He's dead, and the four kids, their lives are practically ruined," Sylvia Cohen said.

It's not the first time **Cohen** has been around violence. As a teen-ager in 1967, **Cohen** said he was working a summer job as a janitor in Newark, N.J., when the New Jersey National Guard, in armored personnel carriers, was called to quell racial rioting. "Just tried to stay out of the way," **Cohen** said. As a second-year architecture student at Kent State University in 1970, **Cohen** witnessed an anti-Vietnam War rally outside the architecture building that ended when Ohio National Guard members opened fire and killed four students. **Cohen** said he helped keep space around the victims in the tumult that followed.

Schunk's final moments alive brought back memories of Kent State, **Cohen** said. This time **Cohen** was down on the ground, applying cardio-pulmonary resuscitation to a young man with a bullet hole in his chest. Schunk died by the time paramedics arrived. Because the murder case was wrapped up so fast, Flynn said he did not get around to conducting a full interview of **Cohen** until Thursday. He was effusive afterward. "I'm impressed by the man. He's a very honest, straightforward person. I am going to enjoy having him as a witness."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Thaddeus Cohen**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Sun Sentinel  
January 12, 1997

**Architect has built a solid reputation, career**

Author: Marcia H. Pounds

When architect **Thaddeus Cohen** came to South Florida in 1978 to visit a former professor, he couldn't help but notice all the cranes. He decided that this market, with its growing population in need of schools, hospitals and government centers, would be the place of opportunity for him and his young family. Now, 18 years later, **Cohen**, 46, runs his own architectural firm in Delray Beach and he finally feels he has the lay of the land.

"It takes time, particularly for a black architect, to have credibility," **Cohen** said. "Often times people don't listen to us. Then they come back and say, 'You know what you're doing. You were right.'" His firm has built a solid reputation in government work with projects including Spady Elementary in Delray Beach, the first public Montessori school in Palm Beach County; the Anne Kolb Nature Center in Hollywood; and the 79th Street Tri-Rail Station (where Tri-Rail ends in Dade County).

**Cohen** "is very insightful, he's innovative, and certainly energetic," said James Garver, president of the Broward Economic Development Council. "He's one of those ultimate salesmen who is always out selling his wares and trying to do a little bit better." As a certified minority contractor, **Cohen** said he sometimes gets frustrated when his firm fails to make the short list for a project. But he doesn't believe in public grousing. Instead, "I get a better understanding of what people are expecting from us," he said.

Garver said it is **Cohen's** willingness to listen and to get involved in the community that has been the design for a successful architectural career in South Florida. To help establish his architectural firm, **Cohen** paid for \$1 million in professional liability insurance. That's what was necessary to team up with a larger firm for a project. "We eliminate the excuses. We carry it. ... I've always tried to position ourselves so there was no question of our ability to do the work," he said.

**Cohen** also immersed himself in the community, which often takes time away from business and family. But **Cohen** said he understood early on that "if you don't do it, you're not a player." He has been chairman of the Palm Beach County's Affordable Housing Commission and now is a Delray Beach Housing Authority board member, which has proven to be a formidable task. Soon after he joined the board, the Housing Authority became mired in trouble. The last two executive directors have been fired in connection with investigations of financial misconduct.

But **Cohen** faces such problems matter-of-factly. "You discover problems and then you go about the business of fixing them," he said. **Cohen** said one of his most satisfying architectural projects was renovation of the historic Tabernacle Baptist Church in West Palm Beach, the oldest African-American church in Palm Beach County. Robert Dillingham, trustee of the church's

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

***Thaddeus Cohen***

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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board during the renovation, said **Cohen's** design work was instrumental to financing the renovation project of the 104-year-old church. "I know how difficult it is being a black professional. I'm a black professional myself. A lot of times people are very leery of your services. I average two to three phone calls a week from people about **Cohen** and the work he's done. ... He would get a personal recommendation from our church anytime."

**Cohen** has helped other minority businesses get a running start by forming a monthly Business Forum to introduce minority business owners to mainstream business people, Garver said. **Cohen** still finds himself traveling from Brevard County to Monroe County to find government projects of interest that also pay the bills. Now settled in South Florida with his wife, Sylvia, and their 12-year-old daughter, **Cohen** said the challenge before him is to expand his firm so he can take on several projects in a closer geographic area. "In the next 10 years, hopefully we'll break the mold and pursue private work," **Cohen** said

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

***Thaddeus Cohen***

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Palm Beach Post  
September 21, 1996

**DELRAY BEACH**

Six Delray Beach Housing Authority board members were dropped as defendants in a lawsuit filed by former executive director Deborah Castellow after she was fired in January.

Palm Beach County Circuit Judge John J. Hoy dropped defendants **Thaddeus Cohen**, Howard Ellingsworth, Robin Preston, Judith Colvard, Kevin McCarty and Tom Carney on Thursday, saying the six were not served with court papers within four months as required.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
***Thaddeus Cohen***  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Palm Beach Post  
June 8, 1996

**Third person arrested in agency's check scam**

Author: Barbara Feder

A maintenance worker for the Delray Beach Housing Authority was charged Friday with using bogus checks to steal from the agency, a day after its former executive director and former board chairwoman turned themselves in on identical charges. David McNeil, 57, turned himself in Friday. He was charged with one count of grand theft and was released on \$3,000 bond.

Former Executive Director Deborah Castellow, 43, who was fired by the agency's board in January, and former board Chairwoman Rosetta Rolle, 73, turned themselves in Thursday. Each was released on \$3,000 bond.

McNeil and Castellow could not be reached for comment Friday, and Rolle declined comment. The arrests resulted from an investigation into 36 checks worth \$5,800 that were written for cleaning services that were never performed.

The checks were made out to two of Rolle's relatives and to a woman believed to be McNeil's relative. Interim Executive Director Ron Range gave the checks to the Florida Department of Law Enforcement after he could find no invoices for the work.

"Clearly, there have been problems and this does not help," said board member **Thaddeus Cohen**, a Delray Beach architect. "But I don't think it takes away from what we're doing to improve our management and fix up our units."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Thaddeus Cohen**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Sun Sentinel  
February 7, 1993

**Familiar faces: Black businesses must find support in own community**

Author: C. Ron Allen

When Donnie Dobson serves breakfast, all the faces he sees are black. When he takes phone orders for dinner, the voices he hears are those of black people. Blacks are the backbone of Dobson's business, Parker's Kitchen on West Atlantic Avenue. "If they don't support my business, I'm out," said Dobson, 42. "Ninety- nine percent of my business is black. I have a few whites who work for the city, but that's only a few."

Dobson's concerns mirror those of several other established and progressive Palm Beach County blacks who rely on black people to keep them in business. While many black professionals and business owners -- lawyers, funeral directors and restaurateurs -- said they have both black and white clients and customers, blacks account for most of their business. And even with their mixed clientele, some said they fail to gain a greater share of white business.

Architect **Thaddeus L. Cohen**, in private practice since 1986, said hard work and membership in community groups and national trade organizations are ways for blacks to develop a larger white clientele. "The more people that you know, the more your name gets around," he said. "You've got to tell people that you exist." Some blacks must be prepared to make a financial sacrifice to provide a product that is competitive and presentable, he said. "It's going to hurt badly in the beginning to meet the expectations, but if you're trying to grab local people, you have to provide them a quality comparable to what they're receiving," he said.

This also may mean working twice as hard to gain an edge over the competition as well as to gain trust among other blacks. "It's hard to convince the black community that a black attorney or even a black doctor is competent," said Wilbur Chaney, a Delray Beach attorney. "We're still faced with that stigma. ..." Bill and Caroline Wilson, owners of Village Cleaners in Delray Beach and Lantana, hoped to expand their clientele when they moved their business from Hollywood to Boca Raton in 1982. Despite a prime Boca Raton location, business was so bad, they had to close their doors.

In June, the Wilsons opened a pickup location in a shopping center on Lake Ida Road. Although they have some white clients, most of their customers are either members of Mount Olive Missionary Baptist Church -- a black church where they worship -- or Haitians. Businessman Alfred "Zack" Straghn stresses the need for blacks to support neighborhood businesses. If blacks fail to support their own, many neighborhood businesses will crumble, he said.

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***Thaddeus Cohen***  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Sun Sentinel  
December 29, 1993

**Consortium names leader**  
Author: Staff reports

Delray Beach architect **Thaddeus Cohen** has been named the new Board of Directors chairman for the African-American Cultural Consortium of the Palm Beaches. The advocacy organization, founded in 1988, serves cultural interests in the county on behalf of African-Americans. It has organized such events as the Gospel Jubilee concerts in West Palm Beach and the African-diaspora fine arts festival.



**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches*****Thaddeus Cohen****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Miami Herald (FL)

June 14, 1992

**A closer look at four architects and their imprints on S. Florida**

Author: Beth Dunlop

Here's a look at the lives and the work of the four architects pictured on Page 1G. When he was a boy growing up in East Orange, N.J., **Thaddeus Cohen** watched the construction of a freeway right through his neighborhood. The public housing projects were soon to follow. "I'd wanted to be a farmer till then," he said, "but then I began to wonder who were these people who designed public housing projects that looked like jails?" He decided to become an architect. He went to Kent State University in Ohio, then went to work, first as a ditch-digger, then as an estimator and finally as an architect. He became the chief architect for Cleveland's Metro Parks System.

One winter he came to Boca Raton to visit a friend and was drawn to Florida. He worked for two large firms -- Peabody & Childs and Darby & Way -- and then "quit on Friday the 13th and started working out of my own house on Monday." That was six years ago.

Now he has an office and is designing schools in Delray Beach and Pompano Beach, a community center in Cocoa, a hospital fitness center in Hollywood and, not ironically, public housing in Deerfield Beach. He also is designing a three-building complex for the Anne Kolb Nature Center as part of a new park in Hollywood.

**Cohen** also is the urban planner for several major neighborhood projects, including the Sistrunk neighborhood in Fort Lauderdale and the Bahama Village in Key West.

Neil Hall has traversed the tropics -- born in Jamaica, reared in the Bahamas and educated in Florida. He came to Miami on his way to McGill University and changed his mind when he discovered how cold it got in Montreal. Instead, drawn to architecture by his interest since early childhood in art and math, he started at Miami-Dade Community College and went on to the University of Florida, where he got bachelor's and master's degrees in architecture. After graduation, he started at the Jacksonville firm of Reynolds Smith & Hills, then returned to Miami. He began at Greenleaf Telesca, Bouterse Perez & Fabregas and then went to Spillis Candela & Partners. Along the way he worked on such projects as Florida International University's Interama Campus, Barnett Bank Plaza in Fort Lauderdale and Sailfish Point in Palm Beach. "I was given a lot of latitude, a lot of responsibilities," he said.

Eventually, Hall went to work for Borelli & Associates, where he was the firm's project manager for the Miami Beach Convention Center (done in conjunction with three other firms) and the North Dade Vo-Tech Center, a new high school.

Then he got a little help from a friend. Actor Philip- Michael Thomas (of Miami Vice fame) hired him to design a house and, with that yet-to-be-built commission, he opened his own firm in 1990. Now, among other projects, he's at work on an important study of the McFarlane Historic

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches*****Thaddeus Cohen****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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District in Coconut Grove, where he's looking at ways to preserve early shotgun houses and other vernacular architecture.

As a child in Jamaica, Hermine Ricketts knew what she wanted to be, "but I didn't have a name for it. I didn't know any architects. I didn't have any role models." In Jamaica, no school offered a full architectural degree, so she set off to Howard University in Washington, D.C. She moved to Miami "on my way back to Jamaica" and started along a nice safe path -- getting an MBA -- and then changed to the chanciest of all courses to follow. She went into business for herself, choosing to "be the person who handles everything." As the only black woman registered architect in South Florida, Ricketts finds she faces a double bill of discrimination -- racism and sexism. But she has surmounted both to renovate hospital labs and wards at Jackson Memorial Hospital and the Veterans Administration Hospital and schools.

Two -- Miami Shores and Comstock elementary schools -- were done in partnership with a white male Broward firm and two -- Jan Mann and Carol City Elementary schools -- were done on her own. She also designed African Square Park on Northwest 62nd Street.

When he got his master's degree from Harvard in 1974, Craig Stark set off on a series of apprenticeships in Boston-based architecture firms. He ended up at Boston's black-owned Stull & Lee, architects for Biscayne Tower in downtown Miami's Park West area and other buildings. He got a second education there. He learned about finances, an area "where white firms don't let you in the door." Soon, he was ready to go out on his own, so he made a big leap. He moved to Miami to open Cruz Stark, and luck struck: The firm was selected the local liaison for the Miami Arena.

Eventually, that partnership dissolved, and Stark is in a new joint firm, Heisenbottle Stark & Partners, with some high- profile jobs. Among them are the renovation of and additions to Edison Middle School and the design of 115 bathrooms at Miami International Airport, "a project that could be thankless, but we're going to do and do it well!"

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches*****Thaddeus Cohen****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Palm Beach Post  
October 6, 1991

**Delray architect coaches community rebirth**

Author: Sonja Isger

The term for it was "urban renewal," but all he knew as a kid growing up in East Orange, N.J., was that his friends were moving because the freeway was coming through. The stark, imposing building going up down the street was rumored to be a jailhouse, but it was really a government housing project. And all that young **Thaddeus Cohen** could wonder is why a building for people had to look like it imprisoned them. Thirty years later and hundreds of miles away, **Cohen**, 40, is still challenging the old school of architecture and urban design. It's a luxury he can afford now that he owns a small firm in Delray Beach. It's also an attitude he must sell if he's to stay in business.

**Cohen** has spent the better part of six years networking with those who dole out contracts for schools, courthouses and other public buildings. He's out to convince them that those buildings should be the center of their communities. They should be identifiable. And they should convey their importance. "Those buildings should become visible in the community because you get more participation, they're more inviting," he said. "When you build a bank, it ought to be substantial. And when you drive by a school, it should say 'school' to you," **Cohen** said. "Around here you can't tell the difference between some schools and industrial parks. You could hang a sign in front that says 'IBM' and you'd believe it."

**Cohen** also has worked with residents in West Palm Beach and Delray Beach who want to improve their neighborhood or whose neighborhood has been targeted for redevelopment. One of the few black architects who heads a firm in Palm Beach County, **Cohen** also serves on many advisory boards including the county's Affordable Housing Commission. "When people talk redevelopment, the people in that community fear displacement," he said. "They think, 'Something's going to happen to us,' not 'for us.'"

The tenor saxophone player and former college running back said starting his own business was one of the easiest things he's ever done. **Cohen** graduated from Kent State in 1973 with a bachelor's degree in architecture and came to Florida in 1978 after visiting a former professor who lived in Boca Raton. He became one of the minions in a larger architectural firm. Then, while he was the director of architecture for an engineering firm, he had a change of heart. "I quit my job on Friday the 13th, and on Monday I woke up and was in business," **Cohen** said. "The hardest part is staying in business."

**DESIGNS SPADY RENOVATION**

But his efforts are slowly paying off. **Cohen's** firm did some of the preliminary designs for redeveloping Atlantic Avenue in Delray Beach, designed a multi-purpose county government building in Belle Glade and the north Broward County Courthouse. Most recently, **Cohen** cracked the Palm Beach County School Board contracting circle and earned a job near to his

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

***Thaddeus Cohen***

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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heart and home: renovating Spady Elementary School in Delray Beach, where his daughter Amanda attends first-grade.

For almost four decades, Spady's front door opened just yards from Eighth Avenue. Though the school sat on 10 acres, the classrooms huddled on the parcel's east side with their backs to the predominantly black neighborhood. A chain-link fence secured the grounds. Under **Cohen's** pencil, the school's entrance has done a 180-degree turn back into the neighborhood. And the chain-link fences have disappeared from most of the school's perimeter.

**SCHOOL NOW MORE OPEN**

"By moving the school's orientation, we were able to take down the fence and the school now opens up to the community," **Cohen** said. The move has also turned a grandfatherly ficus tree on the school's backside into a landmark "signature" in the school's front yard. And **Cohen** has planned renovations to the inside as well, creating dance and art studios for the Montessori and magnet programs that will draw children from various ethnic backgrounds to Spady, said Susan Storm, a plan review specialist at the school district. "You can tell kids to stay in school because it will get you somewhere. In that neighborhood, we can just point to it and say, 'I know, because I did that,' " **Cohen** said.

**Cohen's** knowledge of the community helped him get the contract, Storm said. "He's very well-aware and perceptive of what the community wants," Storm said. "He was able to capture the flavor of the neighborhood and give the school a presence." But a school with presence is not enough to turn around an entire neighborhood in decline, so **Cohen** has gone to the residents and suggested how they might help themselves. Three years ago, West Palm Beach paid him \$67,000 for a study of the blighted northwest neighborhood, an area bounded by First Street, Palm Beach Lakes Boulevard and the Florida East Coast and CSX Corp. railroad tracks. "We don't think people look at communities as a whole," **Cohen** said. "They look at schools, but not at businesses. They look at businesses, but not at homes."

**NORTHWEST AREA WORK**

You can rebuild the downtown, he said. But businesses won't survive without resident customers. And residents won't move in if their kids will be bused to distant schools. And then the community falls apart, **Cohen** said. West Palm Beach was on the verge of beginning downtown redevelopment, calling for plans to build what would become the Raymond F. Kravis Center for the Performing Arts. **Cohen** went to residents of the northwest neighborhood and told them that it was time to end the residential exodus and neighborhood decline. "You need to develop a marketing strategy so that your community becomes known," **Cohen** said. "Right now all people read is that this neighborhood has one of the highest crime rates."

But the neighborhood packed natural appeal, **Cohen** argued. "You're a New Jersey or Canadian resident and you get something in the mail. It asks, 'How would you like to live in sunny Florida, less than 5 miles from the beach, minutes from a downtown district and within 20 minutes of some of the biggest malls in the area? How would you like to live in a historic area on the highest point in town-- where from the third floor, you can see from the Intracoastal to Clear

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches*****Thaddeus Cohen****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Lake?" "I asked, 'How many of you would like that?' and they all nodded. And then I said, 'That's where you live.' You just have to sell it." They took his advice, beefing up their neighborhood associations and working with police to curb crime. While the neighborhood's problems are far from over, publicity soon focused on neighborhood housing projects and renovations as well as crime statistics.

**TRADITIONAL CONCEPTS**

And the city through its Community Redevelopment Agency has dedicated money to further change, said Sharon Jackson, a senior planner for West Palm Beach. "I don't know that his ideas were so different as that he spent a lot of time with the residents and other members of the community to get a consensus," said Jackson, who supervised the study for the city. "He brought various groups together so that when the plan came before the City Commission, it was what they all wanted and there was very little opposition."

**Cohen** has extolled similar advice from Delray Beach to Key West. Even when he isn't hired to make a difference, he finds a way to get his word in. As a member of the Affordable Housing Commission, he gets to influence the county's policies, such as how densely projects can and should be built. "He is quite reserved yet thorough in whatever he says," said fellow commission member and Wellington developer George DeGuardiola. "There is a certain amount of evidence that the ideals he expressed of traditional neighborhoods are principles that are getting ready to be accepted."

Says **Cohen**, "That's not glamorous, but it's the kind of thing that, when it's done, will help people build better affordable housing. And it's not just for them, it's for me. I get involved in development issues because if the restaurant doesn't exist, I don't have a client. And if they don't grow, I don't have a client again."

**THADDEUS COHEN**

**HIS STORY:** **Cohen**, who owns a small architectural firm, has worked with residents in West Palm Beach and Delray Beach who want to improve their neighborhood or whose neighborhood has been targeted for redevelopment. One of the few black architects who heads a firm in Palm Beach County, **Cohen** also serves on many advisory boards.

**QUOTE:** 'When you build a bank, it ought to be substantial. And when you drive by a school, it should say "school" to you. Around here you can't tell the difference between some schools and industrial parks. You could hang a sign in front that says "IBM" and you'd believe it.'

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches*****Thaddeus Cohen****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Sun Sentinel  
March 25, 1991

**Minority firms feels betrayed**

Author: Jane Musgrave

Lorry Hufford laughs when you ask whether she has ever gotten a county contract. "They say, 'Who are you? We've never heard of you.' And then it's, 'What would a woman know about that?'" said the owner of a West Palm Beach office systems firm. "They discriminate against you because you're small, that's a given. But if you're a women or a minority, then it's a double bias." Hufford's view of Palm Beach County's contracting practices is not unique. During the past two months, dozens of women and black and Hispanic business owners have spun similar tales to county committees charged with devising ways to give all business owners a fair shot at county work.

After watching and participating on the committees, many, like Hufford, thought that county officials were actually listening after years of ignoring them. Those hopes were crushed two weeks ago when county commissioners refused to accept a \$175,000 study that found that the county had been a passive participant in discrimination that has kept women- and minority-owned firms at the bottom rungs of the county's economic ladder. The commission's refusal to accept the report meant the committees' recommended ways of reversing the discrimination were put on hold.

An outraged Hufford said she thinks the commission is just looking for a way to ensure that the recommendations, opposed by the predominantly white, male Associated General Contractors group, never become reality. When the recommendations are reconsidered on April 9, "they're going to say, 'Now that we were magnanimous enough to accept the study, don't force us to do anything else,'" she said. However, others said, if that is the commission's grand scheme, they're in for a surprise.

The release of the report in December was a catalyst for formerly isolated women and black and Hispanic business owners to start talking to one another, said Tony McCray, head of the Minority Business Development Center. The commission's refusal to accept the report underscored the need to join forces, he said. "We've had more calls (this week) from people than ever before," McCray said. "It's galvanizing us."

While the commission has been worrying that white, male contractors will sue if the county implements the programs, the minority community now has good grounds to file suit if the commission refuses to take meaningful steps to reverse the discrimination, McCray said. Ironically, if forced to do so, the minority community can could use the county's own report as a basis for legal action, said Clarence Anthony, a management consultant who is also mayor of South Bay.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

***Thaddeus Cohen***

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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That discrimination exists is irrefutable, said **Thaddeus Cohen**, a Delray Beach architect. The study, by the Tallahassee-based MGT of America, found that of the \$97 million in construction contracts the county awarded in 1989, \$73,000 went to minority or female-owned firms. "The numbers speak for themselves," he said. And, he and others said, the steps they want the commission to take to narrow the gap are small compared to what discrimination has cost women and minorities.

The most controversial recommendation would ensure a certain percentage of county construction projects are awarded to women- or minority-owned firms. The general contractors group has vowed to fight any so-called set-aside program, saying that would hurt small firms owned by white men and drive up the cost of projects. But, Assistant County Attorney Tammy Field said, the set-asides would be limited to projects that cost less than \$200,000 and only be offered when there are at least two minority- or women-owned firms capable of doing the work. Even then, bids would have to be close to county projections. "We're not going to spend extra county money to obtain participation," she said.

Anthony said, "If I was a public official, I'd jump on those recommendations because they're minimal." **Cohen** said the issue goes beyond merely who gets county contracts. It is an economic issue that has long-range effects for the county. By continuing to cut certain groups out of the economic pie, the county is ensuring that those groups never get ahead and fend for themselves. If you don't give people a reason to succeed, they won't, **Cohen** said.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

***Thaddeus Cohen***

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Palm Beach Post  
January 16, 1991

**Over opposition, builder added to minority panel**

Author: Meg James

Despite objections, county commissioners Tuesday added a spot for the Associated General Contractors on an advisory committee of minority and women business owners. Earlier this month, committee members voted not to allow an AGC representative as a voting member on the 16-member committee. The contractors' representative would be divisive and stymie the group's work, they said. The committee is supposed to suggest by March 12 ways the county can award more contracts to minority- and women-owned firms. A \$175,000 report concluded last month that the county is a "passive participant" in discrimination. The committee includes women, Hispanics and blacks as well as County Commissioner Maude Ford Lee.

AGC spokesman Geoffrey Sluggett said his group should be included because it represents big builders who receive county contracts. Any changes in the system "will directly affect our industry," he said. But **Thaddeus L. Cohen**, a Delray Beach architect and a member of the committee, argued the AGC shouldn't be on the panel because it is not a minority- or women-owned enterprise. Besides, he said, "they already have access to the County Commission."

Commissioner Carol Roberts said an AGC member should be the 17th member of the committee. She said it would "almost be a slap in the face" not to include them. Commissioners voted 5-2 to put the AGC on the board. Commissioners Karen Marcus and Lee voted no.



**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

***Thaddeus Cohen***

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Miami Herald (FL)  
October 16, 1990

**Poitier admits she was wrong  
Commissioner tried to steer job to friend**

Author: Steve Bousquet

Broward County Commissioner Sylvia Poitier, one of five people evaluating proposals for a half-million dollar contract, tried to steer the job to an architect friend -- an effort she acknowledged Monday was "wrong." Nevertheless, Poitier will try today to block award of the job to another top-rated firm after filing what is apparently the first protest by an elected official over the county's contract negotiations procedure. At stake is a \$520,000 contract to design a badly needed 110-bed drug and alcohol treatment center on Blount Road in Pompano Beach.

Before she even heard the competitors' presentations, Poitier made it known she wanted Delray Beach architect **Thaddeus Cohen** to get the project, the commissioner said Monday. She said she told two rival architects, Chuck McKirahan of N-Y Associates and Michael Shiff, she favored **Cohen**. "It's probably unfair, but I think it's best to tell the truth," Poitier said. "**Thaddeus** was my favorite. I know how good he is."

Poitier said she knew of the quality of **Cohen's** work on the Stanley Terrace apartment complex in Deerfield Beach, where she lives. The firm also has done work for the Broward County School Board and several cities. **Cohen**, 39, is chairman of the Council for Black Economic Development in Broward and is on the boards of the Greater Fort Lauderdale Chamber of Commerce and the American Lung Association. "We feel we've done a lot of things that merit consideration," **Cohen** said. "We were kind of surprised we didn't get it."

Poitier's protest, which will be discussed by the full commission this morning, comes at a time of growing discontent among blacks about their economic stake in the county. In addition, rising interest rates and a tougher growth law have created tougher competition for government contracts. Poitier filed her protest Oct. 3 but did not specify the basis for her complaint. In an interview Monday, she declined to elaborate. "I have a protest," she said. "I don't plan to discuss it in the newspaper."

"It's very unusual," Commission Chairman Scott Cowan said of the protest. "I think she'd like to see a minority architect get this particular project." He said he doubted Poitier's protest would be upheld by the other commissioners today. By state law, architect and engineering contracts are not awarded to the lowest bidder. Instead, under a process known as competitive negotiation, the county can consider other subjective factors. A five-member committee met Sept. 26, heard 20-minute presentations from all eight firms and ranked them. Each member of the panel listed the firms by preference, with 1 being the highest rank. It was a close vote.

Peacock-Corrales Architects of Pompano Beach was ranked first with a total score of 13. **Thaddeus Cohen** Architects was ranked second with 14, and N-Y was third with 16 points.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

***Thaddeus Cohen***

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Besides Poitier, others on the committee were Commissioner Gerald Thompson; Phil Woolaver, the county director of construction management; Russ Bachman, head of facilities; and Marie Reynolds, who runs the drug and alcohol division.

Poitier ranked **Cohen** first; Thompson and Reynolds rated Peacock-Corrales first. Peacock-Corrales' two partners in charge are a woman and a Hispanic. Both firms qualify as minority-owned businesses under county policy. "I was distressed to hear that Commissioner Poitier filed a protest," partner-in-charge Tamara Peacock said. "The main issue is (she) did not like the outcome of the selection process."

Poitier raised questions about the voting procedure used by the selection committee. Thompson was still calculating his rankings while other members' votes were being read aloud, according to a county audio recording of the session. Poitier asked County Attorney John Copelan if it were proper for the vote tally to be announced while one ranker was still voting. "At best, an argument could be made that a procedural error occurred," Copelan said Monday. Woolaver dismissed the effect of the voting procedure on the result. "The process was fair," he said.

During deliberations, Woolaver was recounting how much county work each firm received. He said that **Cohen's** firm worked as an assistant on a Hollywood courthouse parking garage, but has never had the control of a contract. "We talk about spreading the wealth around," Poitier interjected. Asked to recall the last time a commissioner protested the way the architects were ranked, Woolaver said: "It's never happened."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Thaddeus Cohen**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Sun Sentinel  
September 29, 1990

**Minority firms make pitch at trade fair- qualifications**

Author: Joan Fleischer

Networking. A key word in the 1980s may be critical in an economic slowdown of the 1990s. A number of small minority business owners networked on Friday in Boca Raton with corporate purchasing agents from some of the region's biggest companies at a Minority Business Trade Fair. Booths were set up by 70 exhibitors -- including IBM, Florida Power & Light Co., Pratt & Whitney, NCNB and SunBank/South Florida. And minority business owners, many of whom run small graphics, printing, office supply and janitorial businesses, had a chance to pitch their goods and services.

Turnout was so good at Palm Beach County's first Minority Business Trade Fair that its sponsors now want to make it an annual event. "The word is out that we're here," said Carlene Lichtenstein, executive director of the Florida Regional Minority Purchasing Council, one of the sponsors of the fair held at Florida Atlantic University. The Florida Small and Minority Business Assistance Act of 1985 encourages state agencies and state universities to award 15 percent of funds for goods, services and construction to state-certified minority business.

Groups qualified to seek state certification for their businesses include blacks, females, Hispanics, Asians, Native Americans, Native Hawaiians and the physically disabled. Some have criticized potential abuses of the minority set-aside law. In some cases, it has been discovered that a wife or minority partner was being used to front a business. The state law requires at least 51 percent of the business be owned and managed by a minority.

There is no government law requiring private enterprise to buy supplies from minority owners, but many companies find positive returns to affirmative action in the marketplace. "From an equal opportunity standpoint, we feel it's in IBM's best interest to seek out business with minority owners," said Brent W. Campbell, minority supplier programs coordinator for International Business Machines Corp. **Thaddeus L. Cohen**, a Delray Beach architect who also is president of the Council for Black Economic Development, said he was pleased with the trade fair at FAU. "We're a small firm looking to market itself," **Cohen** said.

What does it take to be a state-certified minority business?

--Independently owned business with fewer than 25 employees and a net worth of less than \$1 million.

--Be at least 51% owned and managed by a Florida resident who is one of the following: Black, Asian, Hispanic, female, Native American Indian or Native Hawaiian.

--Business should have started and be in Florida.

--Complete a 10-page application with the Department of General Services in Tallahassee.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

***Thaddeus Cohen***

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Palm Beach Post  
April 22, 1990

**Affordable-Housing Panel picks chairman, executive committee**

Author: Meg James

Members of the county's Affordable Housing Commission met for the first time Friday, tried to define their mission and selected a chairman and executive committee. Nine of the commission's 21 members did not attend. County Commissioner Carol Roberts, who serves on the panel, said the meeting's short notice, not a lack of interest, contributed to the low turnout. John Corbett, a contractor and chairman of the Florida Housing Foundation Inc., was elected to head the county panel. **Thaddeus L. Cohen**, president of his own architectural firm, was named vice chairman.

The group selected five others to serve on an executive committee. Lake Worth Mayor Ron Exline, a member of the panel, objected to the balloting process and voted against the nominees. Commission members were told their goal was to "promote and encourage affordable housing." Affordable housing is defined by county officials as new homes costing less than \$90,000 or monthly rent or mortgage payments that do not exceed 30 percent of a person's or household's income. The Affordable Housing Commission's next meeting is scheduled for 9:30 a.m. May 2 at the Governmental Center.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

***Thaddeus Cohen***

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Palm Beach Post  
June 17, 1989

**Old Northwest section on way back**

Author: Bill McGoun

**Thaddeus Cohen** believes the old northwest section of West Palm Beach already is on the way back up, and he has a lot of ideas about sustaining the momentum. **Mr. Cohen**, a Delray Beach architect and planning consultant, is preparing for the Community Redevelopment Agency a plan to bring new life to the oldest existing black neighborhood in Palm Beach County. He would encourage new housing, cluster commercial uses and establish a historic district down the spine of the city's highest ridge.

Both population and home ownership have been declining in recent years in the area, defined for the purpose of the study as between the railroads from First Street north to Palm Beach Lakes Boulevard. Those who remain have feared their neighborhood would be gobbled up as downtown revitalization progresses. The demolition programs being carried out by Downtown/Uptown to the south and by the city within the area have done little to ease those fears.

The city says its demolition program is more than half completed. **Mr. Cohen** sees the task now as stabilizing those buildings that need work but still can be saved. In fact, the word stabilize recurs frequently as he speaks. This is the key to saving the neighborhood for residential use, he says. The forces of growth are inevitable as downtown bounces back, he says, and if there is not a stable residential base in the neighborhood it will be overwhelmed. Such a base also is necessary, he says, if new businesses are to be attracted, bringing job opportunities with them.

So how should the area be stabilized, and how should it be revitalized? **Mr. Cohen** believes the former already is pretty well accomplished and the latter can be realized through sound planning and some incentives. The 6-acre tract on the east side of Rosemary Avenue that almost was the site of a warehouse development would instead be developed in multifamily residential structures, thus acting as a buffer between downtown and the predominantly single-family areas to the west.

Replacement of razed homes in those areas would be in character with existing uses, though there may be some zero-lot-line townhouses to make a virtue out of narrow lots, much as envisioned for the old section of Lake Worth. One problem of the area as it stands, according to **Mr. Cohen**, is that there are too many small businesses competing directly with each other. In his plan, commercial areas would be clustered on Tamarind Avenue between Sixth and Eighth streets and on Rosemary between First and Fourth. Sapodilla Avenue already has a good mix of uses, he said.

The capstone of redevelopment would be on the city's highest land, where a historic district would extend along Division Street. At the north end would be Palmview Elementary, a campus

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

***Thaddeus Cohen***

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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of great significance because it once housed Industrial High, from which many older residents graduated. To the south are the distinctive church buildings that used to dominate the skyline and the historic block between Fifth and Sixth streets, where one notable home is to be rehabilitated and another rebuilt.

A lot of details remain to be worked out, but **Mr. Cohen** says he thinks the very fact of revitalization will help draw the new residential and commercial uses that will complete the process. He envisions a mixed-income area, much as it was before new housing opportunities allowed the black middle class to move westward. What he does not want is a repository for low-income housing only.

The trend is back toward city centers, he said, and this puts the old neighborhood in an ideal location. It is convenient to the Tri-County Commuter Rail, to downtown jobs, to hospitals, to festivals and to the proposed civic center-performing arts complex. On Tuesday, **Mr. Cohen** will present his plan to the CRA. If the CRA goes along, the task then will be to make these dreams come true.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

***Thaddeus Cohen***

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Miami Herald (FL)

June 6, 1987

**Minority businesses get a boost**

Author: Steve Bousquet

Florida Commerce Secretary Jeb Bush was in Fort Lauderdale on Friday to hail a new joint effort by Broward executives to identify black businesses and to help minority merchants survive and succeed. The Greater Fort Lauderdale Chamber of Commerce and the Broward-based Council for Black Economic Development announced they will begin an effort to get Chamber members to purchase some goods from black-owned businesses. But first, they said, they need to find out how much business is being generated by black entrepreneurs.

The Black Business Procurement Program has two parts: a survey to determine the bottom line on the amount of business in black-owned shops, and an "Adopt-a-Business" venture, patterned after a Jacksonville program, to match minority merchants with executives of larger, established firms for technical advice. "One of the negatives of the past was the inability of these organizations to work together," said Richard Clark, chief executive officer of the Greater Fort Lauderdale Chamber. "They're so busy running the shop, they haven't got time to go around knocking on doors."

"What we're looking to do is create an atmosphere," said **Thaddeus Cohen**, president of the Broward-based Black Council for Economic Development. "All things being equal, people will give business to somebody they know."

Leaders of both groups said they hoped the joint venture will serve as a way for people to make new contacts in Broward's rapidly expanding business community. By "networking," as he put it, **Cohen** met a purchasing agent from Broward Community College and was able to apply for a job he otherwise would not have known about. **Cohen** works and lives in Delray Beach, but his architectural firm does business in Broward. Bush came face-to-face with the sorry state of communications when he met with a dozen business owners at Fort Lauderdale's Northwest Boys' Club.

Newspaper publisher Levi Henry told Bush that even though his company is worth up to \$2 million, he can't get credit for a \$5,000 bank loan. "We're not getting to somebody," Henry said. Henry had no idea -- until Bush told him -- about plans to form an investment partnership between major banks and black-owned businesses in large Florida cities. The program is under way in Miami and should begin in Broward by year's end, Bush said. "I'm amazed that you hadn't been told about a hell of a good program," Bush told Henry. "I'm actually kind of shocked."

Their exchange was all the more significant because Henry's newspaper, the Westside Gazette, is a primary source of news and information for Broward's blacks.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

***Thaddeus Cohen***

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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"Small business growth is really the backbone of this area," said Jerry Miller, vice chairman of the Fort Lauderdale Chamber's board of directors.

In a breakfast speech to about 400 Chamber members, Bush said, "The rules are changing a little bit in the economic development game." As northern states have become increasingly competitive in finding and keeping companies, Bush said, Florida must work even harder to attract business. He also leveled a broadside at the career civil service system in Tallahassee, with its low wages and generous benefits. "It's almost as if the whole system is geared toward not working, rather than working," Bush said.

Bush also toured Fort Lauderdale's Sistrunk Boulevard business district from the air-conditioned comfort of a Cadillac limousine. With Assistant City Manager Jim Hill acting as a tour guide, the blue sedan slowly cruised past grocery stores, game rooms, homes and apartments, a junkyard or two and the new City View townhouse development.

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Research Compiled by:       Tammie Browder and Cara Slade  
  Colin Baenziger & Associates



COLIN BAENZIGER  ASSOCIATES  
EXECUTIVE RECRUITING

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*Section 6*

*Carmen Y. Davis*

*Lake Worth Beach City Manager  
Candidate Report*

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*Cover Letter and Resume*

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**Carmen Y. Davis**  
106 Stonebridge Lane, Clinton, MS 39056  
601-665-5527 cell    cyd05@live.com

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June 18, 2021

Mr. Colin Baenziger and Mr. Rick Conner  
Colin Baenziger and Associates  
2055 South Atlantic Avenue, Suite 504  
Daytona Beach Shores, FL 32118

Dear Mr. Baenziger and Mr. Conner,

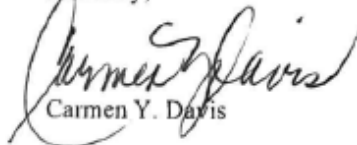
It is with great interest that I submit this letter, as well as, the accompanied application and resume for the position of City Manager with the City of Lake Worth Beach FL. After reviewing the job description and researching the community, with nearly 20 years of experience as a local government professional and over 9 years of managing a mid-size county, I believe that I am well suited for the position and community.

With over nine years of experience as County Administrator with Hinds County, MS, I am prepared to address challenges and share my county management knowledge with the Lake Worth Beach community. Hinds County has approximately 250,000 residents and is the largest county in the state of Mississippi, which is home of the state's capital and largest city in the state (Jackson, MS). During my tenure with Hinds County, I have implemented a conservative budget which yielded savings and led to full salary restoration after a 9-month furloughs period, improved the county's fiscal position so to secure bonds for facilities and infrastructure projects, comprehensively revised and updated the county's 1994 personnel and procedure policies, addressed and improved criminal justice issues, and managed over \$20 million capital improvement projects. In addition, I developed professional development workshops for department heads that resulted in improved efficiencies and working relations among department heads and elected officials.

As a 10-year City Planner with the City of Detroit, I had the opportunity to develop policies/ordinances and improve community relations among community/neighbor organizations and developers.

My resume details the accomplishments and qualifications reflecting my ability to be a value-added team member for the City of Lake Worth Beach community. I look forward to talking with you to further discuss my contribution to the Lake Worth Beach community.

Sincerely,

  
Carmen Y. Davis

### **Carmen Y. Davis**

106 Stonebridge Lane, Clinton, MS 39056  
601-488-4961 home 601-665-5527 cell  
cyd05@live.com

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#### PROFILE SUMMARY

Committed, ethical, team leader, and experienced local government management professional with a proven track record of effective management, community/business relations and consensus building, policy implementation, capital improvement and project management, negotiation skills, and staff and leadership development.

#### PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

##### **Jackson Medical Mall Foundation, Jackson, MS**

**March 2020 – Present**

Founded in 1996 by Dr. Aaron Shirley, the Jackson Medical Mall was transformed from an abandoned shopping mall to a modern medical and retail facility. The mission, to provide healthcare for the underserved and to promote economic and community development, was made possible through strategic partnerships with the University of MS Medical Center, Jackson State University and Tougaloo College. Over twenty years later, the Jackson Medical Mall sits proudly in the center of the state's capital city, providing high quality health and community services to the public. Jackson Medical Mall Foundation (JMMF) has over 130 employees and an operating budget of about \$14 million.

##### *Key Responsibilities:*

- Oversee the day-to-day operations of six (6) departments – Facilities (Environmental Services and Maintenance), Security and Safety Services, Transportation Services, Events, Information Technology, and Care4ME Services (HIV Outreach Program)
- Develop, in collaboration with the CEO and the CFO, an annual operating budget that supports the JMMF's short-term and long-term operations strategies
- Assist the CEO in overseeing the JMMF's achievement and maintenance of a satisfactory competitive position within its industry
- Ensure communications, resolution of issues and project development
- Attend meetings of the Board and its Committees and present the information necessary or relevant to the Board or such Committee for discharging its duties
- Foster a corporate culture that promotes ethical practices, customer focus and service and encourages individual integrity
- Assess and manage the principal risks of the JMMF's business within operations (proposals, projects, and staffing)
- Assist the CEO in establishing an appropriate organization structure
- Set goals for departments and individual managers
- Develop and implement policies and improvements
- Build strong relationships with tenants, key external stakeholders, community leaders and vendors

##### **County Administrator, Hinds County, MS**

**September 2010 - January 2020**

Home of the Capital City, Jackson, MS, Hinds County is the largest county in the state of Mississippi and has a population of approximately 250,000. The county has about 900 employees and an operating budget of approximately \$115 million. Appointed by a five-member board of supervisors and assigned to oversee day-to-day operations with thirteen (13) direct reports.

##### *Key Accomplishments:*

- Negotiated annual employee healthcare benefits yielding over \$1.5 million in savings (reduced potential 25% cost increase to an average of 5% over 6 years)

- Oversaw and completed a comprehensive revision/update of the 1994 County Policies and Employee Handbook
- Initiated/began the County's first Health and Wellness Program which included the creation of the annual 5K walk/run
- Received "clean" (unmodified and free of misrepresentation) audits from independent auditor for 8 consecutive years
- Conducted comprehensive audit/review of all county property, equipment, and vehicles yielding no increase insurance premium cost.
- Created ADA Compliance Office, Record Management and Retention Office, Safety and Training Office, Pre-Trial Services Program
- Initiated and Upgraded County-wide technology network system to advanced fiber optic technology and increased internet speed nearly 100 times at a lower cost than the existing system cost
- Negotiated purchasing cost with vendors resulting in over \$1.0 million in savings to the General Fund, as well as, able to end furloughs and increase year-end cash balance by over 85%
- Achieved increasing cash balance from about \$26,000 in 2010 to over \$2.5 million annually by 2012
- Assisted in managing and monitoring the \$40 M bond issuance for roads, bridges and capital improvements
- Assisted in new bond issue, bond refunding and debt restructuring totaling over \$50 million yielding debt service savings
- Co-chaired newly established Criminal Justice Coordinating Council for two (2) consecutive years with the Senior Circuit Court Judge
- Oversaw and implemented the purchasing of new voting machines for 110 polling locations
- Initiated ADA Improvement Program which consisted of facility improvements, and policies (communications grievance, and non-discrimination policy)
- Initiated purchase of two additional buildings to enhance needed office space to improve operational efficiencies
- Managed and oversaw capital improvement projects such as: \$2.4 million reconstruction project for adult jail housing unit and over \$7 million in jail facility upgrades and improvements, and \$2 million ADA improvements to historic courthouse
- Managed and facilitated the development of the adopted 2017-18 Strategic Plan
- Developed and conducted professional development workshops tailored for department heads to enhance interdepartmental relations, increase moral and improve departmental performance
- Recipient of the Patriotic Employer Certificate from the Office of the Secretary of Defense as an Employer Supporting the Guard and Reserve

### **City Planner, City of Detroit, MI**

**June 1993 – July 2001 and  
January 2007 – August 2009**

#### *Key Accomplishments:*

- Supervised, planned, and coordinated community benefit agreements and conducted conflict resolution sessions among community organizations and Fortune 500 Companies on behalf of City Council (Marathon Oil, Ambassador Bridge Expansion, Chrysler New Mack Engine Plant)
- Chaired effective meetings with community leaders and groups, large and small business owners, and other city departments and agencies on various land use, zoning, and policy issues
- Reviewed and analyzed the social, economic and physical impact of neighborhood commercial development trends
- Organized and developed community master plans with neighborhood and community associations
- Directed office and field work required for effectuation of plans and studies
- Planned, coordinated and laid out the work of professional, technical and clerical employees in one or more of the functional areas of the Commission
- Managed the process for Michigan liquor licenses and activity permits for City Council's consideration
- Authored zoning ordinances, zoning map amendments, city codes, and public policies on major urban issues as well as directed the preparation of recommended changes

- Created reports, recommendations and presentations to the City Planning Commission, the City Council, groups and organizations in and for the City of Detroit
- Participated and represented the City Planning Commission and City Council on task forces and conferences with other planning staff

**EDUCATION**

Master of Business Administration, Dec. 1993  
Wayne State University, Detroit, MI

Bachelor of Art, Urban Planning and Geography, May 1989  
Wayne State University, Detroit, MI

**PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS**

Current Member, International City/County Management Association  
Current President, Mississippi City/County Managers Association  
Current Member, National Association of County Administrators  
Member, MS Association of County Administrators and Comptrollers, 2010-2020  
    President 2015-16  
    Vice President 2014-15  
    Treasurer 2013-14  
Co-Chair, Hinds County Criminal Justice Coordinating Council, 2017-2019  
Executive Advisory Board of Directors, Jackson State University Institute of Government, 2013-2016  
Board Member, Leadership Greater Jackson, 2013-17  
Board Member, U.S.S. Jackson Commissioning Committee, 2015-16  
Member, U.S. Navy League, 2016

REFERENCES UPON REQUEST

## **Section 6**



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*Candidate Introduction*

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**CARMEN Y. DAVIS**

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**EDUCATION**

Master of Business Administration, Wayne State University (MI)  
Bachelor of Arts, Geography and Urban Planning, Wayne State University (MI)

**EXPERIENCE**

Chief Operating Officer, Jackson Medical Mall Foundation, Jackson, MS	2020 – present
County Administrator, Hinds County, MS	2010 – 2020
City Planner IV, City Planning Commission/City Council, Detroit, MI	2006 – 2009
City Planner IV, City Planning Commission/City Council, Detroit, MI	1993 – 2001

**BACKGROUND**

Hinds County is the most populous county in MS of approximately 245,000 residents. Home of the state capital and largest city, Jackson, MS, is centrally situated in the state. Hinds County is a professional, educational, business, and industrial hub in the state. Two major thoroughfares intersect in Hinds County: I-20 and I-55. The County has a total of 877 square miles of which 870 square miles is land and 7.6 square miles is water. The largest and major hospitals are located in Hinds County serving the region and state. In late 2019, Continental Tire opened its most technology advanced tire plant in North America. The plant produces large truck and bus tires for the U.S. commercial vehicle market. The nearly \$1.4 billion investment will create about 2,500 jobs over the next decade.

Hinds County’s General Fund budget comprised of about \$65 million, and the total budget was approximately \$110 million in 2019; in addition to, major capital projects such as road and bridge repairs and construction of \$40 million and \$4 million for facilities improvements. The County has 900 employees with thirteen departmental directors reporting directly to the County Administrator.

The three most significant issues facing the County are:

1. Declining conditions of the roads and bridges. In 2017, the County secured bonds for \$40 million towards repairing deteriorated roads and bridges. This effort is a beginning step towards addressing years of deferred maintenance and repair.
2. Federal consent decree with the Department of Justice concerning the juvenile and adult detention centers. In 2012, Hinds County agreed to address and improve the conditions, policies, and constitutional rights of the detention center detainees.
3. Maintaining property tax revenues. The city of Jackson is the largest municipality within the County. Jackson’s declining population and deteriorated infrastructure will continue

**CARMEN Y. DAVIS**

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to be issues with capturing the needed tax revenues to support and maintain the county's needed level of service.

**GENERAL, MANAGEMENT STYLE AND EXPERIENCE**

I am interested in the City of Lake Worth Beach, FL because of its unique historic character and stable community. Coming from Detroit, MI and Jackson, MS where history is highly regarded and cultivated, I will bring that same historic spirit to Lake Worth Beach. Also, I am drawn towards Lake Worth Beach because of the opportunity to bring my local government, community planning, and organizational management and structure experience to assist the City Commission in carrying out its strategic plan and mission to guide future development, as well as create a more citizen centric community.

My leadership with over 20 years of local government experience has been rooted in integrity, transparency, and stability – in line with Lake Worth Beach's core values. My career has been guided by the principle of servant leadership and being an ethical public servant for the community in which I serve. Prior to my appointment as County Administrator with Hinds County, the County had three different County Administrators within four years. My tenure of nearly 10 years brought leadership stability and consistent management to Hinds County. This approach would contribute to the progress that Lake Worth Beach has begun in the community. Furthermore, my urban planning and community development background would be valuable in addressing the development needs of Lake Worth Beach to assist the Commission in carrying out the city's Strategic Plan, Capital Improvement Projects, and other community sustainability plans and programs. I have worked on and led major land developments, land use and zoning matters, and comprehensive and master plans.

My management style consists of a combination of participatory, collaborative, and consultative. As a professional local government manager that is responsible for implementing the policies and goals of the local government leaders, I believe that my role is to keep the team informed of the organization's goals and direction, utilize the skills and knowledge of the team, and encourage/expect the team to be innovative and creative to address challenging issues. Therefore, in my experience with overseeing a wide range of departmental directors, I found that each director is different and may require a different managerial approach from another director. My position is that the team and their staff are the backbone of any community. A leader must be in tune with the wellbeing of the team. The success of the community is based on the staff being competent and equipped to do their jobs.

Staff would say that I am an approachable, trustworthy, insightful, solution oriented, organized, and dedicated manager. As far as elected officials, they would say that I am accessible, helpful in addressing their needs and concerns, communicative, and budget conscious. My philosophy in working with staff and elected officials is to ensure that they have the resources to carry out their designated roles and state mandated duties to meet the needs of the residents, visitors, and

**CARMEN Y. DAVIS**

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community. In my career, I have worked with people from diverse backgrounds and cultures. Additionally, I can work with all aspects of the community from employees, elected officials to the grassroots of the community to forge collaborations and partnerships to accomplish results where all parties are proud of.

My strength is the ability to maintain a cool and collected demeanor in difficult or stressful situations. I am able to bring calm to a situation. For example, there was an instance when one of our elected officials had not carried out a particular state mandated duty for which he/she was responsible. I was able to gather several staff members to assist me in making sure the particular state mandated duty was performed. The completion of the duty satisfied the state officials and spared the county from embarrassment and financial penalties. On the other hand, concerning a weakness, I am thorough and concise in addressing a matter or situation. This tendency is usually a positive trait; but it can also be an issue when a quick action or decision is needed. However, I have learned over the years to trust my 20 years of experience, along with my instincts and leadership abilities.

In regard to the performance measures used to determine that my staff and I are meeting the organization's goals, at the beginning of each budget year, I implemented a practice that each department director and I set goals which correlated with the departments' roles and the organization's strategic plans and/or priorities. At the end of the budget year, each department's progress was reviewed to determine whether the goals had been achieved. One of the achievements while serving Hinds County was that a cohesive, mutual respect of each other's strengths/skills, and collaborative management team was created. When I began in 2010, the management team was lacking direction, trust of each other's leadership ability, and professional development opportunities. I began monthly meetings, bi-annual retreats, and regular professional/leadership workshops which resulted in strong team relationships, improved across departmental communication, and supportive management team. A mistake that I made was not trying harder to retain a very competent and valuable grants officer. The grants officer was offered a position with another organization. Unfortunately, it took over a year to hire a comparable replacement. I learned that it is more efficient for the organization to work harder to retain employees with proven, as well as valuable talent.

In my career, I have had to fire people. Generally, and depending on the severity of the situation, the drastic action was after providing consultation on the concern with the opportunity for corrective action. Most of the time, the person would align with the corrective action. However, after being counseled and given the opportunity to correct the undesired behavior, the employee was informed that he/she will no longer be able to continue their service with the organization. It is not a pleasant action to take or communicate to a person; but, if the person was given the opportunity to change his/her behavior or have conducted a severe violation, I felt that I did what I could do to address the matter for the good of the organization.

The challenges that I think the person who takes this job are:

1. Shape and manage the redevelopment growth in keeping with Lake Worth Beach's unique heritage and character.
2. Manage the limited finances and resources. In addition, work with the Commission to develop an allocation plan for the \$10 million federal stimulus funds to effectively meet the needs of the community.
3. Utilize the current tax revenues efficiently and create a projected resource allocation plan for future tax receipts anticipated in 10 years from the CRA's developments.
4. Ensure proper accountability from absentee property owners, particularly owners of residential rental properties.
5. Review how Lake Worth Beach does business to ensure that programs and processes are fostering an efficient, transparent and citizen centric government. Determine whether resources are being used optimally.
6. Work with other communities (state, county and federal) to receive assistance in addressing local concerns/issues such as: homelessness, opioids, poverty, cleaning/protecting the Lake Worth Lagoon, flooding, and sea level rise.

What I would do in the first six months in Lake Worth Beach are:

1. Meet with each City Commissioner to understand their priorities, issues, and expectations. In addition, I would like to establish regular meetings with each Commissioner to keep open communications and build a trusting relationship.
2. Hold meet and greet meetings with other city officials, staff, residents, neighborhood associations, business groups, and county officials.
3. Hold one on one meetings with department heads to get acquainted, start building relationships, and become aware of the accomplishments, as well as the challenges in their department.
4. Visit the various city facilities, buildings, and properties, as well as tour the community (neighborhoods, businesses, industry, and potential development sites).
5. Review and become familiar with the City's infrastructure and capital improvement plans to ensure progress and management of their funds.
6. Review and become knowledgeable of the city's important plans, documents, codes, manuals, and agreements. This would allow me to get a better understanding of the city's operations.

I've worked very closely with the media. Being accessible, informative, and available to address their inquiries are important to fostering transparency to the public. Recognizing that there are subject matters that are sensitive, the City Commission may need to be informed of such sensitive inquiries from the media prior to providing a response. There is not anything in my background that would embarrass the City of Lake Worth Beach if it became public knowledge. Should I be privileged to be selected as a finalist in Lake Worth Beach, I do not expect any community activist that is likely to contact Lake Worth Beach with "the dirt" on me.

**CARMEN Y. DAVIS**

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Social media is an essential tool to share information to the public about Lake Worth Beach in a timely manner. To ensure that information is shared on a consistent basis, a dedicated person who is well versed in social media outlets would be established to send information to the public. Because I understand that open communication to the public is vital to being a responsive and open government, as County Administrator in Hinds County, I created the position of Public Relations Officer to do just that.

In my leisure time, I like to walk, bowl, and relax with my husband while watching a good movie.

**SIX ADJECTIVES OR PHRASES YOU WOULD USE TO DESCRIBE YOURSELF**

1. Dependable to get the job done
2. Pleasant
3. Organized, focused, and detailed oriented
4. See the best in everyone and every situation
5. Integrity
6. Goal oriented

**REASON FOR WANTING TO LEAVE MOST RECENT JOB**

The reason that I want to leave my current job is that I have the passion and desire to serve a local government. I count it a privilege to serve communities to enhance the quality of life for those that live and do business there.

**CURRENT/MOST RECENT OR RELEVANT SALARY**

At Hinds County, my compensation was \$125,000, including use of a County vehicle and cell phone.

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*CB&A Background Checks*

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**Background Check Summary for  
CARMEN Y. DAVIS**

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**Criminal Records Checks:**

Nationwide Criminal Records Search	No Records Found
County	
Hinds County, MS	No Records Found
Wayne County, MI	No Records Found
State	
Mississippi	<i>Records Maintained by County. See Above.</i>
Michigan	No Records Found

**Civil Records Checks:**

County	
Hinds County, MS	No Records Found
Wayne County, MI	No Records Found
Federal	
Mississippi	No Records Found
Michigan	No Records Found

<b>Motor Vehicle</b>	
Mississippi	No Records Found

<b>Credit</b>	Excellent
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<b>Personal Bankruptcy</b>	No Records Found
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<b>Sex Offender Registry</b>	Not Listed
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<b>Education</b>	Confirmed
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<b>Employment</b>	Confirmed except for: Jackson Medical Mall Foundation (2020 – Present)
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<b>Social Media</b>	Nothing of Concern Found
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**Background Check Summary for  
CARMEN Y. DAVIS**

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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  
CARMEN Y. DAVIS  
Personal Disclosure**

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**Personal Disclosure Questionnaire**

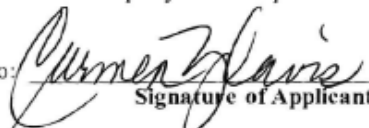
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Name of Applicant: Carmen Y. Davis

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

**Please email this form via PDF DOCUMENT to Lynelle@cb-asso.com or via fax to (561) 621-5965 no later than 5:00 PM PST 06/28/2021.**  
**(Note: Please be sure to sign the form with your actual signature if you are sending Fax or PDF Document)**

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*CB&A Reference Notes*

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Reference Notes  
Carmen Y. Davis

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**Phil Fisher – Former Supervisor, Hinds County, MS 601-924-5474**

Mr. Fisher was on the Board in Hinds County from 2010 to 2013. Ms. Davis was outstanding and on top of everything. Hinds County can be very chaotic with five supervisors who are going in five different directions. She kept up with everything that needed to be done, organized it, and kept the Board moving in a forward direction even then they started chasing rabbits. Under the former administrator they were often voting in arrears. She made sure they had the correct paperwork in the right timing to make decisions. She organized the County and did very well.

Ms. Davis reviewed the organization when she was hired and had to let some employees go that were not performing. She brought in some excellent individuals to replace them. Rather than promoting employees who may not be qualified, as had been done in the past, she hired professionals in their field who were already trained which greatly enhanced the County's credibility in financial audits, budget, communications, and more. Her decisions in general are also good. She keeps everyone informed.

Former County Administrators did not show up to community events, but Ms. Davis was always there. She took much initiative to attend the chamber banquet and every type of gathering in the community. She is easy to talk to. Constituents like that she is responsive and gives them an answer, even when the answer is not what they had hoped for. She is customer service oriented.

Being able to put together a budget with County employees who are intimidated by the Board, balance the budget and provide necessary funding is something Ms. Davis did well. Her budgets were balanced, fair, and they made sense. She held the line even when elected officials made foolish promises but did so without placing blame on anyone.

Because Ms. Davis is so organized, she was timely in meeting deadlines. She handled stress by laughing. Most of the stress came from the elected officials who wanted things done their way even when the idea did not receive support from the majority. She also knew that she worked at their pleasure, which would have caused some stress but is the nature of the position.

Controversial issues came up, like the landfill. Ms. Davis was involved to the extent of making sure that they addressed the issues, and everything was properly executed. Mr. Fisher is not aware of anything in Ms. Davis's history that would concern an employer.

Two of the Board Members who voted to let Ms. Davis go were newly elected and swayed by one Board Member who did not like her because she would not do everything he asked. She focused on doing what was in the best interest of the County, as long as it was legal.

Mr. Fisher would hire Ms. Davis, she has good experience.

Reference Notes  
Carmen Y. Davis

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**Words or phrases used to describe Carmen Davis:**

- Energetic,
- Decisive,
- Organized, and
- Customer oriented.

**Strengths:** Organization, ability to herd cats, point people in the right direction and keep them moving, knew when to use gentle persuasion and when to be blunt, had the courage to do the right thing for the benefit of the County regardless of how it affected her personally.

**Weaknesses:** She is a trusting person who could be betrayed by those who have bad intent.

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**Tomie Green – Senior Circuit Court Judge, Hinds County, MS 601-968-5568  
601-955-0354**

Ms. Green worked on different committees and communications with Hinds County and has known Ms. Davis since around 2011.

Ms. Davis is excellent, she has been able to accomplish much. They worked together on the budget and served on other committees together. The one that sticks out most was the department of justice committee for the jail. The Committee ensured that the jail was in constitutional compliance with the use of force and the jail is still under that consent decree. The process took a great deal of time and it required almost daily attention during the process, but she made sure that the jail was in compliance.

Decisions made by Ms. Davis are definitely good. She is innovative in identifying problems, coming up with a solution, and then achieving buy in. Everyone knows Ms. Davis in the County. Whether the event is social or professional, she was very visible and her entire family was active in the community. Prior to her arrival no one really knew who the County Administrator was, but they knew her because she was very involved. She is also good about keeping others informed.

Emergency management and weather conditions are something that Ms. Davis organized procedures for. She dealt with emergencies like hurricanes, tornadoes, and bomb threats. Nine times out of ten, she was the person coordinating meetings to develop a plan for the emergency.

Being customer service oriented, Ms. Davis told the Court and the Board that the County was a business and citizens were the customers, and they needed to treat them that way. They could always depend on her to meet deadlines and respond in a reasonable amount of time.

Reference Notes  
Carmen Y. Davis

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Even though judges are state employees, the budget goes through the District Attorney's office. When they went over budget or needed appropriations, Ms. Davis was very helpful. She organized the process so that everything was on time and then went before the Board to present the budget. She has great financial skills.

After an election the makeup of the Board changed and they wanted to bring in their own administrator, which really upset everyone in the county because they all enjoy working with Ms. Davis. Nothing in her background or conduct would concern an employer.

Ms. Green tried to hire Ms. Davis because of her skills, abilities, and knowledge of the County, but she opted for a different position instead. She managed a very complex county and court system, with many different personalities. There is nothing that Ms. Davis cannot do, she is very talented. She has great character and values. She treats everyone with respect.

**Words or phrases used to describe Carmen Davis:**

- Competent,
- Professional,
- Timely,
- Innovative,
- Committed to her job, and
- Bright or smart.

**Strengths:** Problem solving, good rapport with department heads and elected officials, good rapport with the committee, developing solutions, completed tasks well, very articulate in communication, very hard worker. Pulls people together and diffuses tense situations, which is a communication and an organization skill.

**Weaknesses:** She takes on the problems of other people and as such, her schedule is overloaded.

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**Darrell McQuirter – Former President, Hinds County, MS 601-927-3962**

Mr. McQuirter reported to Ms. Davis from around 2012 to 2014 as the Permitting and Zoning Director, and then he was elected to the Board and she reported to him until she left in 2020. She is very efficient, knowledgeable, energetic, and did an overall good job.

Ms. Davis reported to the Board and was sometimes instructed who to hire, so she should not be held accountable for those hires. She conducted thorough background checks and gave her opinion but the Board made some of the hiring decisions. Her decisions in general are good.

Reference Notes  
Carmen Y. Davis

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When something is not working Ms. Davis can be a change agent. She made tough decisions which upset some but improved the organization. She gave employees the option to perform at a higher level and trained them in skills they were lacking. She is always looking for new and better ways to work.

In the community Ms. Davis is very visible and she works with the public quite well. She is a people person who has good communication skills. She keeps everyone informed. Customer service is very important to her.

When Ms. Davis was hired, the County was in disarray and all they did was fix issues. In reviewing the organization, she realized that the County was involved in a very risky bond with a \$8 million dollar exposure. She encouraged the Board to refinance the bond and they were able to secure a much better rate. They essentially went from a negative \$8 million to a positive \$3 million. The Board wanted to ignore the bond at first, but she made sure they did not because it put them in such a precarious position.

Most of the time Ms. Davis had one on one conversations with Board members. She typically has fourteen days to report back to the Board, and her assignments were already ready to go and on time. She does not like politics but knows how to maneuver through them. The stress of a task does not bother her.

Everything with the County was controversial because of the environment and the infighting between Board members. Ms. Davis was caught in the middle and had to do what was ordered by the majority of the Board. Her background does not contain anything that would concern a reasonable person. A newly elected Board majority knew that she would not go along with their plans because the plans were not proper and she has integrity. So, they voted 3/2 to not give her a new contract.

If they wanted to reinstate Mr. McQuirter as the President, he would only return with Ms. Davis and the attorney. She has integrity and is a good manager. The information she gave the Board was always accurate, reliable, and complete.

**Words or phrases used to describe Carmen Davis:**

- Energetic,
- Pleasant personality,
- Compassionate
- Aggressive,
- Knowledgeable, and
- Determined.

**Strengths:** Ability to network and communicate, attention to detail.

**Weaknesses:** None identified.

Reference Notes  
Carmen Y. Davis

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**Mickie Parker – Former Human Resource Director, Hinds County, MS 601-896-8722**

Ms. Parker worked with Ms. Davis at Hinds County. They met in 2010. Ms. Davis' job performance is above average, she always went above and beyond to ensure that everything and everyone was taken care of.

Ms. Davis made great decisions both in hiring and in general. She does not make quick decisions, she looks into the matter and puts thought into it. She considers how solutions will affect the organization on a long term basis. She is very innovative.

Before the pandemic Ms. Davis was very visible in the community. When citizens called with concerns, she handled their issues in the most professional way in comparison to other managers. She is always right on point. She kept the staff informed, she wanted them to hear about issues from her and not from hall talk.

On a daily basis Ms. Davis led teams to resolve issues. They were looking at the food service for the detention centers and it made sense to privatize the service. The process was long and before they moved forward, she led a team effort to look at different vendors and check their references. She considered how the change would affect detainees and officers. She created a back up plan if the vendor did not show up because inmates and officers need to eat. She offered different perspectives and made sure they thought through every contingency. When she gave suggestions or ideas, she always said "we" and not "you". She was part of the team.

Being ultimately responsible for the entire County budget, Ms. Davis was good in finance. She monitored purchases throughout the year to ensure that whatever was being purchased was something the County needed and money was not wasted. She is quick to complete tasks.

During tense or challenging situations, Ms. Davis always kept a smile and did not seem stressed. Unless you understand exactly what is going on, you would never know the type of stress that she was under. She sat through some rough board meetings and kept a very pleasant expression even though it was hard on her.

Nothing controversial has occurred related to Ms. Davis. The Administrator is reappointed every year and a new elected board did not reappoint her or the attorney at their very first meeting. They did not state a reason for this decision. While Ms. Parker and Ms. Davis did not always agree, they respected each other. Where Ms. Parker was weak, Ms. Davis was strong, and they balanced each other.

Ms. Parker would hire Ms. Davis, she was one of the best managers that Hinds County ever had and was the longest standing Manager in County history. Ms. Parker has worked in government since the 1990s, Ms. Davis is the best Manager she has worked under in her entire career.



Reference Notes  
Carmen Y. Davis

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**Words or phrases used to describe Carmen Davis:**

- Organized,
- Determined,
- Strong,
- Team player, and
- Great communicator.

**Strengths:** Very organized, great communicator.

**Weaknesses:** She expects others to perform as well as she does, or better, which can be a hindrance.

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**John Morgan – Owner, JM Hughes Group, Hinds County, MS 601-672-4988**

Mr. Morgan has known Ms. Davis since 2012 or 2013. They were both on the Leadership Jackson Board of Directors and got to know each other. Mr. Morgan was a lobbyist for Hinds County from 2016 to 2020. Ms. Davis is fantastic, she is a consummate professional and a pure administrator. Very few are able to navigate the political nuances and she did that marvelously.

Being the Administrator for Hinds County was a difficult job, it is the largest County in the state. Ms. Davis oversaw a large staff and a large budget with many constraints. She did very well. She is very good with numbers and budgeting. Government officials are usually on the low end of the communication spectrum, but Ms. Davis is tremendous and responds immediately.

When they met Ms. Davis was Vice President for Leadership Jackson, and she has been very involved in that organization and several other local charities. She is very visible, she attends the Chamber, ribbon cuttings, and to the local coffee shop where the business community meets.

Their work was mostly behind the scenes to create strategies for the County, but Ms. Davis proved her success in that Hinds County was not on the front page of the paper, they were always on the back page, during her tenure.

Ms. Davis is good about keeping others informed and they had regular communications throughout the legislative season. When legislation came up that Mr. Morgan did not understand, like fringe benefit payroll taxes, he called to ask for an explanation. Ms. Davis could always either answer immediately or she shortly found the answer.

When serving on the Board of Leadership Jackson, their budget was cut 70% even though they were the most successful Chamber program. They went from \$500 million to \$150 million and the topic was very touchy. Ms. Davis was very professional and classy through this time, she

Reference Notes  
Carmen Y. Davis

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was a good emissary between the Chamber and the Board of Directors. She is very tactful and navigates these types of situations and relationships well. She remains cool under pressure.

A shift on the Council after an election led to Ms. Davis' departure from the County. The majority of the Board wanted someone who would play the politics more than Ms. Davis, and game the system in their favor. She served under many Presidents and did not use her position to politically benefit one member of the Board. Even the Board members who voted against her reappointment speak very highly of her.

Mr. Morgan would hire Ms. Davis, she is fantastic. He has worked with many managers and she is the best manager in the state.

**Words or phrases used to describe Carmen Davis:**

- Consummate professional,
- Pure administrator,
- Very high emotional intelligence,
- Strong financial skills, and
- Responsive.

**Strengths:** Consummate professional, pure administrator, very high emotional intelligence, very strong fiscally, responsive, has a natural sense of expediency that is not often found in government employees.

**Weaknesses:** Though a perceived weakness, she may seem introverted or withdrawn but that is only because she is very deliberate.

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**LaVonne McGee – Human Capital Development Director, Hinds County, MS 601-201-4311**

Ms. McGee was hired by, and then reported to Ms. Davis for five years, from around 2015 to 2020. They worked on many excellent and successful programs. Ms. Davis was very detailed in the hiring process, and also hired strategically to meet the goals of the strategic plan. Her character has no flaws.

Because she thinks things through, Ms. Davis is not a quick decision maker. She assesses the entire situation so she can make the best decision for the County. She is innovative and she maintains an organization at a high performance level. Communication is important to her, so she tasked Ms. McGee with helping her to keep the staff informed.

Ms. Davis was out front participating in the entire makeup of the county. She was wonderful with the public. Her personality is such that she is easy to work with. She is very open and

Reference Notes  
Carmen Y. Davis

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honest, she listens intently to the residents, elected officials, and staff for their input into the overall operation of the County.

When issues arose between employees, Ms. McGee and Ms. Davis met with them to mitigate the situation and get everyone on one accord. Ms. Davis is great at mediation and resolving issues, she wanted to have a strong team and could not afford to have individuals who were not working together. She is very pleasant to work with because she is very sensitive and resolves issues in a way that is positive both in terms of finance and also stability. She ensured that Directors had enough resources to carry out their responsibilities.

The budget was always balanced during Ms. Davis' tenure, and the departments were never over their budget allowance. She was a stickler for waste. She made sure that assignments fell within the realms of the vision of the County, so they were always achieving the objectives of the Board. She dealt with challenging situations very well.

Being involved in controversy is not something Ms. Davis does, it is not in her makeup. When the Board changed after an election, they decided they wanted a new Administrator.

Ms. McGee would most definitely hire Ms. Davis, she is a good manager who is enjoyable to work with. When Directors had issues, she was very open and listened intently before speaking. She helped them work through it.

**Words or phrases used to describe Carmen Davis:**

- Professional,
- Committed,
- Strong,
- Organized,
- Compassionate, and
- A leader.

**Strengths:** Compassion, services, and strong organizational skills

**Weaknesses:** Very compassionate, she cries at the sad stories.

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**Lure Berry – Finance and Budget Director, Hinds County, MS 601-214-5174**

Ms. Berry has been with the County since 2008. When the Finance and Budget Director retired in 2016, Ms. Davis offered the position to Ms. Berry. From that time, until Ms. Davis left the County, Ms. Berry reported directly to Ms. Davis.

**Reference Notes  
Carmen Y. Davis**

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Ms. Davis is an excellent supervisor. She is easy to talk to and does not belittle the staff when they make a mistake. She had a nice voice and knew exactly what her role was. She was very enjoyable to work with. When given a project, she met with departments to create a plan to achieve it. She excelled at planning and organization.

Ms. Davis makes good decisions. She is innovative, a change agent, and the organization runs at a high level under her leadership. She did not change processes that were working well. She keeps everyone informed. She leads the organization to fulfill the Council's vision.

Visible in the County, Ms. Davis attended community events and worked with the public very well. She gave press conferences and was one of the few County officials to actually answer the questions. She is very articulate.

Hinds County is the largest County in the state, and they have the largest jail. When an issue occurred related to the jail, she rallied employees and elected officials to bring the jail to the standards it was supposed to be at.

Because she either answered the phone or returned the call, Ms. Davis was the person that constituents called. She followed the process through the system until it was resolved. She has good financial skills and accomplished tasks in a timely manner. If she felt stress, she hid it well.

Ms. Davis' background is free and clear of any incident that might concern an employer. She works at the will of the Board and left after a change in administration. Everyone that Ms. Berry knows has the same high opinion of Ms. Davis.

Ms. Berry would hire Ms. Davis, she is a good manager.

**Words or phrases used to describe Carmen Davis:**

- Kind,
- Motivated,
- Attentive, and
- Workaholic.

**Strengths:** Organization, planner, great communicator.

**Weaknesses:** Workaholic.

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**Prepared by:** Lynelle Klein  
Colin Baenziger & Associates

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*CB&A Internet Research*

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**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Carmen Y. Davis**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Clarion Ledger  
April 15, 2021

**PHOTOS: Vaccine Day held at the Jackson Medical Mall**  
Author: ERIC SHELTON

[CB&A Note: Only the information relevant to **Carmen Davis** is listed below.]

Pharmacist Martha Johnson, left, prepares to administer the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccination to Jimmie Braddy at the Mississippi Urban League Building, located at the Jackson Medical Mall in Jackson, Miss., Thursday, April 15, 2021. Transportation was also available for residents. "Our goal is to make healthcare accessible to all," Jackson Medical Mall Foundation Chief Operating Officer **Carmen Davis** said. "Our transportation services program has recently expanded its services to provide the community free transportation to vaccination appointments."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Carmen Y. Davis**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Jackson Free Press  
March 26, 2021

**City to Transport 400 Seniors for Vaccination at Medical Mall in April**  
Author: Kayode Crown

Four hundred seniors will get COVID-19 vaccines at the Jackson Medical Mall on a yet-to-be-announced day in April, City of Jackson Constituent Services Manager Keyshia Sanders told the Jackson Free Press Thursday. "We will be providing transportation for them to be able to get picked up and transported to the vaccination site and then transported back to their home," Sanders said.

Jackson Medical Mall Foundation Chief Operations Officer **Carmen Davis** confirmed the initiative on Friday. She said the program is an expansion of its outreach program to the seniors and people with disabilities funded by the Mississippi Department of Transportation, the City of Jackson, and the Central Mississippi Planning and Development District. "The Jackson Medical Mall (Foundation) not only will host it at our site, but we will also provide transportation for those who would need transportation to get here, to be vaccinated," **Davis** said. "And so we'll be utilizing our existing transportation program services to those who are registered to be vaccinated that day." "The event will mainly focus on seniors and also the disadvantage or the disabled; however, we are setting aside vaccination shots for the general public as well."

**Working with Senior Apartment Complexes**

Sanders said the City is working with senior apartment complexes. "We're working with service coordinators for the residential apartment complexes, and they have expressed that there is a need for seniors that do not have transportation, that have a desire to be vaccinated, but they might not have the transportation to get to the vaccination site," she said.

Meanwhile, on March 6, 1,818 people participated in the City's vaccination day, Mayor Chokwe A. Lumumba disclosed at a press briefing on March 8, where he described the event as a success and noted that the number constitutes more than 1% of the city's population. Lumumba pointed out some organizations that partnered with the City for the event, including Hinds Community College, Mississippi Department of Health, and "several pharmacists around the Metro area" and "various volunteers."

"The more than 1,800 vaccinations (are) the most vaccinations the state has given out in any one day (in one location)," Lumumba said. "We know that the numbers have been abysmal in terms of less than 13% early on of Black and Brown communities being vaccinated as it relates to the overall vaccination across the state. So we wanted to step in and do our part to help the residents of Jackson, to help in the effort so that we can have some semblance of normalcy here in the near future." The Mississippi State Department of Health, on its website, noted that as of March 25, Black people in the state now makes up 29% of those vaccinated, which, however, is still below their percentage of the total population—37.8%.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Carmen Y. Davis**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Those vaccinated on March 6 will take a second dose on March 27. In a Tuesday statement, the City asked for volunteers to assist in the event. "It is not possible to pull off an event such as this without an army of dedicated volunteers," the City stated. "The City is calling for volunteers to help with day of event logistics from registration to guides to runners and more." Volunteers must be available from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday, March 27, to help run the event. To volunteer email [volunteer@jacksonms.gov](mailto:volunteer@jacksonms.gov)."



**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Carmen Y. Davis**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Clarion Ledger  
January 16, 2020

**New Hinds Co. Board of Supervisors fires county administrator, board attorney on 3-2 vote**

Author: Jimmie E. Gates

The Hinds County Board of Supervisors, with three new members, have fired the county administrator and the board's attorney. No decision has yet been made about the status of the road manager Charles Sims, who has been on family and medical leave. When the new board took office Jan. 6, members had to decide which staff to retain or replace. After electing incumbent Supervisor Robert Graham as president and new Supervisor Credell Calhoun as vice president, the five-member board voted on whether to retain administrative staffers.

The board fired County Administrator **Carmen Davis**, who had been administrator since 2010. **Davis** had been a former Detroit city employee before moving to Mississippi. The county administrator runs the day-to-day operations of the county. The Board of Supervisors gave no reason for terminating **Davis**. The vote was 3-2, with supervisors Calhoun, Graham and David Archie voting not to retain **Davis**. The board named county employee James Ingram as a temporary replacement.

Supervisors Bobby McGowan and Vern Gavin voted to keep **Davis**. Gavin, who once was a Hinds County administrator, argued that the board was making a mistake. He said he hadn't seen anything she had done to warrant removal. Likewise, Gavin and McGowan voted against the motion not to retain then-Board attorney Pieter Teeuwissen. However, Archie, Calhoun and Graham voted to replace Teeuwissen. Scherrie Prince was named interim board attorney.

Gavin said he feared that the firing of **Davis** and Teeuwissen could impact the consent decrees the county signed with the U.S. Department of Justice to improve conditions in the county detention centers and juvenile justice center. Gavin said **Davis** and Teeuwissen have played integral parts in the negotiations with the federal government. Graham said the county will advertise for a permanent board attorney and county administrator.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Carmen Y. Davis**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Jackson Free Press  
September 17, 2019

**JFP Questions Destruction of Public Records by Hinds County Board of Supervisors**

Author: Seyma Bayram

The Jackson Free Press is asking the Hinds County Board of Supervisors to delay its unanimous vote yesterday to dispose of documents relating to its former administrations as well as former County Administrator's files from 1984 to 2007 without specifying the number or the content of those documents. After reviewing the State of Mississippi's records-retention schedule and guidelines for local-government records, this newspaper today sent a letter to the board expressing concern that the decision could violate Mississippi's public-records law. Today's letter also asks the board to provide further explanation and documentation to ensure the legality of the order. The vote occurred during the Hinds County Board of Supervisors' bi-monthly meeting on Sept. 16, 2019, after the County Administrator's office addressed the board about an "Order to Approve the Disposal of Files Related to Former Administrations of the Board of Supervisors as well as Former County Administrator's Files for the Period of from the Years of 1984-2007 (sic), Formerly Stored at the Public Defender's Building, in Accordance with Hinds County's Storage, Retention and Disposal Policy Adopted in 2017." The board did not discuss its decision during the vote nor did it, to our knowledge to date, invite input from the public.

The Jackson Free Press has requested access to the amended 2017 policy to which the order refers as well as a list outlining exactly which files will be destroyed, whether or not any files have been disposed of since the vote yesterday, and whether the board discussed a plan to digitize any documents before destruction. The County Administrator's office had not answered these questions at press time.

**JFP Letter to Hinds Supervisors About Records Destruction**

As with all Mississippi counties, the Hinds County Board of Supervisors is bound to the State of Mississippi's Local Government Records protocols. Mississippi's guidelines state that Board of Supervisors must keep the following records permanently: agenda files; original orders, already recorded in minutes; committee minutes; proof of publication; grant files and program records; activity reports (permanently if annual reports are not maintained); annual reports; policies, procedures and plans; correspondence, executive (elected and appointed officials); certain litigation files relating to "annexation, civil rights and other landmark or historical issues"; and records disposal documentation.

The supervisors control all operations and funding for the Hinds County Detention Center and the Henley-Young Juvenile Justice Center. The Hinds County Detention Center, also known as the county jail, has been under a federal consent decree since 2016 after an investigation from the U.S. Department of Justice found that the jail infringes upon the constitutional rights of detainees through lengthy pretrial incarceration. Violence, infrastructural insecurity and mismanagement, among other systemic issues, also plague the facility in Raymond. The State of Mississippi updated many of the guidelines listed above, which the board must follow, in 2018,

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Carmen Y. Davis***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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suggesting that the updated guidelines supersede the 2017 policy to which the Board referred in its Monday vote. Board Attorney Pieter Teeuwissen told the Jackson Free Press today that he could not comment on the order, as it could violate attorney-client privilege, but that the county policy should follow state law. The Jackson Free Press also called the Hinds County Board of Supervisors' and County Administrator's offices, notifying them of our concerns surrounding the legality of the order and asking for additional information and documentation that would clarify whether or not the vote to approve the order was within the bounds of the law. District 1 Supervisor Robert Graham said today that he is confident that the order, based on 2017 county policy, followed state protocols. "I'm not familiar with the exact policy, the wording of the policy, but it is in accordance with the state policy on record retention. We are following the state law," he said to the Jackson Free Press this morning.

County Administrator **Carmen Y. Davis** echoed Graham's sentiments in a phone interview today. "It's not overriding the state law," she said. "It is reinforcing the policy within the county, encouraging all employees, officials and department heads to comply with the state law. So it's an internal policy making sure that we are disposing, retaining records correctly, according to state law ... and the state law is referenced in our policy."

LaVonne McGee, director of human and capital development at the County Administrator's Office, told the Jackson Free Press today that she believes confusion stems from the wording of the order, which she had drafted. "It (the 2017 county policy) has been amended. It was amended in 2018, and we sent that out ... and I just didn't put 'as amended' on the agenda item, and I apologize for that," she said. "The board approved on October 1 (2018) the incorporation of the amendments made by the Department of Archives and History into the county's 2017 policy," McGee said.

When asked whether the disposal of files from 1984 to 2007 was legal, **Davis** responded: "Well, our staff has reviewed it. If there's an issue with those individual files, we can review those. ... They (the staff) were supposed to process those according to the retention schedule of the state law, so we can review those to verify that." **Davis** added that there was "an attachment of files" detailing a list of exactly which files will be destroyed. She, however, did not immediately provide the attachment when requested. Files are destroyed immediately following an order such as Monday's, **Davis** said, adding that "since there is a question, we will hold off on destroying them, certainly, because we are not trying to be in violation of the law. And if there is a question about any of the files, I want to review them again just to make sure that we're not missing something."

The Jackson Free Press asked whether any files have been destroyed, yet. "I will have to check with the staff, I'm not sure," **Davis** responded. The Jackson Free Press sent the letter to the Hinds County Board of Supervisors outlining concerns and requesting further explanation for the order. You can read the letter here. We will provide more information from the board as it comes in.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Carmen Y. Davis**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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November 14, 2018

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF MISSISSIPPI  
NORTHERN DIVISION

**J.H., et al., Plaintiffs,**  
**v.**  
**HINDS COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI, Defendant.**

Civil Action No.  
3:11-cv-327-DPJ-FKB

ORAL ARGUMENT  
REQUESTED  
AMENDED MOTION FOR AN EXTENSION OF THE CONSENT DECREE AND  
A CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN OR, IN THE ALTERNATIVE, CONTEMPT

The Plaintiffs, children confined at Henley-Young Juvenile Justice Center (“HenleyYoung”),<sup>1</sup> respectfully submit this Amended Motion for An Extension of the Consent Decree and a Corrective Action Plan or, in the Alternative, Contempt (“the Motion”).<sup>2</sup> Pursuant to Local Rule 7(b)(6)(A), the Plaintiffs respectfully request oral argument on this motion. 1. Hinds County (the “County”) for nearly seven years has failed to comply with key substantive provisions of the court-ordered consent decrees in this case,<sup>3</sup> including in the areas of suicide prevention, educational and rehabilitative programming, and medical care, resulting in ongoing violations of the federal rights of vulnerable and disabled children.<sup>4</sup>

[CB&A Note: The remainder of the case can be read here:  
[https://www.splcenter.org/sites/default/files/documents/0131\\_pls\\_amended\\_motion\\_for\\_an\\_extension\\_of\\_the\\_consent\\_decree\\_and\\_corrective\\_action\\_plan\\_or\\_in\\_the\\_alternative\\_contempt.pdf](https://www.splcenter.org/sites/default/files/documents/0131_pls_amended_motion_for_an_extension_of_the_consent_decree_and_corrective_action_plan_or_in_the_alternative_contempt.pdf)

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Carmen Y. Davis**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Jackson Free Press  
June 14, 2018

### **Hinds County Criminal Justice Council Gets to Work**

Author: Arielle Dreher

JACKSON — A group of Jackson and Hinds County leaders has begun meeting bi-monthly to work on improvements to the adult and juvenile justice systems in the city and county, after Hinds County entered into a 2016 settlement agreement with the U.S. Department of Justice. DOJ investigated the Raymond and Jackson detention centers in 2014, and the county's juvenile justice center, Henley-Young, was the subject of a federal lawsuit back in 2011. DOJ issued a findings letter in 2015 with concerns about inmate safety at the Raymond and Jackson facilities, alleging that the county was in violation of detainees' constitutional rights.

Hinds County Board of Supervisors attorney Pieter Teeuwissen said all the stakeholders involved in the criminal justice system need to figure out how to move people through the system faster. Right now, individuals can sit in jail for as long as four years, he said. "We need to figure out how to prioritize these individuals in these facilities," Teeuwissen told the Jackson Free Press. "... If they are not guilty, we shouldn't have them detained in less than appropriate conditions. If they are guilty, they are supposed to be processed through and put in the state correction system."

As a part of the settlement agreement, county and city stakeholders had to form the Hinds County Criminal Justice Coordinating Council, which is working to ensure that people do not get stuck in the jails for too long and that cases move through the system quickly. The council meetings do not have to be public, Teeuwissen said, but he believes they will be in the near future. The settlement agreement requires the county to recognize that "it must provide prisoners with adequate supervision and housing in order to prevent violence between prisoners and the use of excessive force by detention staff," the settlement agreement says. "The county also acknowledges that government detention is a serious infringement on the rights of citizens and other individuals, and is thus subject to constitutional rights."

County leaders must work to decrease the incarcerated population "particularly special-needs populations, such as individuals with serious mental illness and juveniles," the settlement agreement says. Teeuwissen said he thinks the council's work will be long-term. "I think that what you're seeing now is a work in progress," he said.

The Hinds County Board of Supervisors voted to formally recognize the Hinds County Criminal Justice Coordinating Council on May 21. The council is divided into five groups that will work on improvements to address behavioral health, case processing, jail population management, prisoner reentry and juvenile justice, a press release from the Administrative Office of the Courts says. Senior Circuit Judge Tomie Green and Hinds County Administrator **Carmen Davis** co-chair the 19-member council. The other council members include:

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Carmen Y. Davis**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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- Hinds County Circuit Court Senior Judge
- Hinds County Chancery Court Senior Judge
- Hinds County Court Senior Criminal Judge
- Hinds County Youth Court Judge
- Hinds County Justice Court Senior Judge
- Jackson Municipal Court Senior Judge
- Hinds County District Attorney
- Hinds County Attorney
- Hinds County Sheriff
- Hinds County Administrator
- Jackson Mayor
- Jackson Police Chief
- Jackson City Prosecutor
- Hinds County Public Defender
- Hinds County Detention Center Warden
- Hinds County Juvenile Justice Center Director
- Hinds County Behavioral Health Director
- a representative of the Hinds County Board of Supervisors
- a representative of the Jackson City Council

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Carmen Y. Davis**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Clarion Ledger  
August 8, 2017

**Mississippi Department of Revenue ending printing of auto tag renewal notices for counties**

Author: Jimmie E. Gates

The Mississippi Department of Revenue will end printing auto tag renewal notices for counties later this year. “For at least 40 years, the Department of Revenue has printed the renewal card for the counties as a courtesy,” spokeswoman Katie Lawson said. “Each month, DOR prints the cards for the upcoming renewal month and mails those to the counties. The counties are then responsible for mailing those cards to the vehicle owners.

However, the number of counties DOR now prints renewal notices for is down to five, including the most populous, Hinds. The other 77 counties are using third-party vendors to print and mail renewal cards for them because they can get better postage rates, Lawson said. DOR sends an electronic file to the vendors so that they can print the cards for the counties. The other counties DOR prints renewal notices for are Choctaw, Scott, Sunflower and Washington.

The October renewal cards will be the last printed for the five counties. After that time, DOR will provide those counties with a pdf file that they can use to print the renewal information on standard letter-size paper for mailing to the vehicle owners. “That is because the DOR is launching a new motor vehicle tag and title system known as MARVIN,” said Lawson, referring to the Mississippi Automated Registration Vehicle Information Network. “MARVIN, a state-of-the-art, web-based system, will take the place of the current system, which was developed in 1980.” It will cost \$18.8 million to implement the new automated system, DOR said.

On Monday, Hinds County Administrator **Carmen Davis** recommended the Hinds County Board of Supervisors hire Dallas Printing in Richland to begin printing renewal notices and mailing them out at 34 cents per card. Dallas, the only Mississippi company, was one of three companies the county received quotes from. **Davis** said Dallas was the first option. Peregrine of Monroe, Louisiana. was the second option. A Chattanooga, Tennessee, company also submitted a quote.

**Davis** said the board decided to hire Peregrine, which submitted the lowest quote of 30.9 cents per card. DOR says there are 195,129 motor vehicle registrations in Hinds County, and each year the agency would print that number of renewal cards. The renewal notices include the cost an auto owner will have to pay to renew their vehicle tag. The notice also breaks down the cost, such as how much property taxes go into the tag fee.

For the past year, the DOR has actively been communicating and meeting with all 82 counties in preparation for the implementation of MARVIN, Lawson said. Multiple training classes have already been held at the DOR for expert users and bookkeepers of each county. Computer-based training videos have been provided to the counties. Additionally, DOR’s training team will be

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Carmen Y. Davis**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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conducting classes for all system users in each tax collector’s office throughout the month of September, she said.

Washington County Tax Collector Patricia Lee said Tuesday she hasn't decided yet, but expects to select a third-party vendor to print and mail out roughly 2,500 cards a month in her county. Lawson said MARVIN will allow vehicle owners the ability to “opt-in” to receive email renewal notices rather than paper notices.



**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Carmen Y. Davis***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Clarion Ledger

May 19, 2017

**Youth Court judge files another suit against Hinds County**

Author: Jimmie E. Gates

Hinds County Youth Court Judge Bill Skinner is again suing the Hinds County Board of Supervisors over proposed cuts to the Youth Court budget. Skinner said in a complaint filed last week in Hinds County Circuit Court that the board met May 1 in executive session during a special session and adopted a budget of \$788,230.12 for Youth Court for the next fiscal year. The amount reflects a budget cut of \$183,000, more if fringe benefits for salaries is included.

Judge Skinner has filed a new lawsuit against the Hinds County Board of Supervisors . Sorie Tarawally, Skinner's attorney, says the complaint challenges the power and the constitutionality of the Board of Supervisors' action. "The actions, rulings and or decisions taken by the board on May 1, 2017, are ultra vires and illegal and in violation of the Youth Court Act, and its presiding judge's constitutional and statutory powers and duties as provided and guaranteed to him in the state constitution, laws and case precedent," Tarawally said in the complaint.

The complaint asks Hinds County's four circuit judges to recuse themselves from hearing the case, saying it may place the judges in conflict or their impartial judgment may be questioned. Those judges — Bill Gowan, Tomie Green, Winston Kidd and Jeff Weill — all have signed individual orders removing themselves from the case.

In September, Green threw out a similar lawsuit filed by Skinner who was seeking a temporary restraining order to prevent the board from cutting his budget by roughly \$183,000 in salaries and \$71,854 in fringe benefits for the current fiscal year. Green said in her ruling that, should there be a deficit at the Youth Court or a need to request board reconsideration, Skinner has numerous remedies. Green said Skinner failed to advance facts to sustain any public interests, irreparable harm or likelihood of prevailing on the merits for granting the motion.

Hinds County Administrator **Carmen Davis** said in a letter to Skinner in September that, as a mandate to comply with a federally amended consent decree to meet mental health requirements at the Henley-Young Juvenile Justice Center, the Board of Supervisors reduced the Youth Court's salary with fringes budget. Skinner and the Board of Supervisors have been at odds over the last few years about control of the youth detention center.

As the senior County Court judge, Skinner has served primarily as Youth Court judge. Recently he signed an administrative order stipulating he will handle the Youth Court and criminal cases. County Judge Melvin Priester was assigned to handle civil appeals, and Judge LaRita Cooper Stokes will handle civil cases in County Court. The senior judge has the authority to make assignments for the court. Skinner became the senior county court judge after longtime Judge Houston Patton retired.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Carmen Y. Davis**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Clarion Ledger  
April 7, 2017

**Surprise! Hinds County property taxes rise**

Author: Jimmie E. Gates

Hinds County Administrator **Carmen Davis** called it “unintended consequences” that county property taxes went up for residents in Jackson, Clinton and most other areas of the county without the public's knowledge. When county supervisors adopted the \$64.3 million general fund budget in September for the current fiscal year, **Davis** emphatically said in a Sept. 15 public hearing that there would be no tax increase. However, recently county officials said they weren't aware that decreasing taxes for garbage collection in unincorporated areas while increasing it for volunteer fire departments and economic development would lead to an overall higher property tax rate.

**Davis** and then-county finance and budget coordinator Lillie Woods put the budget together, said Hinds County Supervisor Peggy Hobson Calhoun, who has voiced displeasure with the tax increase. Hinds County Tax Assessor Charles Stokes informed county supervisors and others there would be an impact on property taxes for much of the county. Residents began seeing an increase with the property tax bills in December. Stokes said his own overall property taxes went up about \$19 a year, with about \$4.40 of that stemming from the tax increase. He said some property also increased in value because of the reappraisal of property in the county in 2016.

On a home valued at \$75,000 in Jackson, the county taxes increased by about \$7.50. However, the county tax increase coupled with a property tax increase by Jackson led to higher overall increases. The 2017 budget the Jackson City Council adopted in September include a property tax increase of 3 mills, which translates into a \$300 property tax increase for every \$100,000 of assessed value. While the Board of Supervisors approved the budget, Calhoun said some supervisors didn't know it included a tax increase. The only areas where taxes didn't go up were Byram, Learned and unincorporated areas of the county. Byram collects all of its own taxes since it re-incorporated as a city. Learned is a village, and as such isn't assessed taxes. With the reduction in garbage taxes, the property tax rate also didn't increase in unincorporated areas. By law, counties are required to advertise when there is a possibility of a tax increase even if it isn't one by supervisors.

Calhoun said the normal process is to document it in the minutes when there is tax increase. “We didn't announce a tax increase and didn't announce it to the public,” Calhoun said. Calhoun said some at-will employees, including the county administrator, had raises proposed in the budget. Rank-and-file employees received \$100-per-month, across-the-board raises. Initially, **Davis'** raise was set at \$18,000. The amount of the proposed raise was reduced and later rescinded for her and some other at-will employees. There is nothing the county can do about the tax increase this year, but it could be rescinded for the next budget year, which begins Oct. 1. District 4 Supervisor Mike Morgan voted against the budget when it was approved, saying the county continued to spend down its cash reserves to cover budget shortfalls.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Carmen Y. Davis**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Clarion Ledger  
December 8, 2016

**Hinds to look at Medicaid for inmates**

Author: Jimmie E. Gates

Hinds County will look to Medicaid for help to try to reduce inmate medical costs. Last year, Hinds County was hit with medical bills totaling more than \$258,000 for one inmate. Cortaia Washington was convicted in August 2015 of witness tampering for an altercation with a woman who had been a witness against Washington's brother in a case. After Washington's conviction, she ended up in Merit Hospital and then was transferred to the University of Mississippi Medical Center due to an illness from her sickle cell disease. The bills from the two hospitals totaled more than \$258,000.

Hinds County Supervisor Peggy Hobson Calhoun said through research she has learned that a federal rule allows Medicaid benefits to be paid for incarcerated inmates if they were eligible for Medicaid and part of the system prior to needing medical service. Calhoun said counties and cities haven't been taking advantage of the Medicaid program when it comes to inmate medical costs. However, Mississippi Division of Medicaid spokeswoman Erin Barham said Thursday federal law prohibits Medicaid payment for most health-care services provided to individuals while incarcerated under a policy known as the "inmate exclusion."

Barham said Medicaid cannot be used to pay for the care of inmates outside of a limited exception. Hinds County Supervisor Peggy Hobson Calhoun wants to look at Medicaid for inmates. "In Mississippi, anyone (including a person who may be incarcerated), first has to be categorically eligible for Medicaid," Barham said. "I think many detainees can be covered," Calhoun said. "I think most would be eligible." Calhoun said cited a federal rule change in 1997, which she said allows Medicaid benefits to be paid for incarcerated individuals. Also, hospitals would charge for in-patient services based on cheaper Medicaid rates, she said.

Calhoun said the county could realize real savings with the federal government defraying some of inmates medical costs. "Once out of jail, they can continue coverage," Calhoun said of Medicaid for inmates. The Hinds County Board of Supervisors approved this week a motion by Calhoun to have County Administrator **Carmen Davis** work with others to develop a Medicaid reimbursement program for inmates and a plan to get inmates signed up for Medicaid. **Davis** will bring a proposal back to supervisors. No deadline was given.

Calhoun said Hinds County's legislative agenda for the upcoming 2017 session, which begins Jan.3, will likely include a request asking that a regional hospital be constructed or open to care for inmates in the metro area with mental illness. Calhoun said the state Hospital at Whitfield only has 25 beds statewide for such inmates now. "In our detention center in Raymond, we are housing inmates with mental problems," Calhoun said.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Carmen Y. Davis**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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October 31, 2016

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF MISSISSIPPI  
NORTHERN DIVISION

CAUSE NO. 3:15-CV-911-DPJ-FKB

**GALE NELSON WALKER PLAINTIFF**  
**VS.**

**ROBERT SHULER SMITH,**

Individually and in his official capacity as District Attorney of Hinds County, Mississippi; and  
Hinds County, Mississippi; and John or Jane Does 1-10 DEFENDANTS

JURY TRIAL DEMANDED

SECOND AMENDED COMPLAINT

NOW COMES Plaintiff, GALE NELSON WALKER, by and through counsel, and files this Second Amended Complaint. Plaintiff brings this action to recover actual and punitive damages for violations of her First and Fourteenth Amendment rights and for state law claims of civil conspiracy, violation of the computer fraud and abuse act (CFAA), discharge in violation of public policy, invasion of privacy, and intentional infliction of emotional distress.

[CB&A Note: The remainder of the case can be read here:

[https://jacksonfreepress.media.clients.ellingtoncms.com/news/documents/2017/01/03/proposed\\_second\\_amended\\_complaint.pdf](https://jacksonfreepress.media.clients.ellingtoncms.com/news/documents/2017/01/03/proposed_second_amended_complaint.pdf)

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Carmen Y. Davis**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Jackson Free Press  
September 26, 2016

**Youth Court Judge Sues Hinds County Over Budget**

Author: Tim Summers Jr.

JACKSON — The Hinds County Board of Supervisors finds itself caught between two judges in their efforts to address issues at the Henley-Young Juvenile Justice Center. On Sept. 23, Hinds County Youth Court Judge William Skinner filed a lawsuit against the Hinds County Board of Supervisors in Hinds County Circuit Court. Skinner alleged that the county executive board overstepped its bounds when it approved a budget that moved funding and "four youth court staff positions to the detention facility," a decision the judge states is "beyond their power to do."

In a Sept. 16 letter the county administrator informed Skinner that the Youth Court would receive a reduction in funding of "\$183,446.64 in salaries and \$71,854.79 in fringes for four positions," in response to the federal court Amended Consent Decree's mandate to focus on mental health-care at Henley-Young. "The board is following a court order that was given to us by a higher judge, by a federal judge," District 1 Supervisor Robert Graham said before pushing all questions to the board's attorney, Pieter Teeuwissen. "But he advised us to really not say anything."

At the moment, the board, as the representative body of the county, is under the constraints of several binding legal agreements. They include an Amended Consent Decree decided as the result of a federal 2012 lawsuit that Disability Rights Mississippi and the Southern Poverty Law Center brought to address conditions at the Henley-Young Juvenile Justice Center. Graham said that with a federal judge on one side and the circuit court youth judge on the other, he could not comment either way. "It is a delicate issue," Graham said, stating that any budget moves were the result of the federal court orders. "Even at that, it is a part of a court order, too."

And, after receiving recommendations from mental-health consultant Dr. Lisa Boesky as part of that agreement, the Board decided to allocate around \$190,000 to address deficiencies in mental health care at the facility. "We're excited that the board has allocated some funding to meet those needs. I don't know if it is enough," Hinds County Board of Supervisors' attorney Pieter Teeuwissen said during a Sept. 15 interview, the same day the board approved its budget. "I don't think any of us know, yet, because we are starting from a clean sheet. I do think that that is a significant commitment." Teeuwissen did not respond to calls about the new lawsuit by press time.

In the Sept. 16 letter to Judge Skinner, Hinds County Administrator **Carmen Y. Davis** informed the judge of the details of the move. "As a part of the consent decree terms and according to Section XIII, Mental Health Care, it has been ordered that the County reallocate the funding for counselor positions within the Youth Court budget to the Detention Facility to provide appropriate and accessible mental health counselors and case management counselors to the residents for the development of the individualized treatment plans," the letter states. "As a

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Carmen Y. Davis***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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mandate to comply with the terms of the amended consent decree," the letter continues, "the Hinds County Board of Supervisors reduced the Youth Court's salary with fringes budget. This reduction consists of \$183,446.64 in salaries and \$71,854.79 in fringes for four positions." This cut will bring the court's budget down to \$255,301.43 for the next fiscal year. Skinner argues in his complaint that moving these positions will inevitably render the Youth Court without "essential personnel necessary for a functioning court." "Furthermore, Judge Skinner will show that there is only one counselor position funded from the county budget vote and not the four counselor positions that they are proposing to cut, so in essence they are cutting salaries and positions of personnel vital and necessary for the functioning of the court," Skinner wrote in his complaint.

Skinner outlines the structure of his court in the document as well. The youth court, he states, is made up of one director, two operations coordinators, three clerks, four deputy clerks, five youth counselor trainees, six youth counselors, seven youth counselors who serve as restitution officers, eight "youth counselor II" positions, nine "youth counselor III" positions, and ten "youth counselor I" positions, in addition to clerical support staff. He states that all of those are needed to help his court address the "well near seven thousand cases a year, which include abuse and neglect (4,000 to 5,000) and delinquency (2,000) and an assortment of other matters brought before it or complained of by a parent or person with interest in the affairs of the minor."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Carmen Y. Davis**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Clarion Ledger  
September 16, 2016

**Almost \$4 million gap in Hinds County budget**

Author: Jimmie E. Gates

Hinds County supervisors approved a \$64.3 million general fund budget for the next fiscal year that will give the county's roughly 830 employees an across-the-board, \$100-a-month raise beginning Jan. 1. But the budget will spend about \$4 million more than the county is projected to collect in revenue, one supervisor says. The county will use reserve money to balance the budget for the 2016-17 budget year, which begins Oct. 1. "It is inevitable that we will have to make some tough decision," said District 4 Supervisor Mike Morgan, the lone Republican on the board and the only one of the five supervisors to vote against the budget, which takes effect Oct. 1.

Morgan said the county continues to spend down reserve money. He said a \$10 million reserve in the bank two years ago will be reduced to \$4 million in the budget approved this week. Last year, supervisors approved a budget with a nearly \$5 million gap in expected revenue versus department requests. District 1 Supervisor Robert Graham said the county adopted a conservative budget, including one that increases the reserve fund by \$500,000, reduce debt services, provides a modest cost-of-living increase for employees, no tax increase and no layoffs or furloughs for employees.

County Administrator **Carmen Davis** said the county is at a turning point in its budget and is facing some challenges. Asked by District 1 Supervisor Robert Graham of plans to try to stabilize the county's budget situation, **Davis** said a vehicle replacement plan is under consideration to cut maintenance costs. She also said the county will determine whether some permit and zoning fees should be increased. One thing the county could be hit with in the new budget year is expenses to meet a federal consent decree for the Hinds County Detention Center in Raymond as well as the one in Jackson and the juvenile justice center.

The Department of Justice and Hinds County reached a settlement in June stemming from a federal investigation that found the Hinds County jail had violated inmates' constitutional rights. U.S. District Judge William Barbour has approved the settlement and hiring of a monitor to track the county's compliance with the agreement. Lillie Woods, the county's budget and finance coordinator, said \$120,000 was put in the budget for the jail monitor. Last year, a Justice Department investigation found the jail lacked adequate staffing and training and failed to protect prisoners from violence and excessive force. Because of a record-filing backlog, inmates also were imprisoned past their release dates, according to the investigation.

The settlement will require the county to improve staffing, supervision of inmates and the physical plant; to limit segregation; to increase access to treatment and services for special-needs prisoners; and to improve mental health and youth services. **Davis** and Woods said a highlight of the budget is no county tax hike. The raises will cost the county approximately \$787,000 for the upcoming fiscal year.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Carmen Y. Davis***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Clarion Ledger

July 7, 2016

**Hinds County may give up park where naked men roamed**

Author: Jimmie E. Gates

Hinds County may relinquish control of the notorious Parham Bridges Park South off of I-55 South where arrests were made in the 1980s amid complaints of naked men running through the woods and performing lewd acts in parked cars and restrooms. Parham Bridges Park South, not to be confused with the Parham Bridges Park in Northeast Jackson, has been closed on and off for regular use for decades but remains a park. Hinds County has done some maintenance there over the years. However, Pieter Teeuwissen, attorney for the county Board of Supervisors, said the needs at the park today outstrip the available resources.

In 1962, W.P. Parham Bridges Sr. donated the property to Hinds County with the stipulation that it be used as a public park. The deed said that if the property isn't used as a public park, the 35 acres will revert to the family. About 15 years ago, Bridges' son, W.P. Parham Bridges Jr., sought to reclaim the land, saying it had gone years without being used as a park. Parham Bridges Jr. said Friday he never wanted to get the land back. He said he would remove the restriction that the land be used as a park if the county could find a way to use it for the public good.

Hinds County increased its efforts to revive the park when the younger Bridges threatened to take the property back because it wasn't being used. The county constructed new restrooms and said the facility was open by request for family reunions and anniversary gatherings. Hinds County Administrator **Carmen Davis** said this week that the park hasn't been used in years. "It lends itself to those who want to do unsavory activity," **Davis** said.

Teeuwissen said county officials have been discussing over the last month what to do about the park. He said the county will have to identify funding to upgrade the park, which could be as much as six figures, or should relinquish rights to park and return the land to the Bridges family. "I don't think we need to let this linger," Teeuwissen said of a decision on the future of the park. Teeuwissen said the park is close to Jackson but the capital city has shown no interest in acquiring the park. He said Jackson already has about 65 parks and he doesn't think the city has any interest in adding another one. **Davis**, Teeuwissen and other county officials say a decision will be made during upcoming county budget hearings.



**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Carmen Y. Davis***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Clarion Ledger  
November 19, 2015

**Historic records in danger**

Author: Jimmie E. Gates

The court records from the original trial in 1964 of Byron De La Beckwith in the slaying of civil rights leader Medgar Evers are stored in paper files or binders somewhere in Hinds County. Officials just aren't sure exactly where. Deputy Clerk Lee Myers explains that a shortage of suitable storage areas means that court records are stored in any available space at the Hinds County Courthouse in Jackson, including this fourth-floor HVAC area. Water leaks from the roof and windows and mold and mildew have damaged many of the documents.

There are shelves and storage rooms full of old court records in the Hinds County Courthouse and other locations in the county. Some of those records can never be destroyed, according to state law. However, many are in danger from storage in leaky rooms, leading to mildew and mold. Beckwith was tried twice in 1964 in the June 12, 1963, shooting death of Evers, who was shot in the back after he got out of his car in the driveway of his Jackson home while his wife and three small children were inside the house. Each of the trials in 1964 ended in hung juries when an all-white jury couldn't reach a decision.

In 1994, 30 years after his original trials, Beckwith was convicted of killing Evers after the case was reopened. He was sentenced to life in prison. Beckwith died in prison in 2001 at the age of 80. Old court records, such as the Beckwith trial records from 1964, were kept in large binder books. Some records date back to the 1893. NaCola James of the Hinds County Human Capital Development Office said the county has files stacked from floor to ceiling in some storage areas, but water leaks from the roof and windows and mold and mildew have damaged many of the documents. "Stacking boxes upon top of each other is compromising our records," James said. "There is no protection for our historic records."

Longtime Hinds County Circuit Clerk Barbara Dunn, who is retiring in January, said once the county had a storage area infested with bats, but that storage facility is no longer used. James and Hinds County Administrator **Carmen Davis** said they would like the county to have an archive location to house historic records. "We need a storage facility," said Hinds County Supervisors' President Tony Greer. The county is considering a building on McRaven Road. Supervisor Peggy Hobson Calhoun said the county won't be able to buy enough storage for records. Calhoun said the county should seek help from the Legislature to find a solution. "There needs to be better way," Calhoun said. "We have paper everywhere."

**Davis** said that is the reason the county should have its own archival system. James said the county approached the Mississippi Department of Archives and History about taking the historic county records but was told the department currently doesn't have enough storage space.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Carmen Y. Davis**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Clarion Ledger  
September 15, 2015

**Hinds County budget won't fill some positions**

Author: Jimmie E. Gates

The Hinds County Board of Supervisors has approved a \$58.3 million general fund budget that doesn't increase taxes, but will leave about 51 vacant positions unfunded including 36 in the sheriff's department. Board of Supervisors President Tony Greer, who voted no on the budget, complains it doesn't go far enough to curb spending in the county. The county has a gap of about \$5 million in expected revenue versus department requests for the 2015-2016 budget year, which begins Oct. 1. The county will use reserve money to balance the budget.

Greer had proposed eliminating some vacant positions as a way to save money and balance the budget. The overall county budget is \$107 million, with \$58.3 of that for the general fund, which comes from tax revenue. "I feel like we are bloated when it comes to employees," Greer said. Greer voted no on the budget. He was joined by Supervisor Robert Graham in voting no, but they had different reasons for casting no votes. Graham said he was opposed to not funding the positions, especially in the sheriff's department, considering all the jail problems the county has had over the last couple years. About 12 of the positions are at the Jackson Detention Center.

Supervisors Peggy Hobson Calhoun, Darrel McQuirter and George Smith voted for the budget. Calhoun said if the sheriff comes to the board with a request to hire certain employees, there is money in the reserve funds to pay for the employees. Calhoun said the county's only two options were not to fill vacancies or to raise taxes, and she wasn't going to vote to raise property taxes. All five supervisors said they were opposed to raising taxes.

County Administrator **Carmen Davis** said the budget was a challenge with declining revenue. She said revenue has been on the decline over the last two years. Smith, who is interim District 5 supervisor, said adopting a balanced budget, one where revenue and expenditures are in line, could do more harm than good because the county is in the business of providing service to residents. The county is also concerned that it could be hit with additional expenditures in the future to satisfy requirements of consent decrees with the U.S. Department of Justice on the adult detention centers and the Henley-Young Juvenile Justice Center.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Carmen Y. Davis**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Wjtv.com  
May 4, 2015

**Hinds County to fix broken windows inmates used to escape; 1 still at large**

Author: Kristen Lambertsen

JACKSON, Miss. – Hinds County authorities are still searching for a teen after he and two others broke out of the Jackson Detention Center over the weekend. The Hinds County Sheriff's Department tells us they are looking for 17-year-old William Smith. Smith and two other inmates, 17-year-old Antwain Dukes and 18-year-old Gerome Moore escaped from the jail out of a broken window. Dukes and Moore are back in custody. Dukes and Moore were arrested in January in connection to dozens of crimes in Jackson, including multiple carjacking's and the shooting death of Carolyn Temple. One month ago, four teens escaped the downtown jail.

**Carmen Davis**, the County Administrator, said six broken windows could be fixed this week and the sheriff's department says that includes the window used in this weekend's jailbreak. In the meantime deputies are posted outside the jail to make sure no one escapes or brings contraband into the facility. The extra security is 24/7, Sheriff Tyrone Lewis said. The board approved \$100,000 for repairs on April 6. However, the sheriff says no repairs have been made since that time.

WJTV asked him why inmates are housed in cells with broken windows. "I want to make sure I'm very clear," he said. "Every window in that facility is deficient. Every window can be compromised and all the inmates know that so we're in a hurry up and wait situation, until we can get these windows fixed." Earlier this year 21 windows were repaired but **Davis** said 171 windows still need to be repaired.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Carmen Y. Davis**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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wjtv.com

April 29, 2015

**Two Arrested for Trying to Sneak Drugs into Hinds County Jail Downtown**

Author: Kristen Lambertsen

For the second straight week the Hinds County Sheriff's Department made a late-night bust outside of their downtown jail. Authorities stopped a group of people Tuesday around 9:30 p.m. who they say were trying to sneak drugs into the building. Sheriff Tyrone Lewis says his deputies recovered about an ounce of marijuana, some packages of spice, lighters, and cigarettes from a small rolled up package. A weapon and scale were also found in the vehicle used by the suspects.

Sheriff Lewis declined to go into detail about how the two men were arrested while trying to get the items behind bars. He only went as far to say the suspects were caught outside with the help of street-side surveillance. "But we're pretty proud of the measures we put in place and we're going to continue this effort until the county administrator decides she's going to move forward and fix the flaws of this building so we won't have to take these extra precautions," Sheriff Lewis said. He is criticizing Hinds County Administrator **Carmen Davis** on the funding issue.

Two suspects were placed under arrest and will be charged with attempting to introduce contraband to a correctional facility. 24-year-old Joshua Ledbetter and 25-year-old Dominique Griffin are in the custody of authorities. Sheriff Lewis says one more person is on the run. That person's name is Kimandre Davis and authorities are currently working on making an arrest.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Carmen Y. Davis**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Clarion Ledger  
February 25, 2015

**Supervisor: No data compromised in Hinds cyber attack**  
Authors: Harold Gater, and Dawn Dugle

**Hinds hacked**

The Hinds County website was the victim of a cyber attack Wednesday morning, however Hinds County District 1 Supervisor Robert Graham says it does not appear at this time any data was compromised. For a few minutes, a strange image appeared in the middle of the Hinds website saying "Hacked by Hamzah Uygun. F\*\*\* Israel and Usa."

Graham says he discovered that the website had been hacked shortly after 8 a.m. He contacted Hinds County Administrator **Carmen Davis** and together they determined who needed to be notified. IT workers were called along with supervisors, the Hinds County Sheriff's Dept., FBI and other metro area governments. Graham says they take the attack "very seriously."

Hinds County District 3 Supervisor Peggy Calhoun says that most data on the website is public information and there is no reason for the attack which she described as "malicious." There were also claims of the attack being from AnonGhost - whose Facebook page lists it as a "Defacer and a Computer Hacking Crew" from "Worldwide Anonymous." In November, the self-proclaimed Pro-Palestine hackers defaced the website of the United Nations and 120 other government sites. The site provider, U.S. Next, took the site down and reposted it using a previous version of the website. Graham added that it appears that it was not a county server that was hacked.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Carmen Y. Davis**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Jackson Free Press  
November 3, 2014

**Stokes, Graham Blast New Jail Planning Committee**  
Author: R.L. Nave

In response to the seemingly never-ending bad news out of the Raymond Detention Center, county officials this morning took an incremental first step toward finding a solution. The Hinds County Board of Supervisors voted today to form an ad hoc committee to assess the condition of the jail and to develop a plan for alleviating its lingering problems. In recent years, inmate uprisings, escapes, suspicious deaths and allegations of corruption have plagued the jail. The new committee will consist of District 4 Supervisor Tony Greer, who will chair the body, along with Board Attorney Pieter Teeuwissen, County Administrator **Carmen Davis**, Sheriff Tyrone Lewis and representatives from each of the county's five districts.

Even though it passed, the plan drew criticism. District 5 Supervisor Kenneth Stokes, who has long advocated for the construction of a new county jail, objected to forming the committee and its proposed makeup, as well as to having Greer as its chairman. Stokes said the county should hire professional engineers and architects to conduct planning for a new detention facility instead of political appointees. The jail has been embroiled in political controversy for many years. The controversy has grown more intense since Stokes joined the board after serving on the Jackson City Council. Stokes has often been publicly critical of Lewis, who oversees the jail's day-to-day functions. In the meantime, two Hinds County grand juries have delivered damning reports about the safety and security inside the jail. The U.S. Department of Justice is also looking into the conditions at county-run jails.

Most recently, Lewis and Hinds County District Attorney Robert Shuler Smith locked horns over the alleged leak of erroneous grand jury indictment information to reporters. Lewis and members of his staff appeared on a local radio show to criticize the DA's office for putting together weak cases that failed to result in criminal indictments. Smith's contempt motion claimed that a list of unindicted cases provided to the media included the name of an individual who was indicted on another charge. In late October, Smith dropped the contempt citation after Lewis' office assured him that the release of the grand jury information was a mistake and that it would not happen again.

District 1 Supervisor Robert Graham seems to quibble with the idea that a new jail would solve the county's crime problems. "Do we just spend money on top of money on top of money in jail? When does it stop? We're just spinning our wheels," Graham said. No timeline was announced for when the new committee would commence its meetings.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Carmen Y. Davis**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Jackson Free Press

October 3, 2014

**DA Robert Smith Called Grand Jury That Criticizes Sheriff Tyrone Lewis**

Author: R.L. Nave

Robert Shuler Smith, the Hinds County district attorney, empaneled the grand jury that delivered a damning report of Sheriff Tyrone Lewis's supervision of the Raymond Detention Center. Several media outlets, including the Jackson Free Press, reported that Hinds County Senior Circuit Judge Tomie Green—who called a grand jury together in 2013 after an uprising that left a housing pod unusable, the subsequent death of a prisoner named Larry David McLaurin and other incidents of unrest—empaneled the grand jury that delivered its findings yesterday, Oct. 3.

In an email to the Jackson Free Press this morning, Green clarified that it was a grand jury Smith empaneled in July 2014 that inspected the jail and delivered its findings to Green late yesterday afternoon. Calls to Smith's office as well as to Lewis' spokesman Othor Cain were not immediately returned this morning. The four-page grand jury report followed inspections of the jail as well as the Hinds County Courthouse and concluded that "after hearing from (Lewis) and his team, we are of the opinion that Sheriff Lewis is incompetent to oversee the jail or keep pretrial detainees or state inmates safe in a manner or to keep the public safe from inmates."

In their report, grand jurors note that during an inspection of the facility, they observed "the immediate after effects of arson" as well as a prisoner who exposed himself and another prisoner who possessed a cell phone, which they pointed out is a felony. In addition, the jail lacked an adequate number of jailers, and the guards on duty were frightened of the inmates. "The inmates seemed to be in control of the jail as a result of the shortage," grand jurors wrote.

The grand jury also noted other health and safety concerns, including mildewed tiles in the prisoner's shower area, cell doors stuffed with toilet paper to prevent them from locking, several cracked glass windows and areas where lights do not work properly. The control and booking room requires new cameras and monitors and has several areas that are moldy, jurors observed. The U.S. Department of Justice announced June 2 that the agency would open a "pattern or practice investigation" of both the Raymond Detention Center and the Jackson Detention Center downtown. A DOJ press release stated the investigation would focus "on whether Hinds County protects prisoners from harm at the hands of other prisoners and staff" and "improper use of force." Judge Green said the probe is ongoing.

Lewis has long complained that his difficulty maintaining the building stems from the Board of Supervisors and County Administrator **Carmen Davis** holding the purse strings to the jail and must approve all repairs. Judge Green empaneled a grand jury last year, she said, because a thorough inspection of the jail had not taken place since 2008. It found "a great deal of ongoing conflict in this 'arranged marriage' between the county and the sheriff." "The sheriff claims that the County has failed to adequately maintain the basic maintenance needs of the facility. When they need a repair, a work order is submitted, but the County is slow to make the needed repair.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Carmen Y. Davis***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The result is a facility that is in disarray in its basic electric, plumbing, smoke alarm, control boards, ventilation and security systems," they wrote. In the most recent report, grand jurors also inspected the Hinds County Courthouse and found that "it is in good and safe condition," except for its outdated cameras and poorly functioning elevators, which have been a frequent source of conversation among county supervisors. Grand jurors also observed several areas of water damage, including "a constant drip from the ceiling that is damaging the clerk's office." The JFP uncovered similar problems at the courthouse causing damage to thousands of files. Hinds County Circuit Clerk Barbara Dunn denies that any documents are at risk. Yesterday evening, the Hinds County Board of Supervisors called an emergency meeting, which Smith attended briefly, and went into executive session to discuss the report but announced no action.



**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Carmen Y. Davis**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Clarion Ledger  
September 30, 2014

**Hinds County budget includes layoffs**

Hinds County's recently approved budget included elimination of seven administrative jobs. Employees received termination letters on September 15th, WLBT reported. Hinds County administrator, **Carmen Davis**, says the county could not continue to pay the salaries totaling about \$270,000 annually. "It was a 3-2 vote to accept the budget as it was and that did eliminate our positions," said Pamela Young, a laid off worker. Young was an administrative assistant at the Hinds County Department of Human Services.

"These are employees that work for the state but are funded by the county and it just come to a point that the county could no longer afford to fund the state operation. We definitely tried to get them a heads up," **Davis** said. Hinds County is operating with a general fund of \$54 million dollars but officials say they are always looking for ways to reduce costs. **Davis** says the state government is picking up some of the positions.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Carmen Y. Davis**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Jackson Free Press

May 14, 2014

**SPLC Blasts Henley-Young Plan**

Author: R.L. Nave

After receiving a reprimand for its management of the Henley-Young Juvenile Justice Center, Hinds County officials have come up with a solution to the ongoing legal problems, one that has raised sharp criticism from youth advocates. In late April, U.S. District Judge Daniel P. Jordan found Hinds County in contempt of court for failure to comply with a 2012 settlement over abusive conditions and lack of access to educational services at the youth detention center.

At the time, a federal court ordered the county to improve in more than 70 "areas of deficiency" that ranged from basic cleanliness to expanding mental health and rehabilitative services at the 84-bed facility; a monitor was appointed to document the progress. However, those monitoring reports show—and attorneys for the plaintiffs agree—that little progress has been made. Jordan agreed as well. As a result, he not only extended the consent decree for two more years but also found that the county was in contempt of court.

In his order, Jordan wrote that while the initial two-year deadline was probably too little time to make all the needed fixes, "many of the 71 requirements should have been accomplished long before now." "(W)e are faced with a large task and possible incompetence. That said—and this needs to be clearly understood—the progress thus far is unacceptable," Jordan wrote. During a closed-door executive session held May 5, supervisors voted to transfer operation the county voted to turn Henley-Young's daily operation over to Hinds County Judge William Skinner, who supervises the county' youth court program.

Under that arrangement, which could take effect as soon as June 1, the county would maintain the physical building but the detention center's administrator would report directly to Skinner. Currently, Henley-Young Administrator Brenda Frelix reports to Hinds County Administrator **Carmen Davis**; **Davis** reports to the five-member board of supervisors.

Hinds officials have long complained that the involvement of several agencies—the county, the courts and Jackson Public Schools—in Henley-Young's operation creates a bureaucratic nightmare, making it hard to comply with court orders. "It's a house divided," District 2 Supervisor Darrel McQuirter told the Jackson Free Press in an interview last week. Jody Owens, managing attorney of the Mississippi Southern Poverty Law Center, which represented plaintiffs in the 2012 suit, called putting the youth detention center under Skinner's direction "crazy" and a "conflict of interest" because children require specialized care and mental-health treatment.

"There are people who specialize in youth detention, and Judge Skinner does not fit that mold," Owens said. Besides, Owens points out, Skinner was in charge of Henley-Young until 2009 when the Hinds County Board of Supervisors stripped him of that authority amid questions about his management of the facility. District 1 Supervisor Robert Graham said at the time the board

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Carmen Y. Davis**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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"received information that we believe were federal violations regarding the operation of the center." The Mississippi State Supreme Court sanctioned Skinner in August 2013 for issuing a pair of bench warrants in a child-custody case that he'd recused himself from because a court employee was related to one of the litigants. The state's high court found Skinner had abused his power and suspended him for 30 days without pay and a \$1,000 fine.

Owens said SPLC attorneys could take Hinds County back to court in less than six months if they do not see substantial progress on the consent decree's benchmarks, which the county must still meet no matter who is running the detention center. "They can't pass their accountability to Judge Skinner," Owens said.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Carmen Y. Davis**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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WAPT.com  
July 19, 2013

**Sheriff says other county leaders accountable for jail problems**  
**Inmates flood cells at Hinds County Detention Center**

JACKSON, Miss. — The Hinds County Administrator is firing back after the sheriff said other county leaders are accountable for problems at his jail. Inmates flooded a pod of cells with water Thursday. "It's an issue that we deal with every day, where inmates tend to flood our cells. It happens every day," Hinds County Sheriff Tyrone Lewis said. Dozens of Hinds County deputies rushed to the Detention Center in Raymond after an employee called for backup. "This particular employee overreacted and made an unnecessary call," Lewis said.

Lewis said inmates in Pod A broke out of their cells and flooded that area of the jail. He said no one was injured. "We're still dealing with the same old maintenance issues," Lewis said. Video shot by a jail guard showed maintenance problems in June. Inmates can be seen running freely through a pod after popping the locks on their cell doors. One month later, inmates in Pod C broke out of their cells and started a riot that lasted 10 hours. Lewis said maintenance at the jail is out of his power. He said his department must send maintenance requests to county leaders before anything so much as a light bulb is fixed. Lewis said these types of inmate problems will continue until the doors are fixed. "The maintenance director is not being held accountable to maintain this facility the way it should be maintained," Lewis said.

County Administrator **Carmen Davis** oversees the maintenance director. **Davis** said in a statement released Friday that she is disturbed that the sheriff said his requests for repairs have been ignored. "All of the locks were repaired or replaced last summer as identified by the sheriff. The repairs have not been ignored," **Davis** said. **Davis** said the work orders presented to the Maintenance Department have been completed. "Our policy is that a Detention Center employee must sign off on the work order to confirm that the repairs have been completed. This policy ensures and affirms that work orders are not ignored," **Davis** said. "Work orders are handled on an ongoing basis primarily because inmates are constantly destroying county property."

**Davis** said she has work orders from Detention Center and maintenance staff that says inmates are damaging the facility. "More specifically, maintenance staff reported and recorded that the locks were not functioning properly due to inmates jamming the locks with everyday objects or materials," **Davis** said. The county made fixing door locks a priority. She said a vendor repaired the locks last summer and is still at the Detention Center working on other aspects of the doors. **Davis** said she has shared several of her concerns about inmates damaging county property with Lewis but has not received a response from him about how he plans to address the problem.

Lewis said his proposed budget for next year seeks \$500,000 to create a maintenance department withing the Sheriff's Office. He wants to hire, train and be in charge of getting things fixed around the jail. The Board of Supervisors will vote on the budget proposal in September.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Carmen Y. Davis***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Clarion Ledger  
November 28, 2012

**Investigation into Jackson courthouse bomb threat continues**

Author: Ruth Ingram

Officials with the Mississippi Office of Homeland Security today are continuing an investigation into who called in a bomb threat Tuesday targeting the Hinds County Chancery Courthouse and why. Employees of the building in downtown Jackson were evacuated for about three hours after the call came in to Jackson police's dispatch. Hinds County Sheriff's Department deputies cleared and secured the building, paving the way for Homeland Security staff to search the building for anything pertaining to the threat. At least three Jackson Fire Department engines were on standby as an Explosive Ordnance Disposal and K9 units scanned the area. Nothing was found, and employees were allowed to return at about 3:30 p.m.

Jay Ledbetter, director of the Mississippi Homeland Security office, was not immediately available for comment this morning. That agency is taking the lead on the investigation; on Tuesday, multiple agencies including Jackson police and the Sheriff's Department were on hand to close down streets surrounding the courthouse, direct traffic and facilitate the search for explosives. Throughout the episode, Hinds County administrator **Carmen Davis** coordinated putting the county's evacuation plan into action and kept supervisors and others updated on law officers' actions in ensuring the Chancery Court building was safe. She could not immediately be reached for comment today.

It's still unknown if there is a connection to the threat in Jackson and bomb threats called in Tuesday affecting 30 courthouses across Tennessee. They also forced employees to evacuate and local law enforcement agencies to respond to what one Tennessee sheriff's department's deputy chief said amounted to domestic terrorism. Not just Tennessee, but states including Oregon, Nebraska and Washington also have received bomb threats this month targeting courthouses. Around 10 a.m. Tuesday, the Tennessee Emergency Management Agency received a phone call that a bomb had been placed in a local courthouse. By 3:30 p.m., 30 courthouses had received bomb threats, said agency spokesman Dean Flener. No arrests were made, and no bombs were found. "We take bomb threats very seriously," he said. "We get bomb threats throughout the year, sometimes at schools and sometimes courthouses."

Law officers in Jackson were investigating a report from a person giving possible information related to who made the call, but details weren't being released as part of the ongoing probe. Hinds County District 1 Supervisor and board president Robert Graham said Tuesday that law officers "have no indication that it was related to the matter in Tennessee ... Of course, you are always subject to having individuals who are copycats."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Carmen Y. Davis**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Mississippi Link  
October 30, 2012

**Hinds Co. workers get relief on insurance cost**

Author: Monica Land

JACKSON – (AP) Hinds County supervisors have voted 3-2 to keep the contract approved earlier this month with United Healthcare and its local representative, Bottrell Insurance. The new contract lowers employees' health insurance deductible from a staggering \$5,000 to a low of \$500 but more than doubles their monthly premiums, from \$73 for a single employee to \$173. The board voted this month to absorb about \$44 of the cost per month per employee.

County Administrator **Carmen Davis** told The Clarion-Ledger that's possible because the county budgeted for an 8 percent increase in its share of the health insurance cost, and that cost ended up not rising. The 8 percent would equal about \$44 per employee per month.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Carmen Y. Davis**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Jackson Free Press  
September 17, 2012

**Calhoun Wants Action at Juvenile Center**

Author: R.L. Nave

A Hinds County supervisor wants know what's being done to fix problems at the Henley-Young Juvenile Justice Center. District 3 Supervisor Peggy Hobson-Calhoun directed county administrator **Carmen Davis** to provide a list of corrective actions taken at the beleaguered youth jail. A complaint from the Southern Poverty Law Center and Disability Rights Mississippi alleged that the center's staff subjected the children to physical and verbal abuse. It resulted in a March 2012 settlement between the county and plaintiffs. Under the agreement, children entering the facility were to receive mental-health evaluations, counseling, better rehabilitation options, input from family and advocates, and more time outside their cells.

As of August, however, the county has not addressed many basic issues in the settlement, according to a report from court-appointed monitor and juvenile-justice expert Leonard B. Dixon. Dixon points to inadequate staffing that keeps the jail in "perpetual lock-down mode" and high leadership turnover at the facility as one explanation for the county's difficulty in maintaining a safe and secure environment. That the jail has had three directors in as many years, Dixon said, "creates instability, chaos and a lack of direction." The building--located on East McDowell Road in Jackson--is also in poor condition and is in need of extensive maintenance, Dixon wrote.

The Hinds County website displays a job announcement for entry-level juvenile-detention officers. The job description lists tasks varying from subduing violent prisoners and performing life-saving measures to serving snacks, washing walls and cleaning toilets. The job pays \$1,643.63 per month, less than \$20,000 annually. District 4 Supervisor Kenneth Stokes said he's heard stories of cooks and groundskeepers sometimes filling in to keep an eye on youth inmates. Stokes renewed his oft-repeated call to ask the city of Jackson, whose residents represent the majority of inmates housed in county facilities, to pitch in and help pay for the needed changes.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Carmen Y. Davis***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Jackson Free Press

July 2, 2012

**Update: Jail Fixes Cost \$1.3 Mil**

Author: JFP Staff

The Hinds County Detention Center at Raymond is getting a facelift, but it won't necessarily put an end to the security problems that have plagued the facility. With little discussion, Hinds County supervisors agreed to spend \$1.3 million from a 2007 bond issue to make repairs at the jail. In recent months, several escapes from the jail and media reports showing its shoddy condition put pressure on officials to make much-needed fixes. Among the "major repairs" **Davis** said the county plans to make are fixing doors in the housing pods, replacing a water tank at the health department's request, installing a new dishwasher and kitchen floors, fixing shower valves, installing razor wire, and installing and fixing cameras.

District 5 Supervisor Kenneth Stokes warned that making the improvements wouldn't mean that escapes would stop or that no future repairs would be needed. County Administrator **Carmen Davis** said her office would start looking into replacing the jail and talking to the city of Jackson about pitching in. Supervisors have complained that because the majority of detainees are Jackson residents, the city should pay more for housing its inmates there. She added that maintenance at the 24-hour-a-day operation has long been a challenge, in part because "the facility was not built to the proper standards in the first place." "That's the nature of the business," **Davis** said of corrections. "Inmates may not handle the facility like we would handle our homes.

Also, back in January, Hinds County Emergency Operations Center director Jimmie Lewis got fired and supervisors voted to rehire him a few minutes later. Today, he was fired again. Hinds County District 1 Supervisor and board president Robert Graham waited until the end of today's supervisors meeting to air several longstanding complaints against Lewis' management of the EOC. According to Graham, Lewis failed to apply for "millions" of dollars worth of grants for which the county is eligible and didn't satisfactorily respond to Graham's requests for information.

District 5 Supervisor Kenneth Stokes was the only board member who voted against Lewis' firing. District 3 Supervisor Peggy Calhoun did not attend, but did participate in portions of the meeting via a teleconferencing system. The board then voted to rehire Ricky Moore, who previously worked for the EOC, and sued the county in 2010 for racial discrimination when supervisors tapped Lewis, who is black, over Moore, who is white, to lead the department. Joey Perkins will serve as the EOC's interim director until Moore is formally hired.



**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Carmen Y. Davis**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Mississippi Link

June 27, 2012

**Hinds sheriff criticizes county after jail escapes**

Author: Monica Land

JACKSON – (AP) Hinds County Sheriff Tyrone Lewis is criticizing other county officials for not doing enough to repair the county’s troubled jail. Lewis says mounting maintenance problems aren’t being addressed, although administrators and county supervisors are aware there’s a crisis. The recently-elected sheriff led reporters on a tour of the Raymond Detention Center Friday, hours after another inmate escaped. That’s the third escape in three months. Lewis and Chief Deputy Chris Picou say that dozens of cell door locks are broken, meaning inmates can get out at will. They want county supervisors to hire a company that specializes in jail repairs to fix the problems.

Frederick Destache, the inmate who escaped early Friday, was captured about 30 minutes later at a nearby gas station after a struggle with deputies, the sheriff said. Supervisors, for their part, voted 3-2 Monday to close the Raymond facility and build a new one. But they set no timeline and it’s unclear how the county would pay for the \$30 million to \$45 million needed to replace the 1994 jail. “Until the maintenance department of Hinds County steps up to the plate and makes these corrections, we are going to continue to have inmates escaping and employees resigning and afraid to come to work,” Lewis said in the wake of Destache’s escape through a broken grate in his holding cell. He then walked through a maintenance room, then left via double doors that didn’t lock.

Supervisors and county administrators say they’re filling work requests given to them by Lewis. They say recent escapes should not be blamed on maintenance woes but on lack of vigilance by Lewis’ staff. “We want to make sure the public is aware that we’re taking full responsibility to fulfill our maintenance duties, and we have a process and are handling it with urgency,” said County Administrator **Carmen Davis**. “The concern he (Lewis) expressed today is news to me.” The department has a shortage of guards, and those on staff are poorly trained, Lewis said. The sheriff would not say how many more are needed, citing security concerns. According to records obtained by The Clarion-Ledger, 24 people identified as detention or correction officers left the department between Jan. 1 and May 31. Of those, 12 were fired, nine resigned and three retired.

On July 2, supervisors will vote on spending more than \$1.2 million in money from a 2007 bond issue on immediate jail repairs. “The items in the Power Point presentation are the ones being addressed,” **Davis** said.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Carmen Y. Davis**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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<https://www.therecycler.com/posts/us-county-audit-finds-surplus-cartridges-worth-35000/>

The Recycler.com

January 16, 2012

**US county audit finds surplus cartridges worth \$35,000**

Officials in Hinds County in Jackson, Mississippi, found over \$35,000 (€27,661) in surplus ink and toner cartridge supplies, according to the Clarion Ledger. Fisher stated: “It had been bought and just squirreled away. They’ve been sticking it in closets for years, and nobody’s said anything. It’s absurd for taxpayers to be paying for this. “It’s a small example of how the county refuses to do a performance audit and messes over the people who pay for government.”

A number of administrators stated that the stock was the result of a conversion to electronic scanning and emailing from copying and faxing in 2008. Robert Graham, Supervisor’s President of District 1 in the county, excused the stockpile, adding: “This is the expected result of when we changed to a new system. It’s like meat in the refrigerator. It doesn’t mean it wasn’t going to be eaten, but you got something better.”

The discovery came at a bad time for the county, which has been borrowing from emergency and bond funds to pay bills, and Fisher added that his original audit was to establish which printing and copying devices were needed in the county offices to save money. County Administrator **Carmen Davis** performed the audit, and noted that 22 printers had been removed, others were necessary, amounting to 10 percent of the county’s devices, and noted that 43 percent of the surplus was ordered before the county’s conversion, with a 55 percent reduction in consumables expenses since.

**Davis** added: “We’ve gone to departments and have conducted an evaluation, and we’ve relinquished some desktop printers. The whole point of that contract was to reduce the ink and toner cartridge use. We’ve cut our costs down substantially.” County Supervisor Peggy Hobson Calhoun added: “If it was after the conversion, it’s a lack of monitoring and management of the employees. “If these things were ordered prior to that, you could make some justification for having it. I’m pleased we are taking measures to sell the supplies.”

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Carmen Y. Davis***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Jackson Free Press  
September 19, 2011

**Calhoun: Jails Becoming Mental Health Centers**

Author: Valerie Wells

Hinds County wants help dealing with a rising population of incarcerated prisoners who suffer from substance abuse and mental health issues. The board of supervisors passed a resolution today formally asking legislators to support the development of a "behavioral health treatment court collaborative" in the 2012 session. "Jails are becoming mental-health crisis centers," Peggy Hobson Calhoun, supervisor for District 3, said at this morning's meeting. Jails are not equipped to provide necessary health care for drug abusers, alcoholics and the mentally ill, she said, but counties carry the burden of providing that care. "This is a good opportunity to request help," she said.

County Administrator **Carmen Davis** read the resolution, citing a backlog of cases plus overcrowding as serious issues. Financially, the county has seen an increase in medical costs for prisoners over the past two decades. The resolution also refers to an increase of prisoners who are HIV-positive. While more correctional facilities can help the overcrowding, that won't make up for the lack of proper medical and mental-health care, **Davis** said. Sen. David Blount of Hinds County told the JFP this morning the issue is definitely a concern, but it is too early for him to comment substantially. He has met with the county once about the collaborative concept and plans to look more into the subject before the next legislative session convenes in January.

Mississippi Rep. Credell Calhoun, D-District 68, who is Supervisor Calhoun's husband, said he had also attended a meeting on the idea. "I think it's appropriate. Hopefully, we can get something done," he said. "We are not just talking about Hinds County." Calhoun said he didn't know off hand how much money might be involved with developing the treatment collaborative, but he did say it would be significant. "It would be worth it," he said. Rep. Bill Denny, R-District 64, said he was too busy campaigning door-to-door, sun-up to sundown, to talk about the issue. "We are right in the middle of a campaign," he told the Jackson Free Press this morning. "I don't want to get in the middle of anything."

In a previous story, JFP reported that it is not easy for the mentally ill to get help immediately. Kathy Denton, public relations director at Mississippi State Hospital, said that residents must first go to a regional health facility before coming to the state hospital. In Hinds County, residents can seek treatment at Hinds Behavioral Health Services, and staff will then decide if the patient should seek long-term treatment at the state facility. It often takes a family member or friend to bring in someone they are concerned about and continue taking them to appointments.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Carmen Y. Davis***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Jackson Free Press

July 27, 2011

**A Fair Policy?**

Author: Lacey McLaughlin

If you serve at the will and pleasure of an elected official in Hinds County or the state, you have signed on for a job without protection if you are fired. Rep. Ed Blackmon Jr., D-Madison, plans to introduce legislation next year that would require counties to choose a blanket personnel policy that would either give all county employees employment protections or none at all. Blackmon says the situation highlights a bigger issue in the state about employee rights in the private and public sectors. "People say Mississippi is a right-to-work state, but that's a misnomer because it's a right-to-be fired state," Blackmon said.

Mississippi is one of 22 states with right-to-work laws that prohibit agreements between employers and labor unions that require employees to join a union as a term of their employment. Blackmon argues that, historically, employers used the state's right-to-work statute to suppress the African American vote because employers could threaten to fire their black workers if they wanted to vote. Today, people who work for elected county officials may not have the same employment protections that other county public servants (such as public works, emergency services and the county attorney's office) have. State law gives county elected officials the authority to set their own personnel policies.

"This is now being used by the very people that the law was intended to intimidate," Blackmon said. "Right-to-work is a holy grail in Mississippi, and we are happy to tell prospective employers that you don't have to worry about unions or employee rights. You can fire anybody in Mississippi that works for you for any reason or no reason at all."

Speaking at a Hinds County Board of Supervisors meeting June 6, Jacquie Amos-Norris asked supervisors to consider changing the county's policy. In May, Hinds County Tax Collector Eddie Fair fired Norris. She doesn't think she should have been fired. Fair fired Amos-Norris May 13, citing her unwillingness to cross train. Norris, however, claims that Fair fired her after she disagreed with him about her pay. "Employees don't have rights," Amos-Norris said. "The only thing you are allowed to do is show up for work."

Fair denies the allegation that he fired Amos-Norris as an act of retaliation, but said he could not comment on a personnel issue. Fair maintains that he has merely adopted a personnel policy similar to his predecessors and believes that he is being unjustly singled out. "I think it's a fair policy," he said. "If you have the right to hire, why shouldn't you have the right to fire?" Fair's policy, like the majority of county elected officials, does not have a grievance and appeals process, and employees serve at the will and pleasure of the tax collector. County employees who work in departments not headed by an elected official can appeal to the county's human-resources department if they are fired or have workplace grievances. They then make their case to a human-resources committee, which makes a report to County Administrator **Carmen Davis**

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Carmen Y. Davis**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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on whether the employee was wrongfully terminated. **Davis** then has final authority on the person's employment status. Amos-Norris claims that Fair has too much authority and says his personnel policy creates a hostile environment and high employee turnover. The Hinds County Board of Supervisors adopted Fair's personnel policy in 2004. **Davis** said the board has no authority over Fair's policy or over that of any elected official. "It's required by state law that they place it in with minutes of the board," **Davis** said. "It's not an approval action; it's a receiving action." Hinds County Circuit Clerk Barbara Dunn and Hinds County Chancery Clerk Eddie Jean Carr can also terminate employees without a grievance or appeals process. Carr, who spent two years working as a human-resources manager, said that she has not fired anyone during her eight-year term in office. "I have an open-door policy with my staff," she said. "We don't have any issues or problems."

The Hinds County Sheriff's office does have an appeals process, but Sheriff Malcolm McMillin makes the final decision regarding employment. Brenda Scott, president of the Mississippi Alliance of State Employees, said that state employees serve at the will and pleasure of elected officials and did not think that county employees should be any different. "That's a non-protected job title," Scott said. "... If I was the head of a new administration and there were a bunch of employees from that old administration, I should have authority to put my people in place. Otherwise, there is no loyalty to me, and I can't succeed."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Carmen Y. Davis***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Jackson Free Press

June 8, 2011

**Did County Know of Abuse at Detention Center?**

Author: Lacey McLaughlin

The proposed set of rules would include a bond schedule for suspects charged with crimes and outline arrest procedures. Juvenile-justice advocates filed a lawsuit last week that raises questions about how much the Hinds County Board of Supervisors knew about alleged abuses at the county's Henley-Young Detention Center. The Mississippi Youth Justice Project, a project of the Southern Poverty Law Center, filed a lawsuit last week claiming that youth detained in the detention center suffer various abuses and live in unsanitary and unsafe conditions. The advocacy organization says detention-center officials regularly isolate children in cells for 20 to 23 hours a day, deny them educational and counseling services, and verbally abuse the detainees.

The lawsuit states that Henley-Young staff routinely curse at detainees and issue threats of physical violence. Officers have even threatened to kill detainees, the lawsuit claims. One specific incident in the suit describes what happened when a 17-year-old, referred to as D.I., began cutting himself with a razor. "Instead of providing D.I. with the required care, Henley-Young staff taunted the youth and commented that if he succeeded in killing himself, there would be one less person officers would have to worry about," the lawsuit states.

Mississippi Youth Justice Project staff attorney Corrie Cockrell said her organization filed the lawsuit after attempts to work with the county on reforming the detention center's conditions failed. In 2009, the Hinds County Board of Supervisors approved a memorandum of understanding with the MYJP, which called for a series of detention-center reforms. The memorandum resulted in officers discontinuing the use of a restraining chair. But other requests, such as limiting the amount of time detainees are confined to their cells and ensuring that detainees receive educational and medical services, have not been resolved, Cockrell said.

"We were regularly meeting until a year ago to bring this to their attention, and progress was going well," Cockrell said. "... Then things became a standstill, and there was no movement in the right direction. From that point forward, we have been reaching out to the county, but felt like we had to bring the lawsuit forward because we have not been able to make any progress for a year now. " Some supervisors and County Administrator **Carmen Davis** claim that they were unaware of the specific allegations named in the lawsuit. Hinds County Supervisor Peggy Calhoun, who raised questions about the facility's staff and transparency in 2009, said she had not been notified of the allegations of abuse since the board passed the memorandum in 2009. She said that the weekly reports the MYJP provided to county officials contained mostly positive information about the detention center.

"I don't think the lawsuit is necessary to change any alleged conditions of prolonged isolation, verbal abuse and threats of physical harm, because if these matters come before board we will address the situation," Calhoun told the Jackson Free Press. "... I certainly would not tolerate or

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Carmen Y. Davis**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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allow any of the young people to be subjected to adverse conditions. "Regrettably, the Southern Poverty Law Center has not communicated to <sup>[[1]]</sup><sub>[[SEP]]</sub> me any of their concerns, nor has staff communicated to me any concerns. When I heard about the lawsuit, I was appalled by all the allegations."

**Davis**, who is conducting an informal investigation into the allegations, said she receives reports from the MYJP each week and reviews and distributes them to supervisors. She said that the extent of allegations mentioned in the lawsuit did not appear in the reports she has received. "The weekly reports were reviewed by myself and (Dale Knight), the director of Henley Young," **Davis** said. "We reviewed the issues that they raised in the weekly reports as best as we could because they were brought to us in a general manner."

Knight, who has served in his position since August 2010, denied the accusations. "I am confident that we have done all that we can for our detainees," he said. Cockrell, however, claims that the reports addressed the lawsuit's allegations, and her organization made several attempts to bring the allegations to officials' attention. In addition to ensuring that youth are treated properly, she said, MYJP wants the county to consider other juvenile reform programs. "There are several alternatives to detention centers," she said. "Community-based programs could be for children who pose little threat to society, and children who do not require secured detention. These are programs that are proven to reduce juvenile-crime rates." The Jackson Free Press has submitted a Freedom of Information Act request to Hinds County for MYJP's weekly reports.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Carmen Y. Davis***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Jackson Free Press

February 2, 2011

**Caring for Criminals**

Author: Ward Schaefer

Inmate medical care is an unpopular business, at least in Hinds County. The Hinds County Board of Supervisors learned that lesson the hard way in January, when it found itself scrambling for a medical provider before its existing contract, with Jackson-based Reddix Medical Group, expired Jan. 31. Reddix informed the county Nov. 4 that it would not seek a renewal of its \$213,800 contract to provide medical care for inmates at the county detention center. By Jan. 25, when supervisors met to pick a new provider, County Administrator **Carmen Davis** had only found two other companies willing to submit proposals for the contract.

Supervisors postponed a vote on the contract, though. On Monday, Jan. 31, the board discovered at a special meeting that both proposals had fallen through. As Dan Gibson, the county's facilitator for its inmate medical costs, explained, prison work is not particularly desirable for most doctors. "It's hard to find doctors to work in a prison, and if they do, they're going to price it well above market (rates)," Gibson said.

An earlier proposal from Inmate Medical Care Services, which **Davis** had recommended, collapsed after the company's participating doctors dropped out. Insurance company owner Matt Thomas, who had presented the offer, told the Jackson Free Press that his group submitted its offer to the county around Jan. 14. By the time the county met on Jan. 25 and postponed its decision, too many doctors had found other jobs, Thomas said. Thomas said that Inmate Medical Care Services had no previous experience working with prisons, though individual doctors had worked with inmates before. The Jackson Medical Mall would have acted as the actual service provider for the group, he said.

Dr. David Williams, who submitted the second offer, rescinded his proposal without giving a reason, Gibson told supervisors. In place of the two older proposals, **Davis** presented a new, costlier offer from Reddix. For \$330,000, Reddix would offer a wider variety of services, including on-call access to a physician around the clock. **Davis** said that she was able to negotiate Reddix's original proposed cost down from \$363,000 to \$330,000 annually. Still, the new Reddix contract would cost the county \$116,200 more than its original \$213,800 contract.

The increased cost reflects an increase in services, with Reddix proposing to offer an on-call physician around the clock, increase the availability of a gynecologist and provide psychological care not included in the county's current agreement. Faced with the prospect of a gap in health care for prisoners, the board appeared bound to one choice. Sheriff Malcolm McMillin said that he needed more time to review Reddix's new offer, having not seen it before the meeting. "In this particular situation, I feel I've been backed up into a corner," McMillin said. "We didn't have this proposal when we had the other two." "Remember that budget you're talking about is yours, because the Sheriff's Department doesn't have any money for more (registered nurses),"



**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Carmen Y. Davis**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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McMillin added. "I think this is an awfully big proposal here. It may be a good idea, but I'm certainly not going to agree to it without studying it." After a recess, the board voted to approve the Reddix contract. **Davis** asked Reddix to offer its recommendation for minimum medical staffing levels necessary at the jail. Reddix responded with a plan that would require the county to hire three new nurses but also cut six of the 11 medical officers on staff, and replace two bachelor's-level social workers with one master's-level social worker.

Neither she nor Reddix were officially recommending the staff reduction, **Davis** stressed to supervisors. The board voted to accept the company's suggestions for nurse positions and add one additional nursing position and create two more through attrition, when other medical officer positions become vacant. County Budget Director Lillie Woods said adding the nurses without also reducing the number of medical officers would cost the county an additional \$153,544 this year. Following Reddix's entire staffing recommendation, including cuts, would save the county \$89,554, making the total cost increase of the new agreement \$26,646.

Gibson, the county's facilitator for inmate medical costs, said the added staff and services could end up saving the county in the long term. Additional nurses would improve the detention center's initial health screenings of inmates, Gibson said. The new agreement also includes psychiatric services that the county previously contracted for separately. With greater control over psychiatric services, the county could also save money through closer regulation of psychiatric medicines.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Carmen Y. Davis**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Jackson Free Press  
September 7, 2010

**Hinds Hires New Administrator; Debates Voting Machines**

Author: Ward Schaefer

The Hinds County Board of Supervisors voted today to hire **Carmen Davis** as its new county administrator. **Davis** replaces interim Administrator Ray Bryant, who had held the position since March. A native of Detroit, Mich., **Davis** received a bachelor's degree in urban planning and a master's degree in business administration from Wayne State University. For 10 years, she worked as a city planner for the Detroit City Planning Commission. In addition to managing development projects, she assisted in reviews of departmental budgets and monitored grants. **Davis** moved to Hinds County from Detroit, Mich., a year ago. Her husband, Al, is a math teacher in Jackson Public Schools.

The board set **Davis'** salary at \$82,500 a year. **Davis** is the county's third administrator in less than a year. Bryant took over in March after the board voted 3-2 during an executive session to fire Vern Gavin. Gavin himself had only held the position for roughly one year. "Hopefully, you can bring some longevity to the position," Supervisor Peggy Calhoun told **Davis** after the board voted 4-0 to hire her, effective immediately. "I hope so, too," **Davis** replied.

Supervisors also spent over half an hour discussing a request from the county Election Commission to purchase 300 used voting machines. Election Commissioners Lelia Rhodes and Marilyn Avery urged the board to approve buying the two-year-old machines, at a cost of \$350 per machine. New voting machines can cost \$3,000 each, Rhodes said. The machines would arrive by Dec. 1, after the November congressional elections but in time to be used for the 2011 statewide elections, she added. The purchase would come out of the \$1.722 million remaining in a federal grant for election equipment. Supervisors approved the purchase of scanners for the Election Commission earlier this summer. When Calhoun asked how the Election Commission planned to spend the remaining grant funds, Rhodes said that she needed more time. "I can't come before you abstractly," Rhodes said. "I like to do my research and come back to you with an idea of how we can effectively spend the money." Election Commissioner Jermal Clark spoke against the purchase, arguing that the machines were a model most states did not use, and that state-purchasing guidelines may require the county to submit a request for bids, which it has not done. "I don't know whether or not we're in compliance with bid laws," Clark said.

Purchasing Clerk Shirley Partee said that she also did not know immediately what state requirements applied to the elections equipment purchase. Supervisors agreed to delay voting on the purchase until they could determine whether a request for bids was necessary. The board went into executive session around 11 a.m. to discuss litigation concerning M3A Architects' work on a now-scrapped regional jail project in Raymond. Also on the agenda for executive session was discussion of bond funds for the Byram-Clinton Corridor project and the possible sale of the Mississippi Valley Title Building in downtown Jackson.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Carmen Y. Davis***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Detroit News  
August 20, 1999

**Site plan for Kmart stirs water worries**

Author: Madison J. Gray

Residents of Detroit's far northwest corner fear that a potential retail development on the site of the Bonnie Brook Golf Course could upset the area's environmental balance. No agreement has been made on the development, but two meetings with community leaders have been held to show site plans for a new Super Kmart on the property, shrinking the golf course to nine holes from 18 holes. "What you're going to do is a displacement of water," said Tony Maclin, whose home is only a few hundred feet from the waterway. "It costs the residents because they are going to offset what was naturally here."

The site plan, Maclin said, called for the removal of trees and other vegetation, the moving of earth and construction on the river. He said upsetting the Rouge River's ecosystem would cause problems such as flooding in areas north and south of the golf course, higher heating and energy bills because of the removal of the natural canopy provided by trees and shrubbery, and accelerated soil erosion because of the redirection of water.

Marilyn Southern, president of the Berg-Lahser Community Association, said a change in the topography could mean a change in living conditions in the area. "This area has never been developed. The only thing we've ever had over there was Edgewater Park," she said. "My question is: What is the city of Detroit doing to ensure that environmental laws are not being overlooked -- or are they relying on community groups to discover this?"

Bonnie Brook Country Club officials did not respond to phone calls from The Detroit News, but Kmart spokesman Steve Pagnani said the company is "very interested" in the site. He said a decision to build there would depend on the Detroit City Council's approval. The community's concerns were heard, Pagnani said. "We wouldn't want to do anything to upset the current terrain there," he said. "We have to make sure that it is stable in the flood plain with the redesign of the golf course. Everything has to be done so that it works well with the course and the store."

But Detroit Planning Commission officials say that before work can begin, the plan must go through at least two tiers of approval. "The plan is before the city Planning Commission right now," said city Planner **Carmen Davis**. "There must also be public hearings scheduled before the City Council." The council would have to rezone the area for commercial development. It is now zoned for one- and two-family homes. In addition, the city's master plan would have to be changed to allow the "excess commercial frontage" that is prohibited now.

No date has been set for public hearings before City Council, nor have any proposals been made to amend the master plan, **Davis** said. Sandy Kanakis, president of Northwest Detroit Community Organization, said she wants to be sure that Kmart Corp., Bonnie Brook Golf Course officials, and community residents are all on the same page when a decision is made.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Carmen Y. Davis**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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"We need to get everyone in the same room on this because this is not Seven Mile and Meyers," she said. "This is a high-flood area. It has always been a golf course. If we have all this construction, it will be a huge impact on the area."

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Research Compiled by:      Cara Slade and Tammie Browder  
   Colin Baenziger & Associates

COLIN BAENZIGER  ASSOCIATES  
EXECUTIVE RECRUITING

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*Section 7*

*Willie A. Hopkins*

*Lake Worth Beach City Manager  
Candidate Report*

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*Cover Letter and Resume*

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WILLIE A. HOPKINS, JR.

Wahop2@live.com, (678) 266-7102

1513 Brunswig Lane, Emeryville, CA 94608

15 June 2021

Mr. Colin Baenziger:

I am interested in the position as City Manager of Lake Worth Beach. I have extensive municipal government experience as a senior executive who has worked as a visionary and collaborative leader in a diversity of military, private and public sectors.

As my resume reflects, I function as a Senior Leader in all sectors of my career. During these periods I also served, at the corporate level, reporting directly to the Chief Executive and/or the Board and also in an acting capacity as Chief Executive on occasions.

I have always been responsible for overseeing a diverse portfolio of administrative and operational functions. Organizationally-wide strategic influence including, Finance Administration, Facility Maintenance & Operations, Information Technology, Procurement & Supply Management, Risk Management, Public Works, Redevelopment and General Services to name a few.

As a key strategic partner to the Board and Chief Executive and the executive team, I was a vital participant in the development and implementation of policies and strategic initiatives, ensuring that the initiatives were both fiscally prudent and were aligned with the organization's overall mission, goals and objectives.

I would appreciate the opportunity to discuss further how my skills and professional experience are a good fit to work effectively with Lake Worth Beach Commission, management team, local officials and community stakeholders.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Best regards,

Willie A. Hopkins, Jr.

678-266-7102

Wahop2@live.com



**WILLIE A. HOPKINS, JR.**

1513 Brunswick Ln • Emeryville, CA 94608 • (c) 678-266-7102 • wahop2@live.com

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***EXECUTIVE PROFILE***

*Strategic Leadership • Construction / Project Management / Operations • Economic Development*

*High-performance, results-driven senior executive with a solid career history of demonstrating visionary leadership and expertise in Logistical Operations, Capital Planning, Infrastructure Operations & Maintenance, and Fleet & Transportation Public and private sector operations experience. Strong Financial record of accomplishments with functional management experience in all disciplines of administration and operations. A catalyst for change, combining tactical execution of strategic initiatives with strong leadership of cross-functional staff and development of key alliances to capture and enhance overall quality, productivity and bottom-line financial performance and service delivery.*

***Career Highlights***

- Successfully delivery of \$1billion in capital construction projects within budget and on time. [Alameda County Government]
- Manage the procurement and negotiation for the General Contractor to build the Atlanta Braves Stadium. [Cobb County Government]
- Successful restart of the city’s home rehab program after the lost funding for policy violations. Completely obligated \$4.3 million of Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) to purchase foreclosed homes. [City of Pompano Beach]
- Produced two operating and capital budgets and continue to move steadily towards performance-based budgeting. [City of Pompano Beach]
- Saved \$9 million by optimizing resources and skillfully managing more than \$83 million of capital construction on time and under budget. [Fulton County Government]
- Shift of fleet procurement to a new municipal fleet lease program to save more than \$3.5 million per year. [Fulton County Government]
- Increase of multi-site profit margins from -4.8 percent to 23.0 percent in less than one year by streamlining operations and implementing cost-cutting initiatives. [Exel Inc.]
- Ending a five-year streak of unprofitable operations; generated record-setting profit improvement of 33 percent in less than 12 months. [Ashland Distribution Company]

***Areas of Expertise***

- |  |                                      |                         |
|--|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| • TIF/TAD Program Management               | • Emergency Management               | • Fiscal Responsibility |
| • Operations & Project Management          | • Business Plans / Operating Budgets | • Economic Development  |
| • Consolidation / Organization Improvement | • Board and Community Relations      | • Government Compliance |
| • Labor Relations / Contract Negotiations  | • Continuous Process Improvements    | • Strategic Planning    |

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***PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY***

**ALAMEDA COUNTY GOVERNMENT**

**Oakland, California**

*A \$3.5 billion county government operation; over 9,000 employees.*

**Agency Director, General Services Agency**

**12/2015 - Present**

Manage the General Services Agency (GSA) consisting of three major operational departments of Capital & Construction Programs, Facilities Maintenance, and Supply, Maintenance, & Transportation. Five administrative departments of Finance, Human Resources, County Procurement, Real Property, and Sustainability. The agency incorporates 13 functional areas with an authorized staff in excess of 425 employees and an annual operating budget of almost \$140 million, a capital program budget of nearly \$1.5 billion, and procurement administration of over \$1.6 billion in grants, and goods & services.

- Recruited by the County’s Board of Supervisors to build a new stadium for the Oakland Raiders, finish the construction of a \$688 million Acute Care Tower, and begin \$160 million County Court House.
- Revamp of the Small Local and Emerging Business (SLEB) guidelines to increase procurement opportunity for local small business.

- Create a homeless encampment abatement team.
- Establish a Public-Private-Public-Partnership (P4) forging a commitment from existing and future county vendors to partner with community to drive local economic and social change.
- Ranking with National Fleet status of # 3 in Best 100 Fleets, and #8 Green Fleets.
- Secured State grant funding of nearly \$200 million to construct new facilities to support troubled juveniles, inmate health and transit parking.

### COBB COUNTY GOVERNMENT

Marietta, Georgia

*The fourth most populous county government operation; over 4500 employees.*

#### **Agency Director, Support Services Agency**

**07/2013 - 12/2015**

Manage diverse operational departments of the Government Services Centers, Fleet Management, Information and Records Services, Procurement, Property Management, and Tax Assessor's Office. Lead Support Services departments in developing, coordinating and maintaining services that support the overall County's mission and business strategy. Plan and organize and provide management direction to assigned departments to increase their efficiency and effectiveness, direct the preparation of plans and annual work objectives, and accountable for a budget over \$40 million.

- Manage the \$670 million procurement and negotiations with General Contractor for the new Atlanta Braves stadium.
- Held diversity seminars attract DBE participation on the stadium project.
- Obtained 100% local vendors participation on the stadium construction.
- Enhance the "Keep It Cobb" program to attract more local business to do business with Cobb County, by adding the Cobb County School District and increasing the local opportunity base.
- Prepared a successful \$750M SPLOST to complete major capital projects to include new Public Safety Headquarters and Training facility, 400 additional Safety Vehicles, new libraries and many other County facilities and road projects.

### CITY OF POMPANO BEACH

Pompano Beach, Florida

*A local city government operation; over 1200 employees.*

#### **Assistant City Manager – Community Services**

**09/2008 - 07/2013**

Serve on the City's executive team and manage the community service departments including: Airport Operations, Public Works, Fire, Building Maintenance, Fleet Operations & Maintenance, Utilities, Housing and Engineering departments. Manage \$100 million budget of a \$215 million General fund budget and the entire Enterprise fund budget.

- Introducing job order contracting to the city, increasing response time and efficiency while reducing expense.
- Establishment of key performance indicator (KPI) tracking program for all community service departments.
- Reorganization of city departments to reduce operating cost with consolidations and reduce redundancy.
- Lead and initiative to restore the integrity and public trust in the Parks and Recreation Department after loss equipment and illegal activities with community leaders.
- Aggressively sought Federal Stimulus funding and quickly expended those funds enhance city facilities with energy savings projects valued at \$15.5 million.
- One of the first cities in South Florida to completely obligate Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) funding for foreclosed homes in the city.
- Use Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding and Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) funding enhance streetscape redevelopment in Old Downtown Pompano Beach.
- Open the city's Home Rehab program and created new Façade Enhancement Grants programs.
- Establish a Revolving Loan Program to stimulate existing businesses that were not located in CRA.



**FULTON COUNTY GOVERNMENT**

Atlanta, Georgia

*A \$1.2 billion county government operation; over 6,000 employees.*

**Director of General Services**

**08/2003 - 09/2008**

Manage all logistical services operations including: Airport Operations, Capital Construction and Engineering, Land, Contract Administration, Customer Service, Reprographics & Mail/Courier Service, Fleet Management, Supply Warehousing and Distribution, Building Maintenance and Cleaning, and Transportation operations. Manage 400 employees: accountable for \$33 million annual operating budget.

- Consistently record an operating budget surplus: \$3.2 million (2003), \$3.5 million (2004) and \$2.7 million (2005).
- Spearheading a \$375 million Library Bond Referendum to construct 10 new libraries, 2 expansions and 25 renovations of existing library facilities.
- Increase of customer service by 30 percent – the highest percentage in the government – by consolidating operations, restructuring personnel and eliminating 69 positions.
- Elimination of the standard 120-day procurement delay by implementing a job order contractor program.
- Finding \$12 million in equipment not listed on the asset register by conducting a thorough audit of all inventory.
- Modification of fleet needs and reduced fleet size by 20 percent and generated an annual savings of \$5 million.

**EXEL INC.**

Westerville, OH

➤ *A \$12 billion logistics company specializing in warehousing and distribution; company operates in 120 countries.*

➤ **General Manager**

**07/2001 - 08/2003**

- Oversaw the daily operations of third-party logistics distribution centers supporting the consumer, automotive, and chemical sectors; managed a 1 million-square foot facility and 150 employees. Negotiated and administered contracts in accordance with service agreements.
- Significantly improved overall SKU throughput from 12 million pounds per month to 14.5 million pounds per month in less than five months; reduced total operating expense by \$500,000 within six months and secured renewal of a \$35 million contract.
- Successfully negotiation of labor contracts and defeated a second union campaign.
- Obtained and sustained 99.98 percent inventory accuracy, setting a first-time company record.

**ASHLAND DISTRIBUTION COMPANY**

**(04/1996 – 07/2001)**

Various Locations

➤ *A \$4 billion division of a \$9 billion specialty chemicals company; distributes chemicals, plastics and composites in North America and thermoplastic materials in Europe.*

**Operations Process Manager, Corporate Office – Dublin, Ohio**

**2000 - 2001**

- Recruited through Ashland's military officer recruiting program; managed entire scope of distribution operational strategic plan for distribution centers in North America. Spearheading the overhaul of the distribution network; realignment of the private fleet to increase distribution center capacity/fleet utilization. Managed SAP implementation for all distribution businesses. Developed policy and procedures to standardize the operating protocol for all distribution plants.
- Securing \$12 million in rebates from suppliers by developing purchasing agreements to leverage corporate spending.
- Consolidating operations and reduced the number of distribution locations by a total of 14.
- Improve overall inventory accuracy by implementing a cycle-counting program throughout the distribution centers.
- Improve operational efficiency by spearheading the SAP implementation for all distribution businesses.

**Plant Manager, Distribution Operations – St. Louis, Missouri** **1997 - 2000**

- Managed the day-to-day operations of a 300,000-square foot distribution center and 3.1 million gallon tank farm plant supported by unionized hourly and administrative associates. Directed fleet and transportation operations within a four-state area and facilities located throughout North America. Exercised full P&L responsibility for a \$40 million annual budget. Recruited, hired and mentored staff. Standardized all operational practices; created operations manual.
- Elevation labor efficiency from 68 percent to 92 percent by utilizing performance measures and process mapping.
- Save \$275,000 per year and improve customer delivery time by implementing a fleet maintenance program.
- The division Vice President Choice to join the companywide process improvement team.

**Warehouse Manager – Little Rock, Arkansas** **1996 - 1997**

- Manage a warehouse operation for a 40,000-square foot hazardous warehouse facility; exercised full P&L responsibility for a \$12 million annual budget. Implemented policies/procedures to improve operations and increase customer service.
- Improve total customer service quality by 35 percent.
- Achieve a 33 percent increase in profits in 1996 and a 46 percent jump in 1997 – the highest gains companywide.
- Recognized by management for ability revitalize several failing business units and consolidate into a larger operation; promoted to plant manager in less than one year.

UNITED STATES ARMY

Various Locations

**Supply Distribution Officer, Quartermaster Corp.**

**1986 - 1996**

- Manage entire scope of supply chain operations; oversaw the transition from manual to automated operations. Write logistic policies and procedures to increase inventory management for print and dissemination in multiple distribution operations, including hazardous and non-hazardous products.
- Increase operational efficiency by 48 percent by designing and implementing a traffic center for an automated high-velocity distribution center for repair parts.
- Improve inventory accuracy from 45 percent accountability to 98 percent accountability by streamlining the unit's requisitioning system and eliminating redundancy in the ordering process.
- Successfully manage the operations of five distribution centers and four maintenance facilities.
- Receiving coveted Distinguished Instructor accolade from colleagues.

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***EDUCATION***

Bachelor of Business Administration ♦ Alcorn State University ♦ Lorman, Mississippi  
Distinguished Military Graduate ♦ United States Army Logistics Officer Basic and Advanced Course Graduate  
Matriculated in the Top 5% of Class

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*Candidate Introduction*

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**WILLIE A. HOPKINS, JR.**

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**EDUCATION**

Bachelor of Science, Business Administration, Alcorn State University, Lorman, MS  
Combine Arms and Staff School, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas  
Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

**EXPERIENCE**

General Services Agency Director, Alameda County, CA	2015 – present
Support Services Agency Director, Cobb County, GA	2013 – 2015
Assistant City Manager, Pompano Beach, FL	2008 – 2013
General Services Director, Fulton County, GA	2003 – 2008
General Manager, Exel Incorporated, Buffalo, New York	2001 – 2003
Process Manager, Ashland Chemicals, Dublin OH	2000 – 2001
Plant Manager, Ashland Chemicals, St. Louis, MO	1997 – 2001
Warehouse Manager, Ashland Chemicals, Little Rock, AR	1996 – 1997
United States Army (later Army Reserve 1997 – 2005)	1985 – 1996

**BACKGROUND**

Alameda County is in the San Francisco Bay occupying most of the East Bay area. The 2020 census, place the population at approximately 1,800,000, making Alameda the 7<sup>th</sup> most populous county in California, and 20<sup>th</sup> most populous nationally. Alameda County is in the top 2% of most racially diverse populations in the United States.

Alameda County is part of the San Francisco–Oakland–Berkeley, CA Metropolitan Statistical Area, and the San Jose–San Francisco–Oakland, CA Combined Statistical Area. Alameda County is home to the 4<sup>th</sup> busiest port nationally, home to the University of California, Berkeley. I-80 runs the western boundary of the county and I-880, I-580, and I-680 runs East to West across the County. The East Bay is home for the corporate offices of Apple, Google, Facebook and many major technology companies. The continuing growth of corporations like the aforementioned supports the population growth and demand for housing that cannot currently be met. The County is home to Alameda Health System (AHS) a County funded health system and Kaiser Permanente which corporate offices are located in Alameda County. In recent years Alameda County and the City of Oakland lost two major sport teams. The ability to replace the teams has been overshadowed by need for affordable housing. Homelessness and a major need for mental health services continues to challenge the County in every way. Although unemployment is at an all-time low. Local minimum wage of \$15.00 is not sufficient to afford a one-bedroom apartment in the Bay Area.

Alameda County's General Fund budget comprised \$3.1 billion and the total budget was \$3.5 billion in 2021. This does not include Capital Improvement budget of \$1.2 billion of new and on-going major capital projects. Alameda County has approximately 10,000 employees. The majority of the workforce is unionized. There are 12 Labor Organizations and Bargaining Units within Alameda County's workforce. The Agency has nearly four hundred (400) employees and I directly supervise seven (7) employees.

The three most critical challenges facing Alameda County are:

- Revenue reductions/loss. Nearly Two Thirds of Alameda County's General Fund Revenue is program revenue (grant funds) from the Federal and State Governments. Changes in state law continues to reduce the amount discretionary revenue yearly. The state's Education Augmentation Revenue Fund has reduced the county's budget \$2.3 billion dollars since 1993. Revenue from Federal and State sources are constantly in jeopardy given the fluctuating political climates within those governments.
- Affordable Housing/Homelessness. Like many municipal governments in northern California. Alameda County is approximately 50 years behind in housing development. The gap in development of affordable housing is even wider. Over the last five (5) years 90 % of new housing development is market rate housing. Homelessness continues to increase rapidly without any significant effort locally or nationally prior to COVID -19 pandemic. The acquisition of hotel with CARES and state funding established a solid foundation to slow the homelessness increase. More funding and programs are needed to shelter the unsheltered with additional mental health services to provide the needed impact.
- Lack of Development/Redevelopment sites. To compound the issue of the shortage of affordable housing, is the shortage of developable land. California is the most difficult state to successfully develop. California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Allows nearly any resident to delay if not successfully stop construction of new development. In addition, the Hayward Fault a major branch of the San Andreas Fault to the west, runs through the most populated parts of Alameda County, while the Calaveras Fault runs through the southeastern part of the county. Available land that appear buildable is typically not buildable because of soil suitability or proximity to a fault line. Property value is extremely high for uncontaminated buildable site which hinders the project pro forma from yielding a return on the investment if it is not a market rate project. California is the most difficult state to successfully develop or redevelop.



**WILLIE A. HOPKINS, JR.**

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**GENERAL, MANAGEMENT STYLE AND EXPERIENCE**

Alameda County is a leading and cutting edge government, setting the example in Sustainable practices and many other areas. We have been nationally recognized multiple times for our innovative energy savings, renewable energy initiatives and success with our green building.

I am trained and work collaboratively with the community. Transparently articulate all plans and actions in keep with the Board's mission, vision and values. California state laws requires a more direct control over construction, procurements, and labor when tax dollars are involved. I manage to create innovate procurements to minimize the time it takes to provide needed services. I created procurement programs across multiple governments leveraging the collective total spend for better pricing. I have also increase the use of local vendors to keep the local tax dollars at home. I have brought many programs forward for small local business of every type. I believe my overall success has been that I attend all community meetings to hear firsthand from the community. I follow up during the next meeting listing the subject and the action or plan to address the issue. Most important I think is shows the community that I am available and accessible.

I define my management style as situational/participative. I believe in creating an environment that is conducive to the employees wanting to come to work. I am committed to providing clear guidance to the leadership team so no one is guessing how I feel in any given circumstance. Leaders will experience two basic methods of doing things. The first is when Leaders are empowered to deal with the accomplishment of tasks as assigned. Provided both task and purpose are clearly defined, the Leader will have the freedom to execute operations in the way they see fit rather than being told how to do it (Policy Rules!). In some instances, given sensitive and complicated situations when a great deal of control is required to ensure synchronization, the Leader may be told what to do, when to do it, and sometimes how to do it. I will minimize the use of the second method unless forced to do. My core belief is to simply treat people the way I want to be treated.

The manner that I manage employees. I can say I have not had to deal with an adverse action that was a surprise to the employee. Employees terminate themselves, I only make it official. My mother often told me to learn from others mistakes. I have had the opportunity to work for and with very good managers at every level of my career and I have learned a great deal. I have also work for a couple that I learned a few things that I should not do for the sake of my career and the organization.

All current and former elected officials will say I get things done! I am proactive and in my planning and my decision making is all inclusive of the organization in total. Staff will first say that I always say, "please and thank you," with each assignment whether given verbally or in writing. They will say, they like that my door is always open for guidance or advice.



### WILLIE A. HOPKINS, JR.

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The most frequent comment is that I never get upset and calmly coach them through errors the first time. Often the other comment, is that I make the work environment fun. My visioning and forethought has been key in preventing infrastructure failure. I presented multiple alternative financing opportunities to address nearly \$500 million in deferred maintenance. Introduced Public Private Partnerships (3P) as means to keep the capital program on track while addressing other critical needs. Pursued performance based contracts resolve some unfunded maintenance needs. Lastly, all parties have great appreciation for my leadership.

My greatest strength is leadership and teambuilding. I work towards creating a fun competitive environment that not only forge collaborative consensus building internal but also externally. My approach is to finalize the internal team objective and approach before presenting it publicly or to other critical stakeholders. A recent project involved modification of existing jail space for medical and mental health services. I work with Health and Mental Health Services to show lack of and the need for inmate services. I then coordinated to the sheriff's office to show there was a reduction in beds not an increase. The activist understood and agreed halted protest of a jail expansion.

In terms of weaknesses, I am not confrontational at times when I should be. I remain silent publicly and choose to resolve issues without an audience. I have learned over time it sends the wrong message. If a public comment is not true, I should say so but, not engage in public debate.

The Alameda Health Systems Acute Care Tower is my biggest achievement. Although many will look at Atlanta Braves Stadium complex as a great success, and I agree. However, the service provided by Alameda Health healthcare service to thousands of uninsured citizens in the Bay Area. Is the reason I have a passion for public service. It was a costlier project and difficult to construct because the old tower was operational as the new tower was under construction. The old tower was demolished in pieces because we could not implode it sitting in the middle of a community. The hospital will service the community for another hundred years.

My biggest regret not being able to convince Fulton County Commissioners to build a new county jail. Although I was able to get the county out of the facility portion of a federal consent because of the jail conditions. The cost of a new jail was \$200 million dollars. The commission was against the idea of a new jail and outsourced inmates while the occupied jail was renovated. Every effort to convince the commission was rejected, and unfortunately \$220 million was spent outsourcing inmates.

The challenges I see facing the City of Lake Worth Beach are:

- Development/Redevelopment – Ensure the development is in keeping with the community desires.
- Infrastructure - Devise a plan to sustain existing infrastructure while making sure new development does not stress existing physical capabilities.

**WILLIE A. HOPKINS, JR.**

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- Explore other financing options to delay major capital outlay until projected revenue is available.
- Growth Management – Ensure services planning matches the growth, so the community and public service capabilities are not overwhelmed. Consistent communication with all stakeholders to keep them informed. Quarterly review of all city plans for compliance.

During the first six months my efforts will involve:

- Meet the Commissioner individually to understand their vision, immediate needs and other areas of concern. Meeting with staff, other elected officials, citizen groups, and lobbyist.
- Evaluate the City's financial and operational position. Explore possible changes to increase operational efficiency. I want to create a proactive, staff that increasing the trust and confidence in city staff.

I am taking the opportunity to train the entire leadership in media response to ensure there is a consistent message release to the public. The city's Facebook and/or Twitter should be used to get good communicate positively with residents. I would create a score card for residence to see how we are performing operationally.

I do not anticipate anyone contacting the City with negative contacts about me with the possible exception of a community activist and grant recipient that did not want to be reimburse per city policy. The activist insisted on a lump sum disbursement. I denied the request because it was against city policy.

I like classic cars. I own 5 classic cars, so during my spare time, I tinker with one my cars. I am walk and bike daily for health reasons. I do spend a time with my adult children and with my family.

**SIX ADJECTIVES OR PHRASES I WOULD USE TO DESCRIBE MYSELF**

- Creative
- Proactive
- Accessible
- Knowledgeable
- Highly Ethical
- Visionary

**WILLIE A. HOPKINS, JR.**

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**REASON FOR DEPARTING CURRENT POSITION**

I was recruited to build a new stadium. I accepted my current position to gain further experience in very large redevelopment projects. Having experience with the Atlanta Braves stadium redevelopment, Alameda County Board of Supervisors wanted my negotiation and capital redevelopment experience for the Oakland Raiders negotiation and future stadium project. That project did not come to fruition as the Raiders decided to relocate before my arrival. I believe in keeping my word so I fulfilled my agreement. I have been looking for the right opportunity in South Florida for many years. I return to South Florida multiple times each year. I enjoy seeing the growth and redevelopment in Pompano Beach. It excites me because I laid the foundation many years ago convincing the City Manager to pursue a Section 108 Loan. The loan proceeds were used to make infrastructure enhance to entice developers to consider Old Downtown Pompano for development. Pompano has seen much redevelopment within and outside of its two CRA's. That is the kind of projects that drives my passion for this profession. I have fulfilled my contractual agreement with Alameda, and I have stayed longer to train an interim Director and allow for the recruitment of a new Agency Director. Lake Worth Beach is one the most attractive cities with the opportunity for the growth and redevelopment capacity to become a rival destination to work, live and play in Palm Beach County. Furthermore, Lake Worth is the perfect size to embrace the community and work with the Commission to build and nurture personal and professional relationship for the greater good of the city long term.

**CURRENT / MOST RECENT SALARY**

My compensation at Alameda County is \$238,965, excluding vehicle allowance.

## **Section 7**

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*CB&A Background Checks*

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**Background Check Summary for  
WILLIE A. HOPKINS**

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**Education**

Confirmed

**Employment**

Confirmed except for  
Alameda County (2015 – Present)

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.

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**From:** w hopkins [mailto:wahop2@live.com]

**To:** Lynelle Klein

**Subject:** RE: Background Checks Records Found that Require an Explanation

Ms. Klein:

The Crooked Creek Homeowners Association (HOA) civil case was created by my ex wife. Attached are the legal actions I have taken to resolve the issue and the claim I have filed against my ex wife. I have also attached a copy of the settlement offer, indicating this will be closed by 30 November.

Explanation: My ex wife did not pay the HOA assessment, nor did she notify me of any pending legal actions. Also she did not pay the mortgage payments on the home as required which has negatively impacted my credit. I am in the final stage of both legal cases.

The attached documents offer a better explanation and the settlement I have reached. If required I can provide a copy of the motion against my ex-wife to recapture my legal and settlement costs.

If you need more information faster please call me @ 678-266-7102.

Have a great weekend.

WA

**Background Check Summary for  
WILLIE A. HOPKINS  
Personal Disclosure**

**Personal Disclosure Questionnaire**

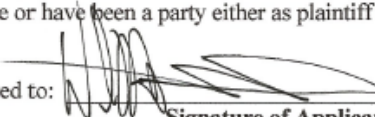
Name of Applicant: Willie A Hopkins, Jr.

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?  
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: Willie A. Hopkins, Jr.
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

Please email this form via PDF DOCUMENT to [Lynelle@cb-asso.com](mailto:Lynelle@cb-asso.com) or via fax to (561) 621-5965 **no later than 5:00 PM PST 06/28/2021.**  
(Note: Please be sure to sign the form with your actual signature if you are sending Fax or PDF Document)



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*CB&A Reference Notes*

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**Reference Notes  
Willie Hopkins**

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**Dr. Jackie McMorris – Former Director Public Services, Cobb County, GA 770-528-2610**

Ms. McMorris worked with Mr. Hopkins from 2013 to 2015 as counterparts for Cobb County services departments. Although Mr. Hopkins is very knowledgeable in all aspects of support services, Ms. McMorris found him equally as knowledgeable in public works. As an adept leader, Mr. Hopkins possessed vast experience in working with several large County departments. He was an excellent manager: believing in team building and encouraging employee growth.

Mr. Hopkins believed in maintaining an approachable atmosphere. He encouraged his employees and department heads to come to him at any time. Willing to listen intently while keeping a calm demeanor was one of Mr. Hopkins's excellent interpersonal skills. Upon first beginning his tenure as agency director, a former colleague expressed her concern in approaching Mr. Hopkins as the new director about a possible wage discrepancy. She later expressed her confidence in Mr. Hopkins's ability to value her concerns and address them, resulting in a satisfactory solution. His capability to balance leadership with management resulted in good working relationships amongst the staff and directors of the different county agencies. He brought all together as a smoothly functioning team. He possessed the talent to express his ideas in a clear and concise manner while respecting the elected leadership's position.

Mr. Hopkins did not micromanage. Rather, he trusted in individual responsibility and accountability. Yet, he was willing to maintaining supervision where necessary. Mr. Hopkins was an innovative person who thrived on bringing change where change was due. He played an integral part in the procurement of a new library, bringing valuable ideas to the forefront while keeping in mind the legal issues involved for such a project to come to fruition.

One of the biggest projects Mr. Hopkins spearheaded was the acquisition in relocating the Atlanta Braves team to Cobb County. His expertise and innovative nature proved very valuable in the planning and implementation of those plans in building the necessary infrastructure needed to support this new acquisition. As a talented public speaker able to address any audience, Mr. Hopkins articulates information clearly while addressing concerns and questions in a manner all may understand. Ms. McMorris witnessed this talent on multiple occasions during frequent Town Hall meetings where the public openly addressed their concerns and ideas. He was a customer service oriented person: valuing input from a variety of sources. Before making decisions of any kind, he believed strongly in gathering facts and information to make the best decision possible.

Ms. McMorris valued Mr. Hopkins's talent and experience. He had been an asset to the County bringing his excellent managerial style creating a smooth functioning multi departmental team, which brought valuable change to Cobb County. As a man of integrity he was well respected by all who had the pleasure of working for him and with him. Ms. McMorris was confident he will be of equal value in any city or government setting willing to learn and work hard.

**Reference Notes  
Willie Hopkins**

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**Words or phrases used to describe Willie Hopkins:**

- Detailed oriented,
- Professional,
- Compassionate,
- Great communicator,
- Good leader, and
- Manager.

**Strengths:** Good listener with an approachable nature, looks at all aspects before making a decision, and well rounded leader with excellent managerial skills.

**Weaknesses:** Although not necessarily a weakness, but could push a viewpoint hard when he felt strongly about it.

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**Scott Transou – Former Assistant Director of Logistics, Fulton County, GA 404-376-4721**

Mr. Transou has known Mr. Hopkins for a number of years extending as far back as 1996. From about 2003 until 2008 they worked together for the Fulton County Government. Mr. Hopkins was the Director of General Services to whom Mr. Transou reported until Mr. Hopkins resigned his position. Mr. Hopkins had extensive knowledge of facilities management and maintenance. His responsibility extended to the management of the county's fleet as well showing outstanding skill and judgment in all areas. He was an excellent leader: able to easily supervise large numbers of employees.

Mr. Transou had great respect for Mr. Hopkins's managerial style. He was an excellent communicator: clearly articulating information to any audience. His willingness to learn all he could before presenting this information demonstrated his commitment to those he served for and with. He was well liked by his peers and employees. Mr. Hopkins believed in delegating responsibilities to allow individual growth while increasing their knowledge base. This style proved successful in encouraging employee self motivation and building a smooth functioning county team which encompassed various departments. He was a hard worker and was willing to lead by example. As an approachable individual with a calm demeanor, he believed in an open door policy, which only added to employee confidence in his leadership.

As an innovative thinker with the ability to view future ramifications, Mr. Hopkins took on the extensive project of renovating the Fulton County Jail facility. It was in dire need of repair and modernizing to bring it within federal standards. His knowledge of all general services and legal issues involved gave credence to his concerns and plans when presenting the information to the county commission. It was a \$55 million dollar project entailing procurement of bids and contracts, which Mr. Hopkins handled with ease.

## Reference Notes Willie Hopkins

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Mr. Transou also worked with Mr. Hopkins at the Ashland Distribution Company in various capacities from about 1996 until about 2001. As a creative thinker, Mr. Hopkins successfully modernized the methods the company had been using to track their inventory. He skillfully began the challenge of converting 92 of the facilities, which provided increased inventory accountability.

Mr. Hopkins believed in customer service. He put great value in listening to the community's needs and was willing to entertain ideas presented to him by the taxpayer. As a talented communicator with an approachable nature, he showed great skill in bringing the individual's ideas or concerns to the attention of elected officials. He was an excellent mediator. Mr. Hopkins is a man of integrity: bringing vast knowledge and experience to the various positions he has held. Mr. Transou is confident Mr. Hopkins will continue to be an asset to any city or county he is employed with.

### **Words or phrases used to describe Willie Hopkins:**

- Good manager,
- Results driven individual,
- High performance,
- Strategic thinker,
- Good leadership skills, and
- Good overall person.

**Strengths:** Good communicator, very disciplined, learns quickly.

**Weaknesses:** Good delegator, but could occasionally release responsibility more.

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### **Eugene Martin –Fleet Manager, Fulton County Government, GA 630-605-8577**

Mr. Martin served with Mr. Hopkins in the military from 1986 until 1996 as part of the division support command unit. Later (from 2007 until 2009) Mr. Martin worked for Mr. Hopkins with the Fulton County Government. Mr. Hopkins was an excellent manager with vast knowledge and experience in various general service areas. He was a people-oriented person with good interpersonal skills. Between his military background and previous leadership positions, he displayed an organized and calm demeanor in any environment.

When beginning his tenure for Fulton County, Mr. Hopkins immediately recognized the need to renovate the fleet department. As an innovative thinker, he implemented an automated system to standardize areas such as asset inventory. His willingness to research the best methods, learn them, and then clearly articulate this knowledge to his employees allowed a successful and more efficient transition to occur. Mr. Hopkins's idea to streamline the brand of fleet vehicles permitted a negotiation with Ford Motor Company to include vehicle maintenance as part of the

## Reference Notes Willie Hopkins

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purchase agreement. This alleviated additional stress from the fleet department. In turn, this led to a more standardized and accountable county division.

Another valuable talent of Mr. Hopkins was his ability to see the future ramifications of an undertaking. When maintaining the facilities of the county, he showed an aptitude for deciding what the best long-term solutions were, rather than utilizing quick and unsuccessful fixes. As a result of Mr. Hopkins excellent communication skills, he successfully encouraged Fulton County to increase their efforts in maintaining Fulton County Jail while remaining within a strict budget. He clearly articulated the need to follow federal mandates and presented plans to implement the changes necessary.

Mr. Hopkins had an excellent managerial style. His approachable nature allowed employees to seek his expertise and advice when needed. He believed in delegation of responsibilities while holding those involved accountable. Mr. Martin was confident Mr. Hopkins had been a mentor to many and was well respected by all who worked with him. He was compassionate: willing to listen intently to those who sought him. As a professional, he was a man of integrity who held himself and his employees to a high standard of performance, thus creating a smooth functioning entity of various departments.

Another example of Mr. Hopkins leadership and organizational ability occurred during his military service. Supervising large groups of personnel in administering relief to the Hurricane Katrina victims proved to be a challenge. Yet, Mr. Hopkins performed it with ease. He brought his teams together quickly to work as a unit in organizing all necessary assets. As a customer service oriented person, he valued input from all. This allowed greater success in his endeavors. Mr. Martin admired Mr. Hopkins past service with the Veteran's Administration in listening to and addressing veterans needs.

Mr. Hopkins led by example in every aspect of his life. He was well respected by Mr. Martin who was confident Mr. Hopkins was an asset wherever he serves. His skill and extensive experience will be of great value to any city or county.

### **Words or phrases used to describe Willie Hopkins:**

- Good communicator,
- Experienced,
- Driven,
- Compassionate,
- Great manager, and
- Trustworthy.

**Strengths:** Excellent interpersonal skills and logistical knowledge.

**Weaknesses:** None identified.

**Reference Notes  
Willie Hopkins**

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**Woodrow Poitier - Commissioner, City of Pompano Beach, FL 954-464-5160**

Mr. Poitier worked closely with Mr. Hopkins from 2008 until 2013. Mr. Hopkins was an excellent manager possessing a broad knowledge of public works and services. His pleasant personality and open door policy promoted good working relationships with those he interacted with. Mr. Poitier was confident in Mr. Hopkins ability to efficiently handle any project or assignment given.

Mr. Hopkins chief responsibilities encompassed all utility and public works departments for the city. His extensive experience proved beneficial in keeping the daily functions running smoothly. As an innovative thinker, Mr. Hopkins brought fresh ideas with well-thought plans to council meetings. He was always willing to research and gather information beforehand. His presentations were clear and concise, displaying an aptitude for simplifying technical information to be easily understood by all. The city leadership appreciated this talent, finding Mr. Hopkins interesting and informative. He was well-respected by the Commission for his ability to be honest, even if the data given proved contrary to the desires of the city leadership resulting in the need to change a plan or project. Mr. Hopkins input proved valuable in moving the city forward in a positive direction.

Mr. Hopkins was an innovative thinker: able to see the future ramifications of a project. His talents proved valuable in renovating the old original high school building into a historic museum. He adeptly negotiated with many agencies and individuals and gained their support for the plan. It is now a valuable piece of city history.

Mr. Hopkins possessed excellent interpersonal skills. When one of his directors in the housing and urban development department experienced continual frustration with her language barrier, he stepped in and smoothly assisted. His capacity to motivate employees and encourage personal growth created high-performance departments. As a customer service oriented person, he was always willing to give of his time to anyone seeking his attention. Those under his leadership gained respect and appreciation for his ability to direct. He remained firm, yet approachable.

Due to a change in the city manager, Mr. Poitier was confident Mr. Hopkins resignation was not for any performance issues. He was a valuable commodity for the city: bringing fresh ideas and talents to the city leadership. His knowledge and extensive experience will benefit any city or county services department. In addition, Mr. Hopkins excellent leadership and managerial talents make him a perfect candidate for leadership positions.

**Reference Notes  
Willie Hopkins**

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**Words or phrases used to describe Willie Hopkins:**

- Trustworthy,
- Honest,
- Timely,
- Truthful,
- Good communicator, and
- Good with people.

**Strengths:** Excellent foresight, honest and quick on his feet.

**Weaknesses:** None identified.

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**Joe Tommie – Purchasing Director, Cobb County, GA 770-528-8435**

Mr. Tommie was part of the interview team that hired Mr. Hopkins in 2013. The team was very impressed at the time of the interview with Mr. Hopkins's extensive knowledge in facilities maintenance and management, fleet management, and various additional County services. Mr. Tommie had great respect for Mr. Hopkins's managerial style and leadership abilities.

Mr. Hopkins oversaw the various general service departments for Cobb County consisting of more than 300 personnel. He displayed a calm and caring nature to his employees, encouraging approachability. Believing in mentoring and motivating an individual to greater success allowed respect from both peers and subordinates. His managerial style with an additional belief in team building established excellent relations between departments. Mr. Hopkins did not believe in micromanaging, but rather delegated responsibilities efficiently while putting trust in his directors and employees. As a director, Mr. Tommie appreciated this opportunity to grow through Mr. Hopkins's leadership.

As an innovative individual, Mr. Hopkins identified the need for a capital improvement budget to allow for improvement of operations within facilities. While working with the fleet, one such change identified was the need to standardize the purchasing of the vehicles to include vehicle maintenance (thus alleviating internal drain). His talent in viewing future needs and potential ramifications was of great value in streamlining operations of the various departments. His excellent communication skills was also of value when presenting information to the areas involved with a potential change. He was articulate, clear spoken, and always well prepared.

Mr. Hopkins was a humble individual willing to research and seek input from knowledgeable individuals before making a decision. As part of an interviewing team, Mr. Tommie witnessed the successful hire of an Information Technology Director. He was confident in Mr. Hopkins thorough job with the interview process, gathering all opinions from those involved before

## Reference Notes Willie Hopkins

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making the best possible choice. This resulted in the hiring of a knowledgeable and talented individual.

Mr. Tommie respected and appreciated Mr. Hopkins's vast knowledge. His extensive leadership experience and innovative nature brought positive change to the County agencies. Mr. Hopkins is a man of integrity: leading by example in all aspects of his life. His calm and humble demeanor encouraged approachability from all. He was an asset to Cobb County and Mr. Tommie is confident Mr. Hopkins will be of great value to any city or county he is employed by.

### **Words or phrases used to describe Willie Hopkins:**

- Team player,
- Organized,
- Good communicator,
- Articulate,
- Good leader, and
- Excellent manager.

**Strengths:** Good communication and interpersonal skills.

**Weaknesses:** None identified.

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### **Steve White – Tax Assessor, Cobb County, GA 770-528-3106**

Mr. White met Mr. Hopkins in 2013 and enjoyed working with him. As the County tax assessor, Mr. White interacted with Mr. Hopkins about once a week and then again in the monthly status meeting held by the County leadership. Mr. Hopkins was a professional in all aspects: making an outstanding representative for the county. He was an excellent communicator, able to articulate clearly in front of a variety of groups. His experience and knowledge base of general services was extensive.

Mr. Hopkins was excellent with people. He was approachable and always willing to listen to all ideas and input from his employees and directors. Mr. White appreciated Mr. Hopkins ability to humbly gather all information and then diligently work with those involved to come to an agreeable decision. He was calm and fair in his dealings. His outgoing demeanor allowed him to smoothly intermingle with all types of people.

As an innovative individual, Mr. Hopkins brought fresh ideas to the County. His vast knowledge and experience made him an asset. He gained respect from the public and elected officials. For example, laws pertaining to firearms were of great concern for Mr. White as the County Tax Assessor. When these concerns were brought to the attention of Mr. Hopkins he showed excellent understanding and skill in analyzing the possible consequences for County facilities.



**Reference Notes  
Willie Hopkins**

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He proficiently presented the issue to the County Manager along with a plan. This resulted in the implementation of key card access to at risk facilities and security measures for government parking structures.

Although Mr. White did not have the privilege of daily interactions with Mr. Hopkins, he respected his professionalism and knowledge. Mr. Hopkins was a man with integrity with excellent interpersonal skills. He was a benefit to Cobb County and will be an asset to any city or county position he holds.

**Words or phrases used to describe Willie Hopkins:**

- Professional,
- Good guy,
- Willing to work hard for anyone,
- Approachable,
- Calm, and
- Understanding.

**Strengths:** Professional in all aspects of his life, outgoing and approachable.

**Weaknesses:** None identified.

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**Donna Zigler – Legal Counsel, Alameda County, CA 510-272-6706**

Ms. Zigler met Mr. Hopkins when the County hired him in 2015. They work together as colleagues.

Mr. Hopkins is very committed to his job. He has a take-charge attitude that helps him accomplish tasks. For example, during the initial outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, he was available at any hour of the day or night. He led his team in a mass sanitizing effort. He was able to execute without becoming bogged down in the bureaucracy.

When Mr. Hopkins was hired to work for the County, he was placed in charge of a department without consistent leadership. Many people resigned. Yet, Mr. Hopkins was able to stabilize the workforce. Despite the difficulties, he has been unflappable in delivering good service. He keeps his team together and keeps them moving. In general, he makes good decisions.

Mr. Hopkins focuses heavily on customer service. He is effective and professional in building relationships with individual board members. Additionally, he seems to enjoy being in the community. The public trusts him.

## Reference Notes Willie Hopkins

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Although Mr. Hopkins can be a very direct communicator, he can also accept the direction he receives. In stressful situations, he does not lose his cool. When the Board creates stressful environments, he communicates clearly with the Board and does not allow himself to become bogged down.

Ms. Zigler is unaware of anything that might be deemed controversial or embarrassing involving Mr. Hopkins. Although Mr. Hopkins has a broad skillset, Ms. Zigler is unaware of his budget skills. For this reason, she hesitates to say if he would be a good Municipal Manager. However, based on all his other skills, she would give him a great endorsement. Mr. Hopkins operates from a leadership point of view. He is able to effectively manage various teams and divisions in numerous areas.

### **Words or phrases used to describe Glenn Cullen:**

- Achiever,
- Effective,
- Direct,
- Hard worker, and
- Listener.

**Strengths:** Does not get bogged down in bureaucracy and politics, and moves to execute decisions.

**Weaknesses:** There is a great deal of politics and bureaucracy to navigate in the County. The size and extent of the bureaucracy can become frustrating to Mr. Hopkins because he is a man of action. When he does become frustrated, he does not manifest anger or rude behavior. Rather, he uses Ms. Zigler as a sounding board.

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### **Vincente Thrower – Community Activist, Pompano Beach, FL 954-601-7788**

Mr. Thrower met Mr. Hopkins in 2009 when Mr. Hopkins was the Assistant City Manager. Mr. Hopkins was an excellent administrator who cared about the community. Working to resolve community issues was part of his leadership style. When making decisions, he tried to always do what was best for the City and the community. Due to that, he generally made good choices.

When it comes to hiring personnel, Mr. Hopkins drew on his military background to hire competent people. He did not believe in nepotism or doing favors for a friend. Rather, he sought to hire the best candidate.

When facing stressful situations, Mr. Hopkins was cool, calm, and collected. He never raised his voice and was very disciplined. For example, at one point Mr. Hopkins's boss left employment. Although Mr. Hopkins applied for the open position, he was not selected to fill the vacancy. Nevertheless, he still gave full effort to his work.

**Reference Notes**  
**Willie Hopkins**

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Mr. Hopkins's calm demeanor helped him earn the trust of the black and white communities in the City. He gave all his energy to building bridges and helping the black community trust the system. Determination to build consensus is one of his strongest traits.

Mr. Thrower is unaware of anything in Mr. Hopkins's past or current behavior that might cause a reasonable person concern. Furthermore, Mr. Thrower is unaware of anything in Mr. Hopkins's past that might cause a future employer embarrassment. He is a good family man who is a good role model for his children. If given the opportunity, Mr. Thrower would hire Mr. Hopkins because he is a good leader who loves his country.

**Words or phrases used to describe Glenn Cullen:**

- Committed,
- Loyal,
- Responsible,
- Cares for others, and
- Is a great leader.

**Strengths:** He is able to build consensus between the community and the City.

**Weaknesses:** Although this is not always a weakness, Mr. Hopkins does not know how to say "no." This is mainly due to his desire to make changes for the better in a community.

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**Prepared by:** Beth Nestman and Emily Dayton  
Colin Baenziger & Associates



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*CB&A Internet Research*

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**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Willie Hopkins, Jr.**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Berkeley Voice (CA)  
May 8, 2020

**OFFICIALS AXE PLAN TO HOUSE HOMELESS IN BERKELEY HOTEL**  
**Project unravels amid dramatic accusations**

Author: Marisa Kendall

A plan to turn 113 Berkeley hotel rooms into much-needed homeless housing during the coronavirus pandemic has fallen apart in a dramatic fashion just one day before dozens of people were set to move in. With most of the hotel rooms Alameda County had reserved for the homeless under "Project Roomkey" already filled, officials last month announced they would turn La Quinta Inn on University Avenue into additional pandemic housing for people who are vulnerable to COVID-19 and have nowhere to self-isolate. The contract, worth between \$1 million and \$1.2 million, was approved unanimously April 28 by Alameda County supervisors. But two days later, officials pulled the plug on the deal, citing problems with the hotel owner. "The city of Berkeley and Alameda County decided together to terminate the contract because the property owner could not comply with the terms of Project Roomkey," county spokeswoman Jerri Applegate Randrup wrote in an email. The deal imploded the day before 48 residents of a homeless shelter operated by the Berkeley Food and Housing Project were scheduled to move in, according to city of Berkeley spokesman Matthai Chakko.

**Willie Hopkins Jr.**, director of the county's General Services Agency, terminated the agreement Thursday in a letter that accused the hotel owner of everything from renegeing on his end of the deal, to behaving in a sexist manner to female county and city of Berkeley employees. But the owner, Pradeep Khatri, who also goes by Peter Khatri, denies all those allegations and has said he and his staff have already done the work needed to get his hotel ready to help, including asking other guests to move out. "I am still able and willing to offer you the Hotel immediately or as soon as the County is ready to take it over," he wrote Monday in a letter to **Hopkins** that he provided to this news organization. "The County needs this hotel to house the homeless and others." Khatri has said he will get his lawyer involved if county officials won't work with him to get the deal back on track.

Through Gov. Gavin Newsom's Project Roomkey initiative, counties around the state - including in the Bay Area - have secured thousands of hotel rooms to use as quarantine housing for homeless residents infected by or exposed to COVID-19, or at high risk of developing serious symptoms if infected. The Federal Emergency Management Agency will reimburse 75% of the cost of rooms.

As of last week, the 393 rooms leased by Alameda County at the Comfort Inn and Radisson Hotel in Oakland were at maximum capacity, Colleen Chawla, director of the county's Health Care Services Agency told county supervisors. The Board of Supervisors approved leases with two other hotels in addition to La Quinta - the Quality Inn in Oakland (98 rooms), and the Marina Village Inn in Alameda (51 rooms). But Chawla said she expects the county will need about 1,200 rooms. The failure to add La Quinta's rooms highlights the difficulties officials

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Willie Hopkins, Jr.**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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around the region are facing as they rush to try and get thousands of hotel rooms ready for vulnerable unhoused residents to move in. "It is unfortunate that the County is unable to use your Hotel as part of its COVID-19 response, but it cannot waste time, money and precious resources dealing with your behavior and repeated breaches of the Agreement during this time of emergency," **Hopkins** wrote in the letter to Khatri.

Points of tension included Khatri's worry that residents wouldn't leave the hotel at the end of the agreed-upon lease term, and his refusal to allow use of his hotel's breakfast area and second-floor ballroom, according to the letter. **Hopkins'** letter claims Khatri attempted to back out of the agreement multiple times, telling officials "I will NOT have the facility ready for you," and "I do not wish to engage with you anymore please have your legal department contact me." But Khatri says those disagreements have been cleared up. He suggested the problems stemmed from the hurried nature of the negotiations - he was allowed just 30 minutes to review the initial contract before signing, he wrote in his letter to **Hopkins**.

Khatri also cited the large amount of work he had to do to get the hotel ready to participate. He and his staff turned each room into a single-occupancy room by removing the second bed, stopped all online reservations and asked current guests to move out by April 30 - including one who had lived at the hotel for several years.

But in an allegation that the county seems to view as insurmountable, **Hopkins** accused Khatri of displaying sexism during his interactions with city and county staff. When a group of five female city and county employees visited the hotel last week, **Hopkins** alleges Khatri's behavior - which included taking one of the women alone into a separate room to negotiate terms of the contract - made them uncomfortable and afraid for their safety. After that, Khatri asserted he would speak only with male county employees, according to **Hopkins**. Khatri denies those claims. "To the extent anyone believed that I was being sexist, that was not my intent," he wrote in his reply to **Hopkins**, "and I have already apologized if any comment I made was perceived in that manner."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Willie Hopkins, Jr.**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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[CB&A Note: Only the information relevant to **Willie A. Hopkins, Jr.** is listed below.]

San Francisco Chronicle: Web Edition Articles (CA)  
September 29, 2019

**Alameda County jail is empty, but the air conditioning is on — at \$83,00 a month**

Author: Phil Matier

Taxpayers are shelling out \$83,000 a month to keep the heat and air conditioning running at a downtown Oakland jail that has no inmates and has been closed for months. "That's the bill we are getting every month from the county," said Alameda County Sheriff Greg Ahern. And taxpayers will probably keep paying the \$1 million-a-year utility bill for the 20-story Glenn Dyer Detention Facility for some time to come as Alameda County officials decide what to do with the empty jail. Here's the story. Opened in 1984, the 800-bed facility was mothballed in June as a cost-cutting measure amid rising expenses and a county inmate count that had dropped to 400. Earlier this year the last of the Dyer inmates, most of whom were on federal detention, were transferred to Santa Rita Jail in Dublin. But when the jail, which is located at Sixth and Clay streets, was closed the heating and air conditioning stayed on.

"Providing adequate ventilation to the interior is critical to maintaining the facility regardless of occupancy," said Alameda County General Services Agency Director **Willie A. Hopkins Jr.** "The lack of ventilation will expedite mold and mildew growth," Hopkins said of the nearly windowless high-rise. Plus, mechanical systems like air conditioners can fail if not operated," **Hopkins** said. Another complication is that the jail's utility system is linked to the adjacent Wiley W. Manuel Courthouse, which is in use. "Unfortunately, the design of the aforementioned facilities prevents deactivation of the central plant," said **Hopkins**, who also noted that "by definition, mothballing is the deactivation and preservation of equipment or a facility for possible future use."

In July, mayors from 14 cities in Alameda County, including Oakland and Berkeley, floated the idea of repurposing the jail as a homeless center. The Alameda County Board of Supervisors agreed and offered to lease the jail, which has a own laundry, and food service and medical facilities, to Oakland for \$1 a year. "The thought was that people could have their own rooms and live with dignity," Alameda County Supervisor Scott Haggerty said. The mayors were given a tour, but the homeless shelter idea died quickly when homeless advocates said housing people in a former jail would be inhuman. "It was seen as being too traumatic," Alameda County Supervisor Nate Miley said. The supervisors said they were never told about the high price of keeping the lights on. "But I have budgeted \$1 million for the year," Ahern said. The supervisors are now trying to decide what to do with the empty building. "I'm for tearing it down. It's never going to be used as a jail again, and we are never going to use it again," Haggerty said. "We can't go on with this situation indefinitely," Miley said. "It's going to cost too much, and that money could be used for other services."



**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Willie Hopkins, Jr.**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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[CB&A Note: Only the information relevant to **Willie A. Hopkins, Jr.** is listed below.]

South Metro Neighbor (Forest Park, GA)  
June 1, 2018

**Stockbridge Main Street program gets third accreditation**

Author: Neighbor Staff

The 3-year-old Stockbridge Main Street program recently received its third annual designation as an accredited Main Street America program. According to a news release, it had to meet 10 performance standards set by the National Main Street Center, a subsidiary of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Main Street programs receive accreditation for commitment to preservation-based economic development and community revitalization.

"The Stockbridge Main Street Program has remained laser-focused on its mission of designing an identifiable downtown historic district that promotes economic vitality, encourages cultural enrichment and nurtures community spirit," program Manager Kira Harris-Braggs said in a statement. "With the assistance of our Main Street advisory board and dedicated staff, we have maintained our status as a national Main Street accredited program and have garnered support for our work on both a local and statewide basis. It is truly an exciting time for our downtown."

Its advisory board is, **Willie Hopkins,**

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Willie Hopkins, Jr.**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Oakland Tribune, The (CA)  
May 25, 2018

**RAISING SALES TAX ON ALAMEDA COUNTY BALLOT**

Author: Peter Hegarty

A June ballot measure would raise the sales tax in Alameda County by a half-cent, with the money going to assist low-income families with child care and preschool costs. Measure A, which will appear on the June 5 ballot, would impose a 30-year, half-cent jump in local sales tax, an increase that would fund scholarships for families to get early education for their kids. If approved, the measure would mean that shoppers in some cities — Hayward, San Leandro, Union City and Albany — would pay a sales tax of 10.25 cents for every dollar. Those in other cities in the county would see the sales tax go up from 9.25 percent to 9.75 percent. The ballot measure also would raise pay to at least \$15 an hour for those employed at organizations that work with the county to provide such services. The measure is projected to generate about \$140 million annually. It needs a two-thirds majority to pass.

Among those who signed the ballot in support of Measure A are Clarrisa Doutherd, executive director of Parent Voices Oakland, and Scott Moore, executive director of Fremont-based Kidango, which offers preschool, behavioral health and other services. "Many families cannot afford childcare or spend years on waiting lists," the argument on the ballot that supports the measure says. "Parents are forced to work two jobs to make ends meet. Mothers are more likely to leave the workforce to care for children, contributing to gaps in their income and careers." The argument notes that a child's brain develops most dramatically during the first five years of life. Just Marcus Crowley, described on the ballot as a citizen and voter, is listed as an opponent. "A special tax must state a few specific purposes," the opposition argument says. "The listed benefits of this childcare measure are so vague that the new sales tax could be spent in practically anything, making accountability impossible."

If voters approve raising the tax, the funds would be administered by First 5 Alameda County or a similar organization, according to county officials. A citizen's oversight committee and a planning and advisory council are also proposed. Proceeds from the proposed tax cannot be used for kindergarten through 12 grade programs, except for expanding transitional kindergarten eligibility for 4-year-olds. County supervisors voted unanimously in February to place Measure A on the ballot after holding eight community meetings. In addition, an advisory panel of 48 child care and early education providers met on three occasions to provide feedback.

Two telephone surveys of 600 likely voters also showed that 73 percent of them would support it, **Willie A. Hopkins Jr.**, director of the county's General Services Agency, told the board Feb. 27, when he urged supervisors to place it on the ballot. "The proposed measure will help to mitigate the scarcity and cost of child care and early education within Alameda County, especially for low- and middle-income families and vulnerable populations," **Hopkins** said.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Willie Hopkins, Jr.**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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[CB&A Note: Only the information relevant to **Willie A. Hopkins, Jr.** is listed below.]

<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/CAALAME/bulletins/1e8595f?reqfrom=share>

**Alameda County GSA, Vendor Forum District 3**

April 17, 2018

Alameda County sent this bulletin at 04/09/2018 11:49 AM PDT

Dear Vendor,

You are invited to the following event: VENDOR FORUM District 3 Presented by the Alameda County General Services Agency

Please join us for this FREE networking event! Maximize your business with Alameda County and take this opportunity to meet with County agencies and departments. Learn about contracting opportunities, meet and network with other vendors and become familiar with the County's Small Local Emerging Business (SLEB) Program. **Willie A. Hopkins, Jr.**, Director, Alameda County GSA, will be the Speaker.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Willie Hopkins, Jr.**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Daily Review, The (Hayward, CA)  
December 29, 2017

**SHERIFF'S SUBSTATION OLD BUT SAFE, COUNTY SAYS**

Author: Darin Moriki

There is no denying that the Alameda County Sheriff's Office substation for Eden Township above Interstate 580 could use a little work, although county administrators estimate it could cost at least \$21.4 million to upgrade the facility.

The two-story, 64-year-old substation, at 15001 Foothill Blvd., does not meet current building or seismic codes and is on the county's list of buildings that need to be upgraded, replaced or relocated in the near future, General Services Agency Director **Willie Hopkins Jr.** said. He insisted, however, that the building does not pose a safety threat to Alameda County Sheriff's Office personnel. "The building is in an acceptable physical condition for its age, but it is outdated and constrained in its space," **Hopkins** said at the Dec. 6 Unincorporated Services Committee meeting, where the issue was discussed. "The building structure does not meet current seismic code; however, an upgrade to current code to complement it is voluntary unless the building is deemed essential to services," he said.

Cherryland resident Mike Baratta disagreed, saying that the Eden Township substation's age and close proximity to the Hayward fault puts it at risk of being damaged or destroyed in an earthquake. Instead, the Eden Township substation should be relocated to a 2.6-acre lot at the corner of Mission Boulevard and Maddox Road in Cherryland, he said. "They're going to be impacted by sitting on that precipice; it's negligent to not even consider that," Baratta said.

Buildings that can provide essential services after a disaster are required under state law to be designed and constructed "to minimize fire hazards" and resist, to a practical extent, "the forces generated by earthquakes, gravity and winds." These requirements apply to fire stations, police stations, emergency operations centers, California Highway Patrol offices, sheriff's offices and emergency communication dispatch centers, along with any buildings that can have those uses.

The substation is close to the Hayward fault but has not sustained any structural damage, **Hopkins** said. Alameda County facilities are exempt from local building and zoning codes but "must work with local fire departments to comply with fire safety codes associated with upgrades and changes," **Hopkins** said.

Overall building improvements and retrofitting the Eden Township substation's second floor could cost Alameda County taxpayers up to \$21.4 million, based on 2016 estimates, Hopkins said. Those projected costs are expected to rise by a little more than \$1 million annually to account for inflation rates. The problem, however, is that no funding has been set aside to pay for upgrades or improvements to the Eden Township substation, Alameda County Supervisor Nate Miley said. "I think the sheriff's office would like to have a new facility, but at the moment, there has been neither land nor location chosen for a new Eden Township substation," Miley said.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Willie Hopkins, Jr.**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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"Should that site be located, then there's the question of funding associated with building a new Eden Township substation. The bottom line at this point of time is all of that is ideal, but the existing facility is OK for the Sheriff's Office to occupy," he said. The 26,000-square-foot substation was built in 1953 to accommodate medical and health services but was significantly remodeled in 1977 for the Sheriff's Office.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Willie Hopkins, Jr.**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Daily Review, The (Hayward, CA)  
August 4, 2017

**VETERANS TO TURN OLD LIBRARY INTO CENTER**  
**CASTRO VALLEY BUILDING HAS BEEN VACANT SINCE 2009**

Author: Darin Moriki

A pair of veterans groups with no solid place to put down roots soon may have a new home inside the old Castro Valley Library building on Redwood Road. The Castro Valley Municipal Advisory Council, by a unanimous 7-0 vote, designated the old Castro Valley Library building as a Veterans Memorial Hall at its July 24 meeting. The advisory board also recommended Alameda County forge lease agreements with American Legion Post 649 and Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 9601, naming them as the facility's main tenants. "Honestly, this is huge for this community; this is a big, big deal," Castro Valley MAC Chair Marc Crawford said at the meeting. "What to do with this building has been a concern for a long time, along with figuring out how to pay for it. I can't think of a better use," he said.

Though details have not been hammered out, Alameda County owns the old library building and could lease it to the veterans groups for at least 20 years, county General Services Agency Director **Willie Hopkins** said. The lease must be brought back to the Castro Valley MAC to review and approve, although the county board of supervisors will have final say. Plans for the 10,239-square-foot library building at 20055 Redwood Road include creating a permanent headquarters for American Legion Post 649 and Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 9601, along with office space for both organizations. The two veterans service groups currently hold many of their events and meetings at the Hayward-Castro Valley Moose Lodge on Rutledge Road in Castro Valley.

"Our main purpose is just to have a meeting place where veterans can meet, set up some other things for veterans to do and all of that," American Legion Post 649 Commander Larry Ames told the Castro Valley MAC. The Veterans Memorial Hall also would serve as a meeting place for the Golden Gate Young Marines and USS Hancock Sea Cadet unit, both based in Hayward, along with various Boy Scout, Cub Scout and Girl Scout troops.

Some space also would be set aside for Friends of the Castro Valley Library, which has used the building to store books that are brought out during three annual weekend book sales at the current library on Norbridge Avenue.

Apart from its use as storage space, the old library building has sat vacant since 2009, when it closed and the current library opened near the Castro Valley BART station. The selection process for a new tenant began in June, when a Castro Valley MAC subcommittee started vetting proposals for the building. Those included one from the Castro Valley Unified School District to expand the Castro Valley Virtual Academy, a college prep high school program; add more career and technical education classrooms at Castro Valley High; expand the school district's preschool program; or create a child development center focused on technical and career education. The

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Willie Hopkins, Jr.**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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school district proposed the plan to the Castro Valley MAC in April but withdrew it shortly afterward, said Candi Clark, assistant superintendent of businesses services.

That left the Veterans Memorial Hall proposal as the only one on the table, Castro Valley MAC member Linda Tangren, a subcommittee member, said at the meeting. "In the proposal that was submitted by the two veterans organizations, you will see that their intent is to use this building as a meeting and conference area, which is much needed in Castro Valley, so we really felt that we were moving in the right direction," Tangren said.

The old library building will likely require Americans with Disabilities Act-compliant upgrades and the removal of hazardous materials, although county supervisors could allocate money to pay some of those expenses, **Hopkins** said. The cost of those fixes, however, has not been determined. "Once they fully understand the scope of what you're trying to do, I feel somewhat confident they will allocate the funding for me to take care of the (Americans with Disabilities Act) issues, and that way it will mitigate the liability for the organizations going forward," **Hopkins** said at the meeting. "From a county perspective, I don't see any limitations that will limit the ability to go forward in utilizing a veterans nonprofit organization," he said.

Castro Valley resident Sylvia Griggs said she and her husband, Steve, live near the old library and support plans for a Veterans Memorial Hall but worry about possible noise impacts, along with the facility's hours of operations. "It's a wonderful cause, and Steve and I both agree that, of all the things to go in there, this is the most worthy," Griggs said at the meeting.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Willie Hopkins, Jr.**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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East Bay Times (CA)  
August 4, 2016

**COUNTY EYES NEW JAIL MEDICAL PROVIDER**  
**SUPERVISORS SCHEDULE VOTE ON A NEW THREE-YEAR HEALTH CARE**  
**CONTRACT**

Author: David DeBolt

Alameda County appears close to cutting ties with Corizon Health, a company that has provided health care services at county jails for about two decades but has been criticized for its handling of medically vulnerable inmates. The Alameda County Board of Supervisors on Tuesday scheduled a special meeting at 10:30 a.m. Friday to vote on a new contract with California Forensics Medical Group, a company favored by the National Union of Healthcare Workers. The new, three-year contract is estimated to be worth at least \$90 million. The shift in the lucrative contract comes amid outcry over Corizon's handling of medical services at Santa Rita Jail in Dublin. The company was sued this year by the family of Mario Martinez, 29, of Hayward, who died of an asthma attack while in custody last year. Also last year, Corizon, along with the county, settled a \$8.3 million lawsuit over the death six years ago of Martin Harrison, 50, of Oakland, while he was in custody at the jail. As part of the record-setting settlement, only registered nurses and not licensed vocational nurses are allowed to conduct assessment screenings. Corizon has since been criticized for firing 49 licensed vocational nurses in January and 16 more in February, who together represent nearly 50 percent cut in the county jail system's nursing staff.

The supervisors on Tuesday rejected a recommendation from Sheriff Gregory Ahern **and Willie A. Hopkins Jr.**, director of the county's General Services Agency, to extend Corizon's contract another six months while the contract is rebid. California Forensics Medical Group was selected as the top bidder for the new contract, but that decision was appealed by Corizon.

County Auditor-Controller Steve Manning, who reviewed Corizon's appeal, requested the bidding do-over after finding flaws in the process related to cost proposals and a preference for hiring local companies. Manning, however, noted that Corizon's chances of winning the contract were not hurt as a result of the process. Sal Rosselli, president of the National Union of Healthcare Workers, opposed extending Corizon's contract and threw his support to California Forensics Medical Group, which has agreed to hire more nurses. The medical group offers health care for correctional facilities in 27 counties and has also faced lawsuits over substandard care. "Extending Corizon's contract is unfathomable," Rosselli said in a statement. "The company's record of inmate deaths, expensive lawsuits, and mass layoffs of nursing staff has clearly demonstrated the company's incompetence and recklessness." Corizon spokeswoman Martha Harbin said the company is reviewing its options. "We care deeply about this community, believe we're best suited to continue this hard work, and are committed to maintaining the continuity of care on which our patients depend," she said in a statement. The county has about 2,300 inmates at Santa Rita Jail and 300 at Glenn E. Dyer Detention Facility in downtown Oakland.



**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Willie Hopkins, Jr.**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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[CB&A Note: Only the information relevant to **Willie A. Hopkins, Jr.** is listed below.]

[https://www.independentnews.com/news/valley\\_roundup/new-department-heads/article\\_263cb19e-7e42-11e5-b5fd-e311fe1331a4.html](https://www.independentnews.com/news/valley_roundup/new-department-heads/article_263cb19e-7e42-11e5-b5fd-e311fe1331a4.html)

The Independent  
October 29, 2015

**New Department Heads**

The Alameda County Board of Supervisors announced the appointment of two new department heads.

**Willie A. Hopkins, Jr.** will lead the General Services Agency (GSA) as its Director, effective December 7, 2015. He is currently the Director of the Support Services Agency for Cobb County, Georgia. He recently served as the Assistant City Manager of Pompano Beach, Florida, and, prior to that, as Director of General Services in Fulton County (Atlanta), Georgia.

“We are pleased to announce the appointments of **Willie Hopkins** as our GSA Director and Phyllis Nance as Director of Child Support Services. Both are experienced local government leaders with a commitment to customer service and innovative programs,” said Scott Haggerty, President of the Board of Supervisors.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Willie Hopkins, Jr.**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Marietta Daily Journal (GA)  
May 4, 2013

**COUNTY BEAT:**

**Willie Hopkins Jr.** will assume the duties of Cobb support services director as of July 22, reports Commission Chair Tim Lee. **Hopkins'** hiring had been halted after he was unable to produce a copy of his college diploma in time for his originally planned April 15 start date. But the county obtained a copy from **Hopkins'** alma mater, Alcorn State University, where he had obtained a bachelor's degree in business administration, Lee said.

The July 22 start date also will allow **Hopkins** to take care of his son for the first 90 days after his son's recent heart surgery, as doctors had recommended, Lee said. "We think he will be a strong asset to the team, so we were willing to extend his start date," Lee said. "We feel real strongly about him."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Willie Hopkins, Jr.**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Marietta Daily Journal (GA)  
April 27, 2013

**Diploma difficulties have Lee, county ...Waiting on Willie**

COBB COMMISSION Chairman Tim Lee announced last month that the county was hiring Pompano Beach assistant city manager **Willie Hopkins Jr.** to succeed Virgil Moon as the county's new support services director. His expected start date was April 15. But that date is now two weeks in the rearview mirror and Moon's old desk is still empty. So what's up? "He's having a hard time finding a copy of his college diploma," Lee explained on Friday.

**Hopkins**, a retired Army major, reportedly has a bachelor's degree in business administration from Alcorn State University in Mississippi, according to the MDJ story about his hiring. Lee said he doesn't think there's anything amiss. "He has given us permission to get it directly from the college, which we're doing," the chairman said. "Why would you sign a release for me to get your college certificate if you didn't have one?" If he fails to produce the document, **Hopkins** won't be allowed to start, Lee said. "But we have no reason to believe it can't be produced," Lee said. **Hopkins**, 49, didn't start on time because he is taking care of his son, who is undergoing open-heart surgery, Lee said.

The support services director manages a staff of 320 and is in charge of property management, information services, purchasing and government service centers. He also is the liaison with the tax assessor's office. The job has a salary range of \$96,800 to \$157,000. Moon, who retired in September to become the chief financial officer at Cobb and Douglas Public Health, was earning \$146,700. **Hopkins** is expected to notify the county on Monday as to what his plans are, Lee said.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Willie Hopkins, Jr.**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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MDJ Online  
March 26, 2013

**Cobb plans to hire new support services director**

Author: Jon Gilloly

The Cobb Board of Commissioners is expected to hire **Willie A. Hopkins Jr.**, the assistant city manager of Pompano Beach, Fla., as the county's new support services director during tonight's meeting. Virgil Moon held the position until he retired in September to become the chief financial officer at Cobb and Douglas Public Health.

The support services director oversees a staff of 320 people who manage the property management, information services, purchasing and government service centers. He also serves as the liaison to the tax assessor's office.

County spokesman Robert Quigley said 104 people applied for the job, which comes with a salary range of \$96,803 to \$157,809. Moon received a salary of \$146,702.

**Hopkins**, 49, was born in Chicago and raised in Mississippi. He holds of bachelor of business administration degree from Alcorn State University in Mississippi, and served in the U.S. Army from 1986 to 1996, where he was a supply distribution officer before retiring as a major.

Prior to his job in Pompano Beach, **Hopkins** was director of general services for Fulton County.

"If you assess metro Atlanta, I would have to say that Cobb is the premier county," **Hopkins** said. "There were a lot of practices and procedures utilizing Cobb County that I borrowed in my previous role at Fulton County because I just see what we used to say in the military — it's a lean, efficient government, and that's what I come from, that's what I want to be a part of."

Another plus about working for the Cobb government is the tenure of David Hankerson, who has been county manager since 1993, **Hopkins** said. "For me, that's a good thing because it speaks to the stability of the county as well as the competency of the manager, and that's something I want to learn from," he said.

County Chairman Tim Lee explained why he believes **Hopkins** is the right person for the job. "He comes with an extraordinary amount of experience and expertise in the area of which he's going to be managing," Lee said. "He's seasoned. He seems to have some visioning capabilities in terms of looking beyond the future and how to better improve things."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Willie Hopkins, Jr.**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Pelican, The (Pompano Beach, FL)  
February 8, 2013

**Abandoned homes being saved with HUD funds amounting to \$4.4 million; so far, 58 homes have been rehabbed or rebuilt**

Author: Judy Wilson

Pompano Beach - Using \$5.9 million in Department of Housing and Urban Development [HUD] funds, this city has "rescued" and sold 58 homes, a notable step in removing the urban blight caused by foreclosures. The money is administered by the city through HUD's Neighborhood Stabilization Program [NSP], initiated to get abandoned homes off the streets. The first grant, \$4.4 million, has all been allocated, Assistant City Manager **Willie Hopkins** said. NSP 3, \$1.5 million, is 60 percent committed and unlike the first grant where homes could only be rehabbed, use of this money is more flexible: houses can be torn down and rebuilt.

So far, 19 families are enjoying completely rebuilt homes. One on Northeast 18 Avenue was dedicated last week. Built for around \$100, 000, the two bedroom, two bath home is the next generation of a new construction technique using poured concrete. According to **Hopkins**, it is a less expensive way to build and is more energy efficient.

Dist 2 Commissioner Charlotte Burrie was at the ribbon-cutting for The Highlands home and was impressed. "I am so glad NSP money is available and working for us eliminate slum and blight. It is has made a noticeable impact on our community." NSP 3 funds can only be spent in Cresthaven, The Highlands and Kendall Green, areas that came to the top by using a complicated formula. This restriction will make these neighborhoods about equal to the number of homes rehabbed in the northwest part of the city where, previously, all NSP funds were spent.

Not long ago the city commission recognized a dozen residents who had bought rehabbed or new housing. **Hopkins** said the projected sale price on 18 Avenue was \$115, 000. This week he did not have the exact selling figure, but said the city likely made a small profit which goes back into the program. Over the years, this profit has generated "significant" income, he added, extending the life of the federal grants. "We can make a profit. I think so far it is about \$1.5 million," **Hopkins** said. Selling the homes is no problem. "Once we acquire a house, we have a buyer," he said. When the HUD funds were first released, cities had a hard time bidding against investment buyers, but banks are now giving the cities the upper hand, **Hopkins** said. To his knowledge, none of the 58 homes have gone into default.

In 2010, HUD allocated \$40 million to Broward County. Pompano Beach is one of four cities, out of the 13 that received NSP funds, to fulfill its obligation by allocating all its funds. Fort Lauderdale, the recipient of \$2.1 million, has performed the most poorly, allocating none of its NSP dollars according to HUD figures. In Deerfield Beach, where \$1.1 million was granted, only \$297, 812 has been obligated and only \$19, 000 has been spent. The city is playing catch-up according to Donna DeFranzo who took over the community development division in 2010 after the department was re-organized By March, 50 percent of the NSP 3 funds have to be obligated

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Willie Hopkins, Jr.**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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and DeFranzo believes she will meet this goal. "We are trying our best," she said this week. "We are moving ahead to extend funds, closing on properties and selling them. And we are looking for buyers." Community Redevelopment Associates has been contracted to help with the process. In January, the city commission approved an amended plan for NSP 3 which now includes \$770,000 in purchase assistance money and \$850,000 to acquire and rehab seven homes.

Previously, NSP money could only be spent in neighborhoods bordering the Dixie Highway corridor. Now, DeFranzo said, the target areas have been expanded to include the entire city. Also available come Feb. 19 are funds for home repair projects. Anyone wishing to apply for this funding should call 1-877-648-3321.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Willie Hopkins, Jr.**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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[CB&A Note: Only the information relevant to **Willie A. Hopkins, Jr.** is listed below.]

Pelican, The (Pompano Beach, FL)  
January 4, 2013

**Plaques give local history a boost**

Author: Judy Vik

Five structures were recently added to the city's Local Register of Historic Places. At a recent city commission meeting, Mayor Lamar Fisher presented bronze plaques recognizing the historic designation to be placed at The Blanche Ely House, Pioneer Monument, Kester Cottages #1 and #2 and the Sample McDougald House.

Fisher thanked members of the volunteer Historic Preservation Committee for their efforts, noting, "Because of the success of the committee you made the local registry a reality. We're truly saving our history and saving these community structures that have gone through the process to be [declared] historic."

Blanche Ely House

**Willie Hopkins**, assistant city manager, accepted the plaque for The Blanche Ely House at 1500 NW Sixth Ave. The building was the home of Blanche and Joseph Ely, educational and civic pioneers in Pompano Beach's black community. The building houses the Ely Educational Museum featuring artifacts and documents relating to the Elys and education in the black community.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Willie Hopkins, Jr.**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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South Florida Sun - Sentinel - Fort Lauderdale, Fla.  
January 31, 2011

**EX-STAFFER FIGHTS FIRING AT EMBATTLED DEPARTMENT**

Author: Larry Barszewski

A former employee challenging his firing from the city's troubled Office of Housing and Urban Improvement is finding himself being blamed for many of the problems that have surfaced in the department. The office, which oversees housing programs that receive state and federal grant money, has been under intense scrutiny since its last director, Richard Bowman, was forced to resign in July 2009. The office is the subject of a critical forensic audit released in October, which was requested by the city because of continuing complaints.

The city has forwarded the audit to the Broward State Attorney's Office and federal housing officials to investigate whether any criminal wrongdoing has occurred by staff, grant recipients or others. Against that background, Alex Medina, the office's former administrative coordinator, is appealing his August termination. As the city makes its case before the Employee Board of Appeals in an ongoing hearing, testimony has linked Medina to many controversies in the department.

Assistant City Manager **Willie Hopkins Jr.** testified this month that he would have fired Medina at the same time he forced out Bowman, but said he was concerned about reducing the office's already limited staff. The office's interim director, Miriam Carillo, testified that she hoped Medina's work and attitude toward her would improve but said that didn't happen in the year after she took over for Bowman.

Witnesses testified that Medina didn't enter federal loans disbursed by the office into the city's database in a timely manner, with dozens not recorded six months or more after their closing. Witnesses also said Medina failed to conduct the required monitoring of nonprofit groups that were sub-grantees of federal money.

Officials said Medina also deleted documents from city computers and sat for six months on a check to the city for \$5,942 that was then returned due to insufficient funds. Last week, the president of the firm hired by the city to do the forensic audit testified that Medina was prying and "trying to steer me down different roads than what I was looking at." Auditor Michael Kessler, head of Kessler International, also testified that Medina's program files were a mess. "The record-keeping was shoddy, to say the least," Kessler said. "That was a recurrent pattern I saw across files."

Medina said witnesses he plans to call in the hearing will rebut what has been alleged and put perspective on how he approached the job, trying to prioritize items when there were so many fires that needed putting out. Medina isn't the only fired employee from the Office of Housing and Urban Improvement to challenge his or her termination. In November, former office



**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Willie Hopkins, Jr.**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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assistant Jennifer Johnson won her case against the city - even though she admitted awarding two scholarships using federal grant money to ineligible recipients. The scholarships were supposed to be awarded by the Broward Education Foundation based on a committee's recommendations.

Johnson skipped over other scholarship candidates ranked by the committee, officials said. However, the arbitrator said Bowman, the office's former director, bore some responsibility. "It was his department, it was under his watch that the scholarships were given to persons who did not meet the basic requirements," arbitrator Lawrence Hammer wrote in his opinion in November. Hammer ordered the city to rehire Johnson, with back pay and benefits. She now works for the Public Works Department.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches  
Willie Hopkins, Jr.  
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)**

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Pelican, The (Pompano Beach, FL)  
January 21, 2011

**City's case against Medina focuses on negligence in handling funds**

Author: Judy Wilson

Pompano Beach – Testimony that portrayed Dr. Alex Medina as either an incompetent or an unwilling city employee was heard Monday night by the city's Employees Appeals Board. Medina was fired in August from his job as administrative coordinator for the Office of Housing and Urban Improvement, or OHUI. He had worked there for eight years. In presenting the city's case, labor attorney Paul Ryder Jr., told the appeals board, "A lot of money is involved here."

OHUI manages \$9 million annually in state and federal housing grants awarded to provide services for low- income families. Medina was in charge of accounting for that grant money and documenting expenditures. Medina's questionable work record came to light in 2009 according to Assistant City manager **Willie Hopkins** when the Director of OHUI, Richard Bowman, was asked to resign. Although "his incompetence was revealed then," **Hopkins** said Medina was retained because of his knowledge of several programs and because the department had only three employees.

Interim OHUI Director Miriam Carillo said in order to bring Medina along she gave him a good performance review in the fall of 2009, but by March of 2010 she had a different opinion. "Essentially, Medina wanted to do what he wanted to do when he wanted to do it," she testified. "The mistakes he was making overflowed into other departments." Carillo said when she came to the department, it had "staff issues, monetary issues and no policies... Money wasn't being properly spent." Nor was it being properly handled. A \$1 million reimbursement due the city from the government had not been processed, nor had about 300 loan documents Medina was supposed to enter into OHUI's accounting system. Carillo said she had to hire people to do this work. There was also the matter of a \$6,000 check Medina failed to deposit until the bank account it was written on was closed.

**Hopkins** said Medina's excuse was that he was too busy. Another of Medina's duties was to monitor the department's sub-grantees, nonprofit organizations that provide community programs. According to Carillo, Medina did not perform the once- a -year site visits to assure compliance as required. At one point, Medina promised he would change, but after two weeks, "He became Alex again," Carillo said. "He never came in on time. He was smoking outside all day long." Carillo also spoke of Medina changing reports without proper approval and of erasing his "H" drive which contained a master list of the department's financial information. By February 2010, Medina had "Boxes and boxes of files waiting to be entered into the department's system," Carillo said. It was at the end of that month that his "H" [hard] drive was erased. In March 2010, Medina received a poor performance evaluation which he refused to sign and he took a personal leave. When he came back in June, his work became an issue again, Carillo said. In a memo written August 2, 2010, Carillo sent Medina the notice of his discharge, citing eight infractions. Under the city code, Medina has the right to appeal. The Appeals Board hearing continues Monday, January 24, 5 p.m. in city commission chambers.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Willie Hopkins, Jr.**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Pelican, The (Pompano Beach, FL)  
December 10, 2010

**Homeless due to foreclosure? Help could be on the way**

Author: Judy Wilson

Pompano Beach – The city has \$500,000 in federal stimulus money to relocate people living in foreclosed properties, but to date has spent only about \$150,000. In order to get full use of the funds, \$15,000 has to be given away each month for the next two years, Assistant City Manager **Willie Hopkins** said this week. Failure to spend the money means it goes back to the federal government. So far, **Hopkins** said, he has sent about 2,000 people to the county for assistance, but only a few have received the financial aid which is administered through the Broward Regional Health Planning Council. Applicants often don't follow through because they don't want to provide the required documentation, **Hopkins** said.

Now, because all cities are having trouble dispensing the Homeless Prevention and Rapid Rehousing Program, or HPRP, funds, the federal government is easing some of the restrictions which may make it easier to be a successful applicant, he said. A successful case involved six families, one a mother and her newborn, living in a foreclosed property. With the help of the HPRP, all of them were relocated, "I am sorry we couldn't administer the grant from here," **Hopkins** said, "But we just don't have the staff to do that." **Hopkins** said the application process "Is fairly easy" but a phone call to 211, Broward's helpline and the number applicants must first call, did not go quickly. When someone did answer, the call was forwarded to someone else who referred this reporter to someone else - who was unavailable.

HUD funds can help buyers of rehabbed homes

The city also received stimulus money from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to rehab homes in the target areas of Cresthaven and the Highlands. Some \$4.3 million was granted for the Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) and to date 26 homes have been renovated. Sixteen of them are under contract. The city's website shows a listing of available properties which go at bargain prices because HUD does not allow the city to make a profit on the resales.

The homes are offered to individuals with low to moderate incomes. For instance, a family of four with an income of \$91,800 would be eligible for a NSP home and could receive up to \$55,000 to help them make the purchase. As with any financial transaction, the paperwork can be daunting.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Willie Hopkins, Jr.**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Sun Sentinel: Web Edition Articles [TCA] (Fort Lauderdale, FL)  
November, 21, 2010

**Pompano Beach to repossess computers from program it says violated grant rules**

Author: Larry Barszewski

The city awarded the Small Biz Community & Economic Development Corp. \$56,000 last year through a federal economic development grant program, but the city has not reimbursed any of the group's expenses so far and has only provided it with \$10,000 in computers and other equipment. Now the city wants those computers and equipment back, and the nonprofit organization has threatened to lock its doors rather than let the city take away the equipment it says it needs to continue serving minority businesses in the city.

The showdown comes as the city tries to resolve problems within its Office of Housing and Urban Improvement, some of which were included in a critical audit released last month. Assistant City Manager **Willie Hopkins** said the Small Biz group violated numerous grant rules, the most serious being that Mary Phillips wrote the grant and was president of the board of directors at the same time she was a paid employee of the organization. More than \$36,000 of the grant money was slated to go to her in the form of salary and benefits. "Had the city disbursed funds to pay her salary, she would be in a much worse position at this point, because then it's a federal situation and it's against the law," **Hopkins** said.

Phillips, wife of former City Commissioner Ed Phillips, said she withdrew as president of the board in May when informed about the conflict and filed the appropriate paperwork with the state. But **Hopkins** said the only way to resolve the conflict would be for Phillips not to receive any salary because of her involvement in setting up the grant.

A forensic audit completed for the city last month was rife with instances where rules weren't followed, or grant awards seemed to show favoritism. The Small Biz center was one of the programs targeted by auditor Michael Kessler. Phillips said if her group was out of compliance, it was partly the city's fault. She said the Small Biz center did not hide any information from the city and has tried to correct violations brought to its attention. While the city's response to the audit admitted that previous Office of Housing and Urban Improvement managers "failed to properly administer the technical requirements" of the programs, Phillips said it was those same managers that organizations like hers relied on for guidance. "The city staff is not taking any responsibility for anything," Phillips said. "Did the staff instruct us on the regulations? They had all of our documents. They knew who was in charge."

**Hopkins** said the conflict-of-interest rules were clear and listed in the contract signed by Phillips. **Hopkins**, who terminated the agreement with the Small Biz center earlier this month, said the computers and equipment will be given to another grant program when recovered by the city. He also said if the city had disbursed money to the Small Biz center, federal officials would have required the city to reimburse the federal government because of the violations.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Willie Hopkins, Jr.**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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South Florida Sun - Sentinel - Fort Lauderdale, Fla.  
June 24, 2010

**POMPANO BEACH TO CONDUCT AUDIT OF HOUSING, DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM; RATIONALIZING THESE PRICEY E-GADGETS**

Author: Linda Trischitta

Pompano Beach hired the same auditor that Deerfield Beach is using to review its housing and development programs.

Consultant and auditor Michael Kessler was awarded a \$40,000 contract plus \$5,000 in expenses Tuesday night by the Pompano City Commission to review its Office of Housing and Urban Improvement.

Several annual audits by the city and its external auditors found that different programs within the city agency did not conform with U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development regulations and guidelines, City Manager Dennis Beach said Tuesday before the commission vote. "There were problems with documentation and record keeping that HUD needs to determine if you've been doing it properly," Beach said. "This predates existing staff."

The city had to return approximately \$600,000 to HUD in 2007 after the state attorney investigated the department in 2006 for mismanagement of state and federal housing programs, according to backup documents for the proposed Kessler contract.

Assistant City Manager **Willie Hopkins Jr.** wrote that the reasons for the forensic audit include, "... to identify oddities, irregularities and possible corruption ..." in federal and state funded programs.

Kessler is also under contract with Deerfield Beach for up to \$100,000. His firm has examined the operations of Deerfield's Community Development Division, where two employees were put on paid administrative leave after Kessler issued his report, as well as the Deerfield Beach Housing Authority.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Willie Hopkins, Jr.**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Sun Sentinel (Fort Lauderdale, FL)  
May 6, 2010

**FUNDING STOPS FOR YOUTH JOB TRAINING PROGRAM**

Author: Rebecca Dellagloria

Under the hot morning sun, Jessica Haygood thinks she might have trapped a tilapia in her net. However, this time it was a false alarm after catching two earlier in the morning. Haygood, 19, has been working every day since February at the Collier City Aquaculture/Hydroponics Complex in Pompano Beach. She arrives each morning at 8 a.m. at the first job she has ever had. Before that, she was homeless. "I wake up in the morning, ready to come here," said Haygood, smiling. "I was sleeping at the park, so I called my sister and she said I could stay with her if I stay in this program. This program paid for my GED, my Social Security card, my iPod."

At this urban fish farm off Powerline Road, once-unemployed young adults like Haygood have been learning basic job skills while helping to build a sustainable environment to raise tilapia and hydroponic vegetables. In addition to the farm work, the trainees receive assistance in creating resumes, going on job interviews, discipline and team building.

This week, the group of young adults was scheduled to transition from job training to working full-time at the farm, which is run by 77-year-old Dorothy Jones. Jones has made it her mission to find employment for young adults in the city. She was awarded a \$146,000 grant through the Office of Community and Economic Development in February. The city has temporarily stopped funding the program until Jones submits a new budget to city, according to Pompano Beach Assistant City Manager **Willie Hopkins**. **Hopkins** said Jones is legally prohibited from paying salaries to trainees but can pay full-time employees. Full-time employees must earn at least \$35,000 annually.

The grant money comes from funding allocated by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the regulations on how the money can be spent are strict, **Hopkins** said. According to **Hopkins**, Jones must submit a revised budget to the city indicating how she will allocate the money.

For Jose Lugo, a formerly unemployed worker from Boston, finding work has been difficult. With a background in the technology field, Lugo said he has been told by prospective employers that he was overqualified. "[Dorothy Jones] didn't tell me I was overqualified," Lugo said. "This is a wonderful program where people are given the opportunity to learn skills beyond just working in the field."

The farm was created in 2000 by Nova Southeastern University as a research project for graduate students. Jones and her late husband, Sid, were hired by the university to help operate the facility. Since 2002, Jones has been running the farm. Jones' grandson, Michael Adderly, the site manager, said the farm also provides workers with the opportunity to learn how to grow

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**Willie Hopkins, Jr.**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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hydroponic vegetables such as broccoli, cauliflower, mustard greens and cabbage. "We grow all this stuff from scratch," Adderly said.

In addition to submitting a revised budget, **Hopkins** said, Jones is not allowed to pay a salary to her grandson after HUD found it would be a conflict of interest. "We think [the farm] is a good idea. It's what the community wanted to see based on the advisory committee," **Hopkins** said. "It's just that we are required after the fact to monitor the program. These things popped up, and they have to be corrected."

So far, Jones has received \$11,714 of the \$146,000 grant from the city. "I love the kids, I love helping people," said Jones, who says she has paid her workers with some of her own money. "But if there's no money to pay the kids, I can't dig in my pockets."

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**Willie Hopkins, Jr.**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Atlanta Journal-Constitution, The (GA)  
October 1, 2008

**Clayton avoids crisis; fuel found**

Author: Megan Matteucci

Clayton County narrowly escaped a public safety crisis and will be able to respond to every emergency call after all, thanks to a delivery of 9,000 gallons of fuel expected this morning. The state tracked down gas for Clayton from Mansfield Oil on Tuesday afternoon. "I called and begged," said Jill Stuckey, director of the Georgia Environmental Facilities Authority's Energy Innovation Center. Stuckey has helped locate gas for several local governments and schools systems, but none were as extreme as Clayton's situation, she said Tuesday.

Most metro counties reported having sufficient supplies at midweek. But several school systems have run into fuel supply trouble, according to Bert Brantley, spokesman for Gov. Sonny Perdue. At one point Tuesday, rumors ran through some school systems that Perdue would cancel classes around Georgia on Thursday and Friday to save fuel -- but Brantley denied that. On Friday, 18 Georgia school systems sought state help. Clayton school officials said they have plenty of gas to run the district's 727 buses and support vehicles.

As of late Monday, the Clayton County government had only enough gas to last throughout the weekend, County Commission Chairman Eldrin Bell said. But if it didn't get this delivery, Bell said, the county was facing the need to make serious cuts in services. "Public safety will be our last restriction," Bell said. Clayton officials said they will continue to conserve to make sure every 911 call is answered. Last week, Bell ordered police to stop using county vehicles for off-duty jobs, except for patrols at school sporting events and other after-school activities. He also ordered county workers to stop mowing grass.

Governments throughout the metro area have also implemented conservation plans, although none seem to be as stringent as Clayton's.

- Cobb County's municipal fleet gas supplies are at 75 percent, with fuel shipments coming in as scheduled. County spokesman Robert J. Quigley said employees are being encouraged to conserve as much fuel as possible on county business.
- Gwinnett County has had a slight decline in operations, but is not near a crisis stage, said Michael Lindsey, fleet management director. "There's been a slowdown, but there hasn't been a shortage," he said. "We've had enough fuel to do what we need to do."
- Fulton County is in "very good shape" with more than 50 percent capacity, said **Willie Hopkins**, Fulton's general services director. The county has an emergency reserve locked away in the event that the gas shortage drags on several more weeks, he said.
- Fayette County has about a three-week fuel reserve, said Capt. Pete Nelms, Fayette's emergency management coordinator.
- Henry County is in good shape as of Tuesday, said spokeswoman Julie Hoover-Ernst, with another gas shipment expected today.



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**Willie Hopkins, Jr.**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Atlanta Journal-Constitution, The (GA)  
September 10, 2005

**Panel: Security still lax in courts**

Author: Rhonda Cook, Beth Warren

Six months after the March 11 killings, there are still not enough sheriff's deputies at the Fulton County Courthouse and needed repairs haven't been made, a commission looking into security lapses said Friday. "Here we are, months later, and we're still talking about the same thing," State Court Judge Penny Brown Reynolds told members of the Fulton County Courthouse Security Commission. "We can't even get a definitive answer about whether cameras are working," Reynolds said, raising her voice. "We have a dead judge. How much more of a squeaky wheel do we need?"

Atlanta police Chief Richard Pennington, another member of the task force, said the safety of the building was compromised by bureaucratic power struggles, communication problems and the failure of any one person -- including Sheriff Myron Freeman -- or any agency to take the lead in improving conditions. "The things we need for security aren't getting done," Pennington said. Cameras and distress buttons in some courtrooms don't work and a secure door has yet to be installed in a key hallway leading to judges' chambers.

The commission, created by Freeman a month after the courthouse killings, had expected to complete its work Friday. But several loose ends remained, and so it will have at least one more meeting, Oct. 7. The group was created because of allegations that apathy and security failings allowed rape suspect Brian Nichols to overpower a sheriff's deputy and kill Judge Rowland Barnes, court stenographer Julie Ann Brandau and sheriff's Sgt. Hoyt Teasley. Nichols is also accused of killing U.S. Customs agent David Wilhelm before surrendering March 12. Nichols, who would face the death penalty if convicted, has pleaded not guilty.

Friday's hourlong meeting was heated and spirited at times as task force members complained it was taking too long to improve security at the downtown courthouse. They also expressed concern about conflicting information from the Fulton County Sheriff's Department and the county's General Services Department, which is responsible for repairs and maintenance of county buildings. "The difficulty is it's a 'he said, she said,' " said U.S. Marshal Richard Mecum, chairman of the commission.

Pennington, chairman of a commission subcommittee focusing on security issues, reported in July that a majority of the Sheriff's Department's repair requests to General Services had been ignored. In an interview, General Services Director **Willie Hopkins** disagreed with that contention. "I don't know what he's talking about," **Hopkins** said Friday. He said all requests for repairs had been completed and "90 percent" of \$750,000 in improvements recently approved were "in the works." He said some of that work involved courtroom cameras and scanners to unlock doors with key cards. "Everything on their priority list has been completed," **Hopkins** said. Pennington, however, said he has asked General Services for the documents showing the

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**Willie Hopkins, Jr.**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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work had been done, but that agency officials "have not got back with us. We stand by our report." **Hopkins** said he had responded.

Mecum said he recently counted four courtroom cameras that were not operating. "They [General Services] said they put it on priority, but that was at least four months ago," he said. Fulton County Superior Court Judge T. Jackson Bedford Jr. said he's not sure who is responsible for not improving security before March 11, but "a fire needs to be built under somebody." Neither Freeman nor his chief of staff, John Croslan, could be reached for comment.

The commission planned to report on four areas by Friday: security deficiencies, staffing at the courthouse, deputies' performance on March 11 and the sheriff's policies and procedures. A fifth area, focusing on deputy training, was added at the end of the meeting. So far, only two reports have been completed: one Friday dealing with staffing and another earlier in the summer on deputies' performance. The commission said there were not enough sheriff's employees at the courthouse and those assigned to the complex, and the jail, were not properly deployed. Staffing also is hindered by the county's employment practices, which the commission said were cumbersome and time-consuming.

While the commission was charged with reviewing courthouse staffing, the jail was also included in its analysis because both sites sometime share the same employees. The commission found that the Freeman needs at least 200 more deputies to provide security at both sites. "A 30 percent increase in personnel to perform the same functions as now -- that's a significant percentage to be without," said Monroe County Sheriff John Carey Bittick. The department already is trying to fill 50 vacancies that are not included in the larger figure.

The commission suggested the county change its hiring requirements to give the sheriff the ability to hire deputies directly rather than waiting for the county's personnel office to screen applicants. "The money is allocated, and it's taken away [by the county] because of the bureaucracy," said DeKalb Sheriff Thomas Brown, a commission member. Fulton, however, contends Freeman has complete authority to hire when he needs to and make other staffing changes.

In an interview, Commission Chairwoman Karen Handel said the sheriff had the authority to reclassify positions to convert high-ranking positions to deputies. "The sheriff's office is top heavy and they need to redeploy individuals," Handel said. "We've all been requesting a staffing strategy from the Sheriff's Department, and that has yet to come."

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**Willie Hopkins, Jr.**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Atlanta Journal-Constitution, The (GA)  
July 9, 2005

**Courthouse review cites lying, apathy**  
**Investigators find security was lax, warnings ignored**

Author: Rhonda Cook, Ty Tagami

Sheriff's deputies at the Fulton County Courthouse ignored specific warnings that a prisoner was dangerous, failed to turn on a key security monitor, and lied to investigators looking into security breaches after a fatal shooting spree in March, a special commission has found. A detailed report on the March 11 shootings at the courthouse in downtown Atlanta show that mistakes made by deputies were much worse than previously reported.

Several deputies interviewed during an internal affairs investigation lied about some aspect of their activities on the day Brian Nichols allegedly beat up a deputy, took her gun, killed a judge and his court reporter and another deputy, then fled, later killing another man. The report by a committee of the Fulton County Courthouse Security Commission, which was empaneled to investigate how the courthouse shooting spree occurred, paints a picture of sloppy record-keeping, bumbling security procedures, and high-ranking officers failing to do their duty. The investigators document a pattern of incompetence, lying, absenteeism, lax security and failed leadership in the Sheriff's Department. The long-awaited report shows that the deaths, or at least the suspect's escape, might have been prevented had different decisions been made.

Fulton Sheriff Myron Freeman, who appointed the investigative commission, said he would review the findings over the weekend and make a decision within a few days about any changes needed. He said he would pay close attention to his officers's actions as outlined in the report, which was issued Friday. "If I do need to get rid of them, they will be gone," Freeman said.

Among the findings:

- Inmates brought into the courthouse from the jail were routinely asked to raise their shirts and pants legs to be "visually searched," not patted down, in direct violation of policy. That was how Brian Nichols entered the courthouse with heavy pieces of metal fashioned into weapons and hidden in his shoes two days before the shooting spree.
- High-ranking courthouse security officers failed to take any follow-up action after the weapons were found on Nichols. Nor did they act on information that his mother had warned a deputy her son might try to overpower his guards if the verdict in his rape trial did not go his way.
- The deputy who was supposed to be watching monitors from the holding cells, including the one where Deputy Cynthia Hall's gun was taken after she was beaten, left the central control room during several critical minutes, then lied about his whereabouts.
- At the same time, the cameras in the holding cells were not transmitting to monitors in the control room anyway.
- The judgment of some deputies was clouded by personal relationships with Nichols or opinions they had concerning the suspect, who was on trial at the time for allegedly raping his former girlfriend.

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*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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- At least one ranking deputy knew Nichols had told his mother he planned to take a deputy's gun but did not pass along a specific warning. The sergeant instead told colleagues that Nichols might "act up." Sgt. Jerome Dowdell used his position as a deputy to gain access to Nichols so they could pray together, investigators reported. "His conduct was in direct conflict with his duties," said DeKalb County Sheriff Thomas Brown, chairman of the internal affairs subcommittee that prepared the report.

Investigation continuing

The report showed that a number of deputies failed to use standard procedures and at least five lied when they were first interviewed. Several failed lie detector tests and later admitted to failing to tell the truth, investigators said. Most law enforcement agencies consider it a firing offense to lie in the course of an internal investigation. Investigators said apathy that had apparently infected the Sheriff's Department allowed the events of March 11 to unfold as they did. "These are good people, but somewhere along the line they lost interest," said U.S. Marshal Richard Mecum, chairman of the Courthouse Security Commission. "There's a culture that's being fostered. It's very lackadaisical and security isn't the No. 1 issue."

The commission has not completed its work. Three other subcommittees are looking into the department's policies, procedures and staffing, and what security changes are needed. But the internal affairs committee findings had been eagerly awaited by people shocked that Judge Rowland Barnes and court reporter Julie Ann Brandau were gunned down in their courtroom and that sheriff's Sgt. Hoyt Teasley was shot dead on the street just outside the courthouse. Nichols disappeared into the metro area, surfacing several hours later in Buckhead after he allegedly killed Immigration and Customs Enforcement agent David Wilhelm. He was captured in Gwinnett County the next morning after holding a woman hostage in her apartment for several hours.

Security fixes found tardy

The sheriffs of DeKalb, Monroe and Cherokee counties and the chief deputy of Cobb made up the internal affairs committee. Virtually all the interviews in the investigation were conducted by seven internal affairs investigators from various law enforcement agencies. The commission was highly critical of the Fulton County government's lack of response since January 2004 to requests from the Sheriff's Department for security-related repairs or upgrades. Atlanta Police Chief Richard Pennington, who led that part of the commission's review, found that the majority of requests to the county's General Services Administration were ignored. For example, Pennington said the county did not respond to 22 of 34 requests to fix alarm problems, to 34 of 50 requests to fix broken doors, and to 19 of 25 requests to fix broken locks. Mother warned of trouble

GSA Director **Willie Hopkins Jr.** said the requests were not made properly. "They don't understand the system," he said. He characterized requests from the Sheriff's Department as upgrades and not repairs, and said upgrades have to be approved as a budget item.

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*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The internal investigation spread a wide net. Investigators reviewed a series of e-mails from Nichols' mother, Caritha Nichols, who was in Africa at the time of the shootings, and examined Deputy Hall's firearms training. They created a detailed timeline stretching back to August, when Nichols was arrested and charged with rape. They probed absenteeism in the Sheriff's Department and security problems in Barnes' courtroom. By far the most damning portions of the report concerned the actions of sheriff's deputies.

For example, Sgt. Dowdell, who was assigned to training for the department, got a phone call in late February from Otis White, minister at Shiloh Baptist Church, where Dowdell and Nichols' mother were members. The pastor told Dowdell that Caritha Nichols had sent him an e-mail warning that her son "had made statements leading her to believe that if his trial verdict did not go well he would overpower a deputy and take the officer's weapon." Dowdell told a detention officer that Nichols might "act up," but he made no mention of the possibility he might try to get a deputy's gun, the report said.

Dowdell arranged to see Nichols when the suspect was brought to the courthouse. "He told Nichols that he had parents who loved him and a church that supported him and asked him not to do anything foolish," the report said. "Sgt. Dowdell then had prayer with inmate Nichols. Sgt. Dowdell stated that he was meeting with Nichols in his capacity as a deacon of the church although he utilized his position with the sheriff's office to gain access to the inmate," the report said.

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**Willie Hopkins, Jr.**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Atlanta Journal-Constitution, The (GA)  
January 5, 2004

**City flushes out old debtors. Untapped fortune? Atlanta records show about \$50 million in uncollected water and sewer bills.**

Author: Ty Tagami

As Atlanta City Council weighs whether to triple base water and sewer rates today, the city has yet to tap one possible source of revenue for a massive sewer project: customers who don't pay. City officials say their records show as much as \$50 million in uncollected water and sewer bills from several thousand accounts, but they also acknowledge the records are shoddy and likely inaccurate. No. 1 on Atlanta's delinquency list is the Fulton County Jail, which owes nearly \$1.5 million, according to the city's computerized billing database. But Jack Ravan, the man who runs the city's water and sewer operation, says there are too many questions about the jail's account to compel payment. For one thing, the county complained that the meter was broken.

Atlanta is hiring a contractor to overhaul high-volume meters and then monitor them to establish a typical consumption rate. The old bills will be adjusted based on that rate. But many of the alleged debtors are smaller residential users and businesses that racked up tens of thousands of dollars in unpaid bills. The city will have to sift through those accounts to determine who owes what. That will be difficult because in many cases the bills are inaccurate, owing to a broken meter and a billing system that was based on estimating water usage instead of actually reading meters. Then comes the nettlesome task of collection. Ravan, who is commissioner of the Watershed Management Department, said the city has brought in a private collection company and has begun a water turnoff policy for people who don't pay. The estimated millions have gone uncollected even as city officials are asking paying customers to dig deeper for a massive upgrade of the city's pipes and treatment plants. Mayor Shirley Franklin also wants to spend more money hiring and training staff.

Franklin has asked for a tripling of the base water and sewer rates. Even some Wall Street bond analysts wonder whether that much is collectable given the city's poverty rate: 24 percent among individuals and 21 percent among families. The higher rates would cover the debt on more than \$2 billion in construction and provide money for Watershed Management operations. The debt accumulated because the water contractor, United Water Services Unlimited Atlanta, was unwilling to shut off service when it knew people didn't pay, said Melinda Langston, director of customer and government relations at Watershed Management. United Water averaged a collection rate of 94 percent, Langston said. That compares with the 98.5 percent Atlanta maintained before handing control to United Water in 1999, she said. Langston acknowledged that the city could have a hard time collecting from customers who have canceled service and moved away -- and no longer fear a shutoff. "It's not realistic to think we can collect all of that," Langston said. "We're not even at a point where I can guess how much we can get, or even collect, out of that 50 [million dollars]. But we're going after every bit of it." To succeed, the city will have to squeeze money from debtors such as financially strapped Morris Brown College, which lost its accreditation last year. City billing records show the college started falling behind

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*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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on payments four years ago, yet its water service was never shut off. As of Dec. 31, it owed \$121,694. Unlike many large accounts, the records for Morris Brown show no evidence of a billing dispute. But so many large accounts are disputed that Atlanta officials can't say how much of the paper debt is real. Fulton County officials say they are paid up in full and that they have the records to prove it. "We really want to resolve this with the city, but at this particular point we don't have a whole lot of confidence in the reports that they send us," said Rod Cantrell, financial systems manager in the county's General Services Department.

The county sends a lump payment for its water and sewer bills, and the city has misapplied the money, said **Willie Hopkins**, the county General Services director. The city overpaid some accounts and underpaid others, he said. One county property that uses an average of \$17,000 a month in water showed a credit of \$29,000 on the most recent bill, **Hopkins** said. Another property, an undeveloped piece of land near Charlie Brown Airport, owes \$30,000, though it doesn't use water, he said.

The city allowed a reporter to inspect a handful of accounts at a city computer terminal. A review of five selected at random from a list of the 200 biggest debtors showed mistaken or disputed bills with three. There were notations showing broken meters on two accounts. In a residential account that showed an \$80,309 debt as of Dec. 2, there is a notation indicating that an inspector recently realized the property no longer exists. The bill was for a house on Longleaf Drive in Buckhead. Not only is the house gone, the whole block has been redeveloped into a subdivision. The meter hadn't been read since Dec. 15, 1999, and all the bills since then were estimated by the computer. Water officials recently adjusted the bill back to the \$7,581 balance that had accrued by that date, and sent a message to the city finance department to file a lien against the property. It's unclear whether the customer can ever be made to pay, since the city apparently doesn't know who the person was. The name field in the account was blank. Ravan said he and his staff can't vouch for the data because, "No. 1, we weren't here when it was created."

United Water left more than eight months ago, and at some point city officials will have to take responsibility for the system's problems, said Councilman Derrick Boazman. He is among the eight council members who oppose Franklin's water and sewer rate increases. The councilman said he recently got a call from a constituent who hadn't received a bill in five months. "I have not seen any changes. We still have brown water running into people's houses. We still have meters that take months to install. And we still have a collection rate that I understand hasn't improved," the councilman said. Atlanta officials say they are making improvements, but say it'll be difficult to make much progress without money for new computer equipment. That is why the rate increases must take place, they say. Langston said the city recently hired staffers to turn off water service for delinquent accounts. "We have a fairly aggressive termination policy in place," Langston said. "We're terminating water service every day."

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Research Compiled by:      Cara Slade and Shannon Farr  
   Colin Baenziger & Associates

COLIN BAENZIGER  ASSOCIATES

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EXECUTIVE RECRUITING

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*Section 8*

*Thomas “Tom” J. Hutka*

*Lake Worth Beach City Manager  
Candidate Report*

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*Cover Letter and Resume*

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## Section 8

Thomas J. Hutka

1300 S. Ocean Blvd, #704  
Pompano Beach, FL. 33062  
954-501-3626  
[tjhutka@yahoo.co](mailto:tjhutka@yahoo.co)

June 18, 2021

City Commission  
City of Lake Worth Beach

Dear Mayor Resch and Commissioners,

After seeing your listing on the ICMA and Colin Baenziger & Associates websites, I am very interested in the position of City Manager. The challenges described fit extremely well with the skills I've built over many years in community leadership roles — right here in Florida.

I have worked in literally all aspects of community government, and developed a track record of proven management skills based on participatory leadership and professional innovation. Having worked my way up through the ranks, I also have hands-on experience in the day-to-day operations of the very best local governments, especially in support of neighborhood preservation, stable growth management and sustainable economic investment.

My portfolio of successful management initiatives has relied on fostering excellent working relationships with elected officials, citizens, employees, the news media, private companies and other government agencies. Communication and consensus building are the keys to my implementing many diverse initiatives. Under my watch, complex government operations are run like efficient profitable businesses, but with respect for each individual employee and citizen. In all cases, my results-oriented successes are marked by strict but reasonable financial decisions, operational efficiency, and emphasis on quality customer service.

As you can see, I am excited about the position, and working for you and with the citizens of Lake Worth Beach. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely yours,



Tom Hutka

**THOMAS J. HUTKA**

(954) 501-3626

tjhutka@yahoo.com

1300 South Ocean Blvd. #704, Pompano Beach, FL 33062

### EDUCATION:

Harvard University, Master Public Administration (land planning, public finance).  
Princeton University, BSE Civil Engineering (structural, water/wastewater).  
Florida State University, Certified Public Manager program.

### EXPERIENCE:

#### City Manager: Port Huron, MI

Championed dynamic public-private partnerships to fully re-energize a great, but recently stagnant community, honored with All America City award. Implemented "Downtown Action Plan" to rebuild streetscapes, attract new investment, and reduce downtown vacancy from 40% to 8%. Greenhouse gas emissions reduced through active energy conversions and wastewater treatment process improvements. Completed — with minimal neighborhood disruption — reconstruction of city's water, sewer, stormwater and street infrastructure (US-EPA's nation-wide excellence award). Enlisted the collaborative efforts of regional governments, corporate sponsors and citizen volunteers as recognized with Municipal League's Greatest Innovations award. Led management team to Thomas Edison Business Award for creating exceptional work environment. 2001 to 2006.

"Hutka Helped Port Huron to Become Better. Hutka is a leader. There is no question Hutka made a difference. He reached out to a variety of community leaders and set a standard of cooperation. The City's progress was substantial enough to win state and national recognition. On Hutka's watch . . . he did much to help the city achieve. That type of leadership is hard to find . . . outstanding city manager."

— Port Huron Times Herald

#### Director of Public Works: Broward County, FL

Led Capital Projects, Solid Waste & Recycling, Facilities Management, Streets & Bridges, Traffic Engineering, and Water & Wastewater Operations and Finance. Served on Climate Change Task Force, Complete Streets Team, Fort Lauderdale International Airport Expansion Committee, and Convention Center/Hotel Team. Nationally recognized energy reduction program. All projects LEED Gold, including one of AIA's Best Ten Buildings in State. Greatly increased efficiencies and service quality, even while implementing ERP and reducing expenditures. 2009 to 2020.

#### Director of Municipal Program Management: HNTB Corporation, Indianapolis

Consultant to local governments, managing capital improvement programs and enhancing funding sources. Clients included South Bend, IN (Notre Dame University), Town of Speedway, IN (Indy 500 racetrack), City of Dallas, Hillsborough County, FL and other municipalities. 2006 to 2009.

#### Deputy County Manager: Osceola County, FL

Directed all elements of growth management: development review, land use planning, public works, capital program, engineering, solid waste, and code enforcement for this high-growth area which includes Walt Disney World. Implemented green initiatives, concurrency planning and smart growth measures for Disney's Town of Celebration and other nationally-recognized sustainable developments. Many first-time initiatives: energy savings, personnel management training, one-stop permitting, land development code, long-term financial planning, capital project cost/schedule controls, management information systems, parks/recreation master plan, and inaugural solid waste collection service. Extensive construction program included major league baseball park renovation, rodeo/fair complex, jail, courthouses, offices, libraries, parks and highways. 1997 to 2001.

#### Associate County Administrator: Hennepin County (Minneapolis)

Directed IT, purchasing, finance, accounting, investments, budget, facilities and public works programs for one of the county's largest governments. As member of the County's Executive Team, led one of the nation's most advanced social service and health care systems. Developed County-

## Section 8

wide strategic planning initiatives: performance measurement, employee evaluation and total quality management (NACO Excellence Award winners). Implemented comprehensive cost/benefit priority analysis for all capital expenditures-producing \$50 million in cost savings. Maintained one of the few public AAA bond ratings. 1994 to 1996.

### Commissioner of Engineering and Construction: City of Cleveland, OH

Led capital re-development improvements, public works maintenance, and development review for America's premier economic renaissance. Successfully completed – on time and on budget – City's largest infrastructure program in support of major league sports facilities, Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, State Aquarium, light rail line, waterfront parks, and neighborhood revitalization. Established City's reputation for professionalism and honesty with local private industry. Nationally recognized successes based on award-winning public/private partnerships, regional government partnerships, large state and federal grants, and innovative privatization. 1992 to 1994.

### Bond Rating Specialist: Standard and Poor's, New York, NY

Expert analysis of municipalities' management, budgeting and financial planning. Specialized in operation and management of public water, sewer and solid waste utilities. Experienced with entire range of public finance options. This training has helped increase bond ratings for every agency I led.

### **LEADERSHIP POSITIONS:**

Economic Development Alliance of St. Clair County, Executive Board Member.  
Downtown Development Authority of Port Huron, Board Member.  
Blue Water Habitat for Humanity, Jimmy Carter Work Project, Board Chair.  
Port Huron Neighborhood Housing Corporation, Board Member.  
Volunteer of the Year Award, MainStreet Port Huron.  
Rotary Club, Board of Directors, President Elect.  
United Way of Broward County, Broward County (agency) Chair.

### **PUBLICATIONS & PRESENTATIONS:**

"Mechanics of Coastal Sand Erosion," Senior Thesis.

"Local Government Public-Private Partnerships," National Council Public-Private Partnerships Annual Conference.

"How to Improve Your Capital Bond Rating," Training session for State of Colorado employees.

"Rebuilding Infrastructure with Public/Private Partnerships," American Public Works Association International Exposition.

"Cost Requirements of the Safe Water Act for Cities," Credit Week magazine.

"Neighborhood Conservation Policy Alternatives," for Landmarks Commission, City of Boston.

"Marketing Your Downtown for Development Opportunities," International Council of Shopping Centers Conference.

"Fundamentals of Public-Private Partnerships," American Water Works Association Annual Conference.

"Finding Funds for New Construction," American Public Works Association International Exposition.

"Twenty-One Tips for Successful Capital Projects," Public Management magazine, International City/County Management Association.

"Checking for Quality," "Advanced Customer Service Skills," "How to Interview and Hire the Best People," In-house training.

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*Candidate Introduction*

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**EDUCATION**

Harvard University, Master of Public Administration — Finance, Planning  
Princeton University, Bachelor of Science — Civil Engineering  
Florida State University, Certified Public Manager program.

**EXPERIENCE**

Director of Public Works, Broward County	2009 — 2020
City Manager, City of Port Huron	2001 — 2006
Deputy County Manager, Osceola County	1997 — 2001
Associate County Administrator, Hennepin County	1994 — 1996
Bond Rating Specialist, Standard & Poor's	1987 — 1988

**BACKGROUND**

My career in community government has been primarily in Florida, providing city services in communities very similar to Lake Worth Beach. I know Florida's laws, diverse cultures, tourist-based economy, climate demands, and citizen expectations.

Most relevant to the position of Lake Worth Beach's City Manager, I was City Manager in Port Huron, a water-front city with 35,000 residents and a population of 70,000 in the daytime, with 400 employees and a \$300 million operating budget. When I started, the City had never set policy goals, established long term budgets, properly explained their operating budget to Council Members or citizens, nor properly adjusted taxes and fees to meet expenses.

I am extremely proud of my work in this community. Not only did I help heal the many deep rifts in our team, but helped Council start positive, productive discussions of the important issues facing the City while arriving at virtually all unanimous votes.

More important are the accomplishments of this great organization's efforts. I helped to lead significant, measurable improvements to the local economy even under difficult state-wide financial conditions. We implemented the "Downtown Port Huron Action Plan" to rebuild streetscapes, attract new residential reinvestment for the first time in 30 years, and reduce downtown commercial vacancy from 40% to 8%. An innovative economic development program resulted in reducing vacancies in our City-owned industrial park from 30% to 5%. As result, regional unemployment was measurably reduced in several job categories. We also completed — with minimal neighborhood disruption — reconstruction of city's entire water, sewer, stormwater and street infrastructure.



**Thomas Hutka, PE**

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Across my diverse career in local government, and particularly as City Manager, I have overseen all services typically provided by community governments including yours. I have directly supervised — and achieved successes in — all the departments typically found in full-service local government:

Police	Economic Development
Fire	Downtown Development
Emergency Medical	Parks & Recreation
Disaster Response	Facilities Management
Social Services	Real Estate
Housing	Fleet
Planning	Parking
Zoning	Finance
Code Enforcement	Purchasing
Rental Inspection	Accounting
Building Inspection	Treasury
Engineering	Assessor
Capital Projects	Information Technology
Highway, Street and Bridge	Public Information
Environmental Protection	Clerk
Water/Wastewater	Attorney
Solid Waste	Human Resources

**GENERAL, MANAGEMENT STYLE AND EXPERIENCE**

As you can see from my resume, my entire career has been dedicated to public service. I spent the first part of my career learning professional skills with the goal of bringing advanced, in-depth technical knowledge into government. The rest of my career has been devoted to protect communities and serve the public.

I was excited to see that you are looking for a new City Manager. I consider the position one of the best opportunities in my profession, since I know from my visits that Lake Worth Beach is one of the very best places in the country to live and work. At this point in my career, I am interested in putting my management skills to work directly for a professional, reputable and forward-thinking organization. I would very much like to apply my nationally-recognized experience to cultivate community partnerships and lead City staff to lasting results for your great community.

Simply put, my management philosophy is based on the “Golden Rule.” Having worked my way up through the ranks, I’ve worked for many different leaders, and developed a strong sense of how I like to be treated, challenged and appreciated on the job. Our on-the-job practice of



“participatory leadership” promotes working concepts of teamwork, as well as a sense of professional accountability on a personal level.

Regarding strengths and weaknesses, in my last two government leadership positions, I rebuilt the reputation, the professional expectations, and the performance of our teams at all levels by hiring, retaining, training and supporting some of the best people I’ve ever met. The lasting legacy of these excellent and diverse teams will bring experience, integrity and quality services to the public for many years into the future. While every effort was made to find the right assignment for every staff member, exercise progressive discipline to ensure fairness, and train and retrain all staff members as necessary, it is sometimes a difficult — but necessary — task to remove a person from his or her job.

I measure performance — and more importantly ensure success — by:

- 1.) Working closely with the Mayor and Commissioners to develop and detail Commission policies and strategic priority plans,
- 2.) Developing and assigning staff targets, goals and specific action items in line with each individual employee performance appraisal,
- 3.) Implementing cost, quality and schedule tracking controls,
- 4.) Conducting regular staff meetings to discover and resolve any difficulties through the strength of the team’s diverse knowledge and collective skills,
- 5.) Locking in, reporting and rewarding accomplished goals, and of course
- 6.) Regularly reporting program and project progress to the City Commission.

Starting with my analyzing local government multi-year budgets and long-range finance plans on Wall Street, and continuing with my teaching financial planning classes at national conferences, I have developed an advanced set of skills that I’ve applied on the job to raise bond ratings, improve service, and lower taxes and fees. In every one of my professional positions, I have led the design and implementation of cost/benefit analysis and cost/schedule controls for every multi-year project and program. Within a short time, managers were properly trained to enforce cost, schedule and quality controls for every project and program, large and small, for the current budget year and into the future.

But computer-based systems do not give the entire picture. As a manager — and especially during my first six months on the job — I have always spent most of my day, every day, visiting crews and service providers at the front lines of our work for the public. To fulfill my leadership philosophies, I have always spent many hours asking staff how I can help them do a better job.

### **Thomas Hutka, PE**

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In several executive positions, I implemented organizations' first customer service training, first use of social media to communicate with citizens, first quality improvement workshops, first project management classes, in addition to many other leadership initiatives. My early training as a construction project manager taught me well the principles of professional accountability and management by exception — in short, how to get team and personal results — even while creating an enjoyable and professional work environment. In short, I have almost forty years of significant tangible results in government.

Look for experience in your next City Manager, but also look for a record of success. Under my leadership, the Strategic Plan gets done.

All of the successes summarized on my resume (and many, many others) have been achieved by cultivating close partnerships between all stakeholders. I have built close professional and personal relationships based on a shared desire to serve the public with:

- Citizens and civic groups,
- News media,
- Local and national businesses,
- State governments,
- County governments,
- Regional governments,
- Environmental organizations,
- Hospitals,
- School districts,
- Colleges and Universities, and
- Not-for-profit community service organizations.

I have devoted my career — my life — to the idea that city government can do much, much more for our citizens than simply providing basic services, and have fulfilled that endeavor many times for several communities. I look forward to joining the Lake Worth Beach team to help maintain the best of your great community and help make improvements where needed.

**Thomas Hutka, PE**

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In every management position I've held, I've built a high-performance organization. For example, the Port Huron Times Herald printed the editorial "Hutka Helped Port Huron to Become Better":

"Hutka is a leader. There is no question Hutka made a difference. He reached out to a variety of community leaders and set a standard of cooperation. The City's progress was substantial enough to win state and national recognition. On Hutka's watch . . . he did much to help the city achieve. That type of leadership is hard to find . . . outstanding city manager."

No one could contact the City with negative contacts about me. Nor are there any negative media stories in existence. I've worked very hard to build bridges with the news media and, in fact, every stakeholder regardless of their opinion or point of view.

When not working, I bike, swim and in general enjoy the great outdoors.

**SIX ADJECTIVES OR PHRASES I WOULD USE TO DESCRIBE MYSELF**

- Experienced
- Results oriented
- Respectful
- Customer service oriented
- Environmentally conscious
- Ethical

**REASON FOR DEPARTING RECENT POSITION**

Having created and trained the best department serving the community *anywhere*, I am looking to take on new challenges in public service. With ten years remaining in my career, I am looking to bring my skills in local government to the City of Lake Worth Beach.

**MOST RECENT SALARY**

My final compensation at Broward County was \$205,000 plus excellent benefits.

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*CB&A Background Checks*

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**Background Check Summary for  
THOMAS "TOM" J. HUTKA**

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**Criminal Records Checks:**

Nationwide Criminal Records Search	No Records Found
County	
Broward County, FL	No Records Found
Hillsborough County, FL	No Records Found
St. Clair County, MI	No Records Found
State	
Florida	No Records Found
Michigan	No Records Found

**Civil Records Checks:**

County	
Broward County, FL	No Records Found
Hillsborough County, FL	No Records Found
St. Clair County, MI	No Records Found
Federal	
Florida	No Records Found
Michigan	<b>August 2002</b> , Civil Lawsuit Filed Against the City of Port Huron including Mr. Hutka in his role as City Manager. <b>Disposition: February 2003</b> , Terminated
	<b>March 2003</b> , Civil Lawsuit Filed Against the City of Port Huron including Mr. Hutka in his role as City Manager. <b>Disposition: January 2004</b> , Terminated
	<i>* See next page for Candidate Explanation for Records Found</i>

**Motor Vehicle**

Florida	No Records Found
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**Credit**

Excellent

**Personal Bankruptcy**

No Records Found

**Sex Offender Registry**

Not Listed

**Background Check Summary for  
THOMAS "TOM" J. HUTKA**

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<b>Education</b>	Confirmed
<b>Employment</b>	Confirmed
<b>Social Media</b>	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.

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**From:** Thomas Hutka <tjhutka@yahoo.com>  
**To:** Lynelle Klein <lynelle@cb-asso.com>  
**Subject:** Re: Background Check Records Found that Require an Explanation

Hello Lynelle,

The report is self explanatory: it was a nuisance suit for \$10,000 brought against the City, all City Commissioners (then and former), City staff members, City consultants, local judges, former City Manager, recent interim City Manager, and me as the then City Manager. It was quickly thrown out of court as without merit.

Thanks,  
Tom

**Background Check Summary for  
THOMAS "TOM" J. HUTKA  
Personal Disclosure**

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**Personal Disclosure Questionnaire**

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Name of Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_ Thomas J. Hutka \_\_\_\_\_

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?  
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. LinkedIn, Twitter (Note that the "Thomas Hutka" in Texas with political content on his social media accounts is not me.)
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.  
I was listed as both plaintiff (without my knowledge or consent) *and* defendant on a 1994 lawsuit against the City of Cleveland's civil service system. The suit was quickly dismissed by the Judge as without merit.

Attested to:

\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Applicant

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*CB&A Reference Notes*

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**Reference Notes  
Thomas Hutka**

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**Marty Kiar – Property Appraiser, Broward County, FL 954-205-7735**

Mr. Kiar worked with Mr. Hutka during Mr. Kiar's tenure as both Mayor and Commissioner for Broward County. They worked together starting in 2012 until 2016 Mr. Kiar became the County Property Appraiser. Mr. Hutka was impressive.

Though the County covers a small geographic area, it is highly populated. With approximately two million people in the area, traffic flow weighs heavily for the Public Works Director. As Director, Mr. Hutka handled the County and its needs responsibly. He rose to the position. He worked with others to decongest traffic and move people as smoothly as possible from one end of the County to the other.

Mr. Hutka was a hardworking, excellent employee. He worked on several capital projects, including a massive courthouse, proposals on a convention center, and traffic light synchronization. He overcame several obstacles, including light coordination and water management. He understood utility operations intimately and passed on that information to others. For example, Mr. Hutka took Mr. Kiar on a tour of all the facilities when Mr. Kiar became Commissioner in 2012.

Mr. Hutka was a respectable leader and usually made good decisions to maintain the organization at high performance levels. He hired highly qualified staff and trusted them to do their jobs. When issues arose, he accepted responsibility of any blame. His staff greatly respected him and worked hard. When Mr. Kiar was Mayor, he rarely received concerns from constituents about utilities and payments, both of which Mr. Hutka oversaw. Additionally, Mr. Hutka thoroughly understood business aspects behind operations. During budget reviews, he effectively explained the Public Works Department's needs and proved the Department properly used the funds to benefit the County.

As an innovative change agent, Mr. Hutka kept others well informed. At a minimum, he held weekly meetings with Mr. Kiar. If Mr. Kiar ever had a problem or wanted Mr. Hutka's viewpoint, Mr. Hutka explained issues clearly and in a way Mr. Kiar easily understood.

Mr. Hutka was close to both the public and local government agencies. The County contains 31 individual cities with their own Mayors, a large school board, and various other local government agencies. Mr. Hutka acted as a gentleman with all these groups and was easy to work with. He was customer service oriented, often fulfilling the public's needs. He consistently completed projects in a timely fashion.

Mr. Kiar is unaware of anything in Mr. Hutka's background that will concern a future employer. Mr. Kiar would absolutely hire Mr. Hutka if given the opportunity and has the highest regard for him. Mr. Hutka is an exceptionally good worker and typically overcomes adversity. He is a great leader for both public and private groups. He will be a good Manager.

**Reference Notes  
Thomas Hutka**

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**Words or phrases used to describe Thomas Hutka:**

- Personable,
- Hardworking,
- Innovative,
- Excellent employee,
- Gentleman, and
- Leader.

**Strengths:** Interpersonal skills, management abilities, communication skills.

**Weaknesses:** None identified.

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**Ron Thomas – Finance Director of Water and Wastewater, Broward County, FL  
956-931-0585**

Mr. Thomas began working with Mr. Hutka in 2015. At the beginning of 2020 Mr. Hutka put in a two-month resignation notice. Mr. Thomas was disappointed to hear of Mr. Hutka's resignation. Mr. Hutka was a respectable worker who had several good ideas. He academically understood utility operations and knew how to apply that knowledge.

Mr. Hutka performed excellently. He generally made good decisions and hired acceptable directors. He kept staff and directors informed via regular meetings and emails. He also invested in his personnel. He held in-person staff meetings to learn what issues employees had and to answer their questions. He welcomed complete honesty from his employees, and he maintained a straightforward attitude with them. If an employee struggled, Mr. Hutka stepped in to help. He was customer service oriented and even held customer service seminars to ensure employees knew how to help their customers.

Mr. Hutka changed certain cultures within the organization to ensure greater accountability. For example, he changed the budget transfer process between departments. Previously, if a department wanted more budget, that department filled out a paper and acquired a signature to attain the desired amount from a different department. Such budget transfers often occurred unbeknownst to the other department. Mr. Hutka overturned this quick process. The department desiring a budget transfer needed to contact Mr. Hutka and the other department's director. Mr. Hutka required proper justification with complete details in order to enact the transfer. Although Mr. Hutka's process implementations were not unique to other counties, such a change was radical for Broward County. He brought in necessary change and fixed the courthouse project that previously had been woefully behind schedule.

Sometimes a person advocated for a certain position and tried to have Mr. Hutka sign off without providing explicit details. However, Mr. Hutka required everyone to provide ample justification, which caused some irritation and discomfort for those unable to provide decent explanations.

**Reference Notes  
Thomas Hutka**

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Furthermore, Mr. Hutka encouraged his staff to provide straightforward information. Mr. Thomas had worked on a graph regarding the County's solid waste in 2019. Typically, his graphs involved only two axes. However, Mr. Hutka asked for three axes involving the amount of construction tonnage, the price per ton, and future costs if the County had to suddenly expand the landfill. Mr. Thomas initially felt overwhelmed while making the graph. Once he completed the graph, though, he noticed how easily he interpreted the information. He then understood Mr. Hutka's intentions. Mr. Hutka wanted others to grasp the information right away after reading the graph.

Mr. Hutka understood utility operations, both from technical and business standpoints. He used his experience and knowledge to help others know the County's circumstances when people had complaints. He worked well with other state and local government agencies to effectively solve problems. For example, Mr. Hutka worked under a legislative mandate that did not allow the County to discharge inflow water within the County. As such, Mr. Hutka worked with a neighboring County that needed more effluent water to irrigate golf courses and both counties benefited. This agreement saved Broward County almost \$500 million by negating the need for drilling deep injection wells for the copious amounts of inflow water.

Mr. Thomas is unaware of anything in Mr. Hutka's personal or professional background that will concern a future employer. Mr. Thomas enjoyed working for Mr. Hutka and would absolutely hire him if given the opportunity. Mr. Hutka will be a good Manager.

**Words or phrases used to describe Thomas Hutka:**

- Knowledgeable,
- Open-minded,
- Customer service oriented,
- Straightforward,
- Approachable, and
- Change agent.

**Strengths:** Problem solving abilities, communication skills, management skills.

**Weaknesses:** None identified.

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**Chip LaMarca –Representative, State House, FL 954-444-3200**

Mr. LaMarca worked with Mr. Hutka between November 2010 and November 2018 when Mr. LaMarca was a commissioner for Broward County. As Broward County Director of Public Works, Mr. Hutka reported to the County Commissioner Board. He provided updates on various projects and was upfront on issues that arose. Even when difficult and sometimes emotional problems arose, he provided steady information.

## Reference Notes Thomas Hutka

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Despite the slowness of government processes, Mr. Hutka strove to accomplish tasks. He effectively solved problems and completed assignments in a timely fashion. He was strategic and planned thoroughly. He followed through excellently. Even with limited mobility in his position due to commissioner dictations, he performed well.

Mr. Hutka oversaw numerous large capital projects in the Public Works Department. Some of these multimillion-dollar developments involved wastewater reconstruction and animal care. He even worked on a \$2.1 billion airport project where he oversaw the building inspection and processes. During this massive project, he coordinated the private and public working environment to ensure the large public sector worked effectively with contractors.

In general, Mr. Hutka made good decisions. For example, he dealt with a water reuse issue. Essentially, some communities needed to get rid of excess water, and other communities needed extra water for other community projects. His department worked with local municipalities in order to provide the appropriate resources and revenue to both sides of the issue.

Additionally, Mr. Hutka maintained the organization at high performance levels. He strongly understood both processes and business side of operations. When constituents dealt with utility issues, he worked effectively. He regularly set a day aside to meet with Mr. LaMarca to discuss project details and which assignments needed additional funding. Mr. Hutka gave direct and detailed communication. When deeper questions arose, he provided ample information.

Mr. LaMarca is unaware of anything in Mr. Hutka's personal or professional background that will concern a future employer. Mr. LaMarca would strongly consider hiring Mr. Hutka for a director position. He is highly educated and experienced. He possesses both good managerial skills and the ability to apply his knowledge to real world situations. He capably handles problems and tasks. He can apply his experiences to be a good Manager.

### **Words or phrases used to describe Thomas Hutka:**

- Intelligent,
- Strategic,
- Adaptive,
- Good planner,
- Capable, and
- Effective problem solver.

**Strengths:** Excellent follow-through, managerial skills.

**Weaknesses:** None identified.

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**Reference Notes  
Thomas Hutka**

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**Lamar Fisher – Board Commissioner, Broward County, FL 954-931-0585**

Mr. Fisher worked with Mr. Hutka between 2018 and 2020. At the time, Mr. Fisher was a Broward County Commissioner until he retired in 2020.

Mr. Hutka was well-versed and professionally handled his position. He completed tasks in a timely manner. He was dedicated and loyal. Though he performed admirably, he sometimes placed too much responsibility on himself.

During the year-and-a-half they worked together, Mr. Hutka greatly impressed Mr. Fisher. They met weekly to discuss project details and issues, typically via telephone. Whenever Mr. Fisher had a question or needed a solution, Mr. Hutka quickly responded. On multiple occasions, he corrected problems within 24 hours. He was accessible and quite informative. If asked a question, he usually had an answer ready. He also had good foresight, such as whenever he alerted Mr. Fisher of any potential problems his constituents might face.

Mr. Hutka greatly understood the finite details behind utility operations. He managed hundreds of people, leading with a wealth of experience and maturity. He also understood the business side of operations. He maintained the organization at a high performance level. Mr. Fisher received no complaints regarding Mr. Hutka.

As Director, Mr. Hutka oversaw multiple capital projects. Several included road mechanisms, such as light synchronization and construction. He worked daily with state and federal government agencies, as well as local government organizations to effectively solve problems.

Mr. Fisher is unaware of anything in Mr. Hutka's background that will concern a future employer. Mr. Fisher would hire Mr. Hutka if given the chance. Whoever hires Mr. Hutka will be pleased with his services. He will make a good Manager.

**Words or phrases used to describe Thomas Hutka:**

- Detail-oriented,
- Knowledgeable,
- Responsive,
- Dedicated,
- Loyal, and
- Informative.

**Strengths:** Accessibility, experience, organizational skills.

**Weaknesses:** Sometimes puts too much on himself without asking for additional help.

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**Reference Notes  
Thomas Hutka**

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**Ilene Lieberman Michelson – Attorney, The Law Office of Stuart R. Michelson, FL  
954-463-6100**

Ms. Michelson has known Mr. Hutka since 2010. They worked together when she was a Broward County Commissioner and Mayor. Presently, she is now an attorney and no longer works directly with Mr. Hutka.

Mr. Hutka was a pleasure to work with. He completed tasks in a timely fashion. He was quite reliable and dependable. On multiple occasions, Ms. Michelson received calls from constituents on the weekends. If she had questions, she then contacted Mr. Hutka, who usually responded within an hour. Even if he did not have an answer, he quickly responded that he was looking into the issue. Regardless of the time or day of the week, he replied promptly.

Additionally, Mr. Hutka was a great manager. He remained calm when working with others. He generally made good decisions. He knew how to interview potential personnel, and he motivated his staff. He was a leader who excellently dealt with the big picture and left day-to-day operations to subordinates.

A good administrator, Mr. Hutka understood the Public Works Department well. He needed little direction in his position and intimately knew utility operations. Because Broward County is one of the most populous counties in the country, the Department handled an enormous workload. Mr. Hutka supervised numerous capital projects, such as a courthouse renovation and road construction. He also oversaw work at the airport.

Though a different department handled billing, Mr. Hutka comprehended the business side of utility operations. He knew the requirements to build a road or enact a plan. He had respectable project management skills. He collaborated effectively with some state agencies, such as when the county experienced state road issues.

Mr. Hutka worked well with the public. If anyone approached him with a problem, he listened. He researched available information before providing a variety of options. He understood public works well enough to know some issues had several different answers. If he was unsure of an immediate solution, he contacted the affected people to alert them as to how the problem might be corrected and what was currently being enacted.

Ms. Michelson is unaware of anything in Mr. Hutka's conduct or background that will concern a future employer. He is a highly qualified individual and a good Director. If given the opportunity, she would hire Mr. Hutka. Because of his great management style and ability to accomplish tasks effectively, he will make a good Manager.

**Reference Notes  
Thomas Hutka**

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**Words or phrases used to describe Thomas Hutka:**

- Responsive,
- Calm,
- Reliable,
- Dependable,
- Leader, and
- Customer service oriented.

**Strengths:** Managerial skills, project management abilities, communication skills.

**Weaknesses:** None identified.

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**Mark Darmanin – Operations Director of Water and Wastewater, Broward County, FL  
954-914-4575**

Mr. Darmanin worked for Mr. Hutka for approximately 6 years since December 2013. Mr. Hutka has performed excellently. He communicates regularly via email and telephone. If issues arise between divisions, he discusses matters with divisional leaders. He keeps others informed.

Mr. Hutka typically makes good decisions. He thoroughly investigates concerns by researching the problem and observing both sides to the issue. He makes suitable selection judgments regarding staff. He places the right people in the right place and trusts their decisions. He supports his staff when needed and prepares employees so they can accomplish their jobs. He is quite thorough and follows up well.

Additionally, Mr. Hutka understands the procedural points behind utility operations well enough to discuss what action must be taken with plant operations. While he is generally more comfortable guiding the Department to the big picture for a project, Mr. Hutka pays significant attention to details. He knows the big picture is only accomplished by watching the little details. He also understands the business behind utility operations, having overseen much of that in Broward County.

Some of the large capital projects Mr. Hutka has managed include multimillion-dollar developments. He has supervised the construction of a new courthouse. He has overseen the full renovation of the wastewater plant, costing around \$40 million. He has also managed significant highway construction and wastewater improvements.

Mr. Hutka comfortably works as a change agent in order to maintain the organization at a high performance level. He oversees his staff, providing guidance and support. Once he trusts his staff to follow through properly, he focuses on maintaining good performance. For example, Mr.

**Reference Notes  
Thomas Hutka**

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Hutka established procedures for all divisions to follow. Such procedures provided consistent means of communication and set common expectations for all divisions.

Furthermore, Mr. Hutka is customer service oriented. He has good public relations. When he works with the media, he typically understands the media's intentions, whether those intentions are to just ask a question or to make a point. During quarterly meetings, he often pairs up the divisions that typically interact with each other. This way, he has helped improve divisional relationships and facilitate better communication.

Mr. Hutka effectively solves problems through a holistic approach. He researches the problem and possible solutions before analyzing each solution's outcome. Using this approach, he makes informed decisions.

Mr. Darmanin is unaware of anything in Mr. Hutka's conduct or background that will concern a future employer. Mr. Darmanin would hire Mr. Hutka if given the opportunity. Mr. Hutka accomplishes tasks promptly, often ahead of schedule. He is organized and meticulous. He supports his staff. He will make a good Manager.

**Words or phrases used to describe Thomas Hutka:**

- Organized,
- Meticulous,
- Thorough,
- Fair,
- Literate, and
- Customer service oriented.

**Strengths:** Attention to detail, management abilities, communication skills.

**Weaknesses:** None identified.

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**Roberto Hernandez – Deputy City Manager, City of Fort Lauderdale, FL 954-828-5003**

Mr. Hernandez knew of Mr. Hutka between 2006 and 2008. Later, Mr. Hernandez worked with Mr. Hutka between 2013 and 2016 when Mr. Hernandez was the Broward County Deputy Administrator who supervised Mr. Hutka. Mr. Hernandez left the position to become the Fort Lauderdale Deputy City Manager.

Mr. Hutka was an effective leader. He respectfully responded to the County Manager's needs. He planned appropriately and strategically. He remained organized and analytical. He was a polished professional who possessed articulate public speaking skills. He was disciplined, focused, and timely.



**Reference Notes  
Thomas Hutka**

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Mr. Hernandez saw few crises during Mr. Hutka's leadership. Mr. Hutka capably handled his position. He focused on the big picture and comfortably left everyday operations to subordinates. He used his previous experiences as a city manager and deputy city administrator to confidently stick with the department's goals. While some said Mr. Hutka was tough on his employees, Mr. Hernandez did not notice such behavior.

Mr. Hutka supervised numerous capital projects due to the County's large population. He oversaw major expansion plans for the wastewater treatment plant. He also undertook seaport planning and construction until that project was reworked to a different department.

Additionally, Mr. Hutka generally made good decisions. He brought in many acceptable personnel. He also maintained exacting and demanding standards to keep the organization at high performance levels. When issues arose, he analyzed the situation to determine the strengths and weaknesses of each area. He methodically looked at problems before making a decision.

Mr. Hutka understood the business side of utility operations. He also understood utility operation technicalities. He was quite intelligent and academic. However, because of his strong intellectuality and the immense size of the Public Works Department, Mr. Hutka may not have related well with blue-collar workers.

With his superiors, Mr. Hutka communicated effectively. He met on a regular basis as issues unfolded and brought issues to Mr. Hernandez's attention when necessary. Mr. Hutka communicated credibly and with legitimacy when speaking with elected officials. He worked well with the public. He also dealt efficiently with state and local government agencies.

Mr. Hernandez is unaware of anything in Mr. Hutka's conduct or background that will concern a future employer. If Mr. Hernandez had a position available, he would hire Mr. Hutka. Mr. Hutka capably handles long-term planning and strategies. He will make a good Manager.

**Words or phrases used to describe Thomas Hutka:**

- Intelligent,
- Disciplined,
- Responsive,
- Polished,
- Professional,
- Focused, and
- Capable.

**Strengths:** Organizational skills, analytical abilities, public speaking.

**Weaknesses:** May not have related well with blue-collar workers.

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**Reference Notes  
Thomas Hutka**

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**Rita Durocher – Assistant to Department Director, Broward County, FL 954-357-6410**

Ms. Durocher has worked with Mr. Hutka since approximately 2009. He is a reasonable supervisor who is willing to do whatever is necessary to help employees do their jobs. Even though Mr. Hutka has been short staffed due to financial circumstances, he has performed well. He is often a comedian, telling good jokes to keep up office morale. He is a patient and fair boss.

Mr. Hutka is a knowledgeable teacher. He considers employees' input to facilitate an easier workflow. In fact, he eagerly desires employee feedback. He also points out areas that require improvement. For example, he advocated for classes specifically designed to help employees complete their jobs well. He implemented both a customer service training program and a quality assurance program for staff members.

Mr. Hutka is a well-rounded individual. He comprehends both the technical and business aspects behind utility operations. He has vast experience with wastewater treatment operations and construction. He also has ample involvement with public work streets and construction. He confidently discusses finite details with plant operators and observes the big picture. He comfortably leaves day-to-day operations to subordinates, allowing them to see how their jobs fit in the master plan.

Furthermore, Mr. Hutka has overseen numerous capital projects. A major development involved renovating street intersections and working with traffic signals. He also worked on new wastewater plants and a new convention center. The largest project he recently completed was the 20-story downtown courthouse in the City of Fort Lauderdale.

Generally, Mr. Hutka makes good decisions. He meets and exceeds deadlines. He is an excellent judge of character and has made sound decisions when hiring personnel. He judges an employee's potential well and has been a sound ear for division directors when they have hired staff. He effectively solves problems. When issues arise, he talks directly to involved divisions and listens to different sides. He often asks for input from deputy directors and is unafraid to elevate the issue to a commissioner when necessary.

Mr. Hutka communicates effectively with everyone, from property owners to county commissioners to state representatives. He works well with the public. He also handles intergovernmental and media relations well. He has commendably worked with non-profit organizations, Florida State departments, and the 31 municipalities within the county. When handling his staff, Mr. Hutka is an excellent communicator. He has great command of the English language. He has even instituted classes for employees to deal with internal and external customers to improve their communication skills.

Mr. Hutka is an innovative change agent who capably maintains the organization at a high performance level. When Mr. Hutka first started with Broward County, the Public Works Department had several personnel issues. One issue was the office culture, where some people only worked when needed or only worked within the division. However, Mr. Hutka has changed

**Reference Notes  
Thomas Hutka**

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that culture. Now, employees willingly complete their assignments and enjoy what they do. They enjoy helping one another, even across different divisions.

Ms. Durocher is unaware of anything in Mr. Hutka's background that will concern a future employer. If given the opportunity, she would absolutely hire him. Mr. Hutka will make a good Manager. He works hard and expects his staff to do the same. He works with his team to figure out solutions and ensures his staff members have the resources they need.

**Words or phrases used to describe Thomas Hutka:**

- Knowledgeable,
- Fair,
- Teacher,
- Facilitator,
- Coordinated, and
- Well spoken.

**Strengths:** Fairness, sense of humor.

**Weaknesses:** None identified.

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**Brittany Wallman – Reporter, Sun Sentinel Newspaper, FL 954-356-4541**

Ms. Wallman knew Mr. Hutka approximately between 2010 and 2017 when she wrote for the South Florida Sun Sentinel, the main Broward County newspaper. They no longer remain in contact.

Ms. Wallman respected her interactions with Mr. Hutka. He behaved professionally and was easily accessible. If Ms. Wallman had questions on county issues, Mr. Hutka answered her questions directly. Rather than sending her through a communications person, he either personally provided details or sent her to the correct person if he was unsure. If that individual was unavailable, he sent her a brief email covering a few important points.

Whether Mr. Hutka worked on traffic light synchronization or the courthouse project, all communications were thorough and transparent. Whenever Ms. Wallman had concerns on county issues, he provided her the same material he gave commissioners.

Mr. Hutka was smart, friendly, and a nice person in general. He rarely experienced friction with others. He treated Ms. Wallman respectfully, even during the times she was highly critical.

Ms. Wallman had only positive exchanges with him, which was a rarity among other individuals in her media career over the past 25 years. For example, Ms. Wallman asked him about the

**Reference Notes  
Thomas Hutka**

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county's response to the Zika virus because one of her colleagues handled health issues. Mr. Hutka sent an email back to Ms. Wallman telling her to have the colleague contact him directly. He also included a PowerPoint discussing the virus and the email address of the staff member who knew the issue better.

Mr. Hutka effectively solved problems. Though government processes were sometimes slow or controversial, he performed well. He handled the media and media inquiries professionally and transparently.

Ms. Wallman is unaware of anything in Mr. Hutka's personal or professional background that will concern a future employer. She would hire him if given the opportunity. Mr. Hutka is a high-caliber leader. He will make a good Manager.

**Words or phrases used to describe Thomas Hutka:**

- Respectful,
- Friendly,
- Responsive,
- Professional,
- Thorough, and
- Even-tempered.

**Strengths:** Media handling, management abilities, communication skills.

**Weaknesses:** None identified.

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**Prepared by:** Danielle Dayton  
Colin Baenziger & Associates

## **Section 8**

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*CB&A Internet Research*

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**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Thomas J. Hutka**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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<https://www.local10.com/consumer/2018/07/17/mysterious-nighttime-humming-leaves-hollywood-neighbors-restless/>

July 17, 2018

**Mysterious Nighttime Humming Leaves Hollywood Neighbors Restless**

Author: Layron Livingston

Nosey neighbors aren't Bea Mazzrillo's problem. It's the noisy one across the street. "Absolutely wretched," is how Mazzrillo described the racket. "It's very loud, and it never goes away." Mazzrillo reached out to the Leave it to Layron team for help silencing the not-so-soothing sound. Imagine a very mechanical hum, constantly humming, at the same pitch, 24 hours a day and seven days a week. Mazzrillo said the droning is worse at night and early in the morning. One morning, she recorded the sound on her cellphone from inside her apartment, sealed with hurricane impact windows.

In the video, she notes the time -- just before 5 a.m. --and you can hear the hum, humming away. Seconds later, the video shows Mazzrillo opening her front door, allowing the listener to get the full effect. "Somebody should be able to do something," she said. Mazzrillo and her husband moved into their Harrison Street condo eight years ago. It's right across the street from Broward County's South Regional Courthouse in Hollywood. Mazzrillo and her neighbors tell the LITL team the noise became increasingly unbearable within the past year. They've contacted the city's code enforcement department, and have even made contact with workers in the courthouse building to get the humming to stop.

The LITL team's search for silence stopped with **Tom Hutka**, public works director with Broward County. After we called, **Hutka** stopped by the South Regional Courthouse. "I heard the noise, and I have to agree, we can do better and make everybody in the neighborhood happier," he said. **Hutka** said the constant noise is caused by chillers, part of the cooling system for the courthouse. While many county buildings' cooling equipment is located on the roof, the chillers at the South Regional Courthouse are located inside utility rooms, at the back of the building. He said the building's air conditioning system can function properly without the chillers running during the evening and overnight hours. The plan, now, is to shut the chillers down at the end of the day to make things quiet when no one's using the building.

Mazzrillo immediately noticed the change, Sunday night. She recorded another video on her cellphone, this time from outside of her condo. In the video, the noise was gone and she thanks the LITL team. She also thanked **Hutka**. "Heavenly," is how she described the silence. **Hutka** also said there are plans in the works to minimize the noise during the day. The design and permitting process will take some time, but a fence with hedges is slated to be installed behind the courthouse to help buffer the noise from the utility room. **Hutka** said the county is also now looking into ways to buffer the sound inside the utility rooms. "We will be good neighbors, and we'll take care of business for them," **Hutka** said.

Fort Lauderdale Magazine (FL)

June 1, 2018

**Wasted Broward****Insufficient Facilities, Lack of Oversight, Changing Economics – There are Plenty of Reasons Why – But When it Comes to Recycling in Broward, Mount Trashmore Isn't the Only Thing That Stinks**

Robin Merrill is the type of person who chases a napkin caught in the wind. If she finds a plastic water bottle, she'll lug it around in her purse or car until she spots a recycling bin. At her condo, where she lives with her husband and two sons, she led the charge to start the building's recycling program more than a decade ago, and remains draconian in keeping her cardboard, plastic and cans separate from the trash. For a time, she even collected plastic spoons from sticky-fingered European tourists who strolled past her art gallery from a nearby ice cream shop and made sure they wound up in the proper bin.

- For Robin, recycling isn't just an ethical or moral issue—it's a spiritual one. It's the cornerstone of her relationship with the earth, a recurring motif in her work as an artist and gallerist in Fort Lauderdale. "I'm tired of being the shrill voice or the loud mom but this is deeply personal to me," Merrill says. "It's completely selfish to throw something away that shouldn't be."
- 
- For the most part, it's hard to rile people up about garbage. It smells. It's easy to pretend no one saw you free-throw your soup can into the trash, or wing it when you question if a plastic shopping bag can be recycled (it can't!). And yet every day it seems that Mount Trashmore looms higher and higher over the Turnpike and the prospect of meeting the state's goal of a 75 percent recycling rate by 2020 becomes more and more unlikely—especially now that reports from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection reveal that Broward's recycling rate has taken a nosedive: plummeting from its high of 60 percent in 2012 to 48 percent in 2016, the lowest recorded number in almost a decade and 24 percent lower than the 72 percent rate in Palm Beach County (the numbers for 2017 aren't out yet).
- 
- Why is Broward so bad at recycling? It's a tangle of bureaucratic and economic issues: dips in the market's demand for recyclables, a shuttered waste-to-energy plant in Pompano, a disbanded regional recycling board five years ago, a confusing tangle of public utility and private enterprise and a lack of accountability and oversight over the county's municipalities. Unfortunately, that means that when someone like Robin Merrill tosses a glass bottle in the blue recycling bin, it's hard to pinpoint where exactly it'll end up: a local sorting facility, an out-of-state processing center, or perhaps even in a landfill. "It's demoralizing to even think that the little we're already recycling isn't actually being recycled," Merrill says. "We're losing what little we even had."
- 
- After months of research, this month the county and local municipalities plan to release a major report on the state of recycling in Broward. The report, compiled by consulting firm



**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Thomas J. Hutka***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Arcadis, will focus on how the county can collectively reach the state’s 75 percent recycling goal by 2020. Leaders are hopeful it will usher with it a new era of sustainability in Broward. “We can’t wait any longer to figure this out,” Broward County Mayor Beam Furr says. “What are we going to do when the Monarch Hill Landfill [Mount Trashmore] reaches its life span? Where will everything go then?”

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- If you ask the director of Public Works for Broward County, a deeply patient man named **Thomas Hutka**, the only way to understand the reasons recycling rates plummeted is to start from the beginning. Or at least all the way back to 1986, when Ronald Reagan was president and a quasi-independent government agency was formed in Broward to tackle recycling, uniting unincorporated parts of the county and local municipalities. The Resource Recovery Board (RRB) oversaw contracts with private companies that routed recyclables to sorting and processing facilities and, depending on your address, shuttled the trash put in garbage bins to one of two waste-to-energy plants—one in the north and one in the south—that incinerated the waste and created power. It’s not recycling, but since it generates energy and keeps waste out of landfills, the state credits the percentage of waste that is incinerated towards the county’s total recycling goal, which was added to the annual FDEP reports in 2012.
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- Recycling rates steadily hovered around 25 percent in the early aughts. In 2008, the RRB switched from the system where households put paper and cardboard in one bin and glass and plastic in another to a process called single-stream recycling, in which all recyclables mingle together in one 90-gallon blue bin. The logic was that by making recycling easier, more people would. Indeed, the rates began to climb slowly. With the added waste-to-energy credits, by 2012, the county celebrated its highest mark yet: Sixty percent of all solid waste was recycled.
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- But things soon flipped. In 2013, Waste Management closed one of its recycling centers in southwest Broward. That July, the RRB, the group responsible for overseeing most recycling in the county, disbanded after its 27-year contract ended. The municipalities that once comprised the RRB had to now secure their own systems of recycling (typically now to a facility, where a company takes possession of it and it is then either shipped, sorted, processed and recycled).
- 
- The county mostly had contracts with Waste Management, but now another waste disposal company called Sun Bergeron, run by Broward businessman Ron Bergeron, created competition. Rather than send trash to the waste-to-energy plants owned by Wheelabrator to the south and Waste Management to the north, Sun Bergeron mostly shuttled its solid waste to landfills including some in the middle of the state, which drastically reduced the waste-to-energy credits Broward had previously received. Less tonnage was being incinerated. Waste Management shuttered its waste-to-energy plant in Pompano in 2015. “It’s now a patchwork quilt with a lot of different players,” **Thomas Hutka** says. “Some cities have contracts with Waste Management, others with Sun Bergeron, others kept the contracts secured by the county ... But less waste is going to the incinerators than it used to.”
- 
- Basically, without the RRB’s oversight, a local municipality like the City of Fort Lauderdale remains responsible for organizing curbside garbage and recycle pickup. Except now it’s nearly

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Thomas J. Hutka***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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impossible to pinpoint where that neighborhood garbage truck goes to dump its contents across 31 autonomous municipalities. Even if every single truck took its contents to the remaining waste-to-energy plant in south Broward, that plant's capacity still couldn't withstand it. There have even been talks about shuttling the waste further north to Palm Beach County and its new state-of-the-art waste-to-energy plant. "When they dismantled the waste-to-energy center in the north, it was a disaster for the county," Mayor Furr says. "As Palm Beach County's building a new \$600-million waste-to-energy plant in 2016, we're dismantling ours, and that's when our rates really started going down."

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- In 2014, Broward recycling had dropped to 55 percent and by 2016, it was listed at 48 percent. As Palm Beach County comes close to reaching the 75 percent state recycling goal and Broward's current downward trend continues, the county finds itself below the 50 percent mark for the first time since 2011, reversing years of hard work by residents and local leaders.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Thomas J. Hutka***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Sun Sentinel (FL)  
September 15, 2016

**Crosswalk Plea from Widow Gains Backing**

Author: Brittany Wallman

It's just one six-lane roadway, just one crusade to help veterans cross the street to the clinic, and it has support from City Halls to the halls of Congress. It's a cause that gained the voice of a widow after a 70-year-old Army veteran, Willie Span, was struck and killed there two years ago. But the effort to get the Commercial Boulevard crosswalk is a study in government red tape, a "cluster to the 10th magnitude," according to one elected official, Cooper City's Lisa Mallozzi. Today the crosswalk quest will get new attention, when Span's widow, Doris, addresses the Broward County Commission. She's got the backing of the local congressional delegation, among others. Five U.S. representatives from South Florida - Lois Frankel, Debbie Wasserman Schultz, Frederica Wilson, Alcee Hastings and Ted Deutch - signed a letter to the county after Span's death, asking that a pedestrian traffic signal and crosswalk be installed in the 9800 block of Commercial Boulevard. Veterans cross the busy roadway midblock to reach the William "Bill" Kling VA Clinic on the south side. That might not be enough. The county says there aren't enough pedestrians to warrant a signal and crosswalk.

Willie Span, 70, took the Broward County Transit route 55 bus on Oct. 2, 2014, after 6 a.m. He rode about a mile, got off and started for the clinic across the street. A 36-year-old woman driving an Acura hit him before he got halfway across Commercial. The sun hadn't come up, and she didn't see him, police said. Span had a volunteer post to report to at the veterans clinic in Miami under a program for veterans with mental or physical disabilities. He intended to catch a shuttle there from the Broward clinic. He enlisted in the Army in 1963 and served six years, stationed in Germany during the Vietnam era. Back in the States, he became addicted to drugs and homeless. Doris Span had a history of drugs, as well, but when they met in 2003, they were both clean and remained so, she said. They married in 2006, on her 51st birthday. And in 2014, three months before the accident, they bought a house. When the deputy came to her home that morning, she thought he was welcoming her to the neighborhood. "He shuffled his feet a little," she remembered. "He said, 'Is your husband Willie?' I said, stop, don't say anything, just don't say it." She'd seen reports about the accident on TV news and had called him, leaving a message: "I saw there was a fatal accident the way you go. Did you see it? Love you. Bye."

Span couldn't talk about the accident until recently. She struggled with a breakdown and was hospitalized twice. As she watched others advocate for a crosswalk, she wished she could speak up, too. But the pain and guilt were paralyzing, she said. Now she said she's speaking out and is planning a memorial, "for me, to have joy about how my husband lived." Wasserman Schultz, D-Weston, said she met Doris Span in August at a Broward Veterans Coalition meeting. "I want to do everything we can to provide our veterans the health care, safety and security they deserve - including creating this crosswalk, which will help South Florida's veterans access the clinic in a safe manner," she said Monday in a written statement. Deutch said in a written statement that it's inconceivable that "after risking their lives for our country ... veterans are then expected to risk

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Thomas J. Hutka**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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their lives crossing a busy road just to access the health care and mental health services that they deserve." He said he'll continue working to support installation of a signal near the clinic.

The county is officially opposed, a position reiterated this week by Public Works Director **Tom Hutka**. "A crosswalk cannot and should not be installed at this location because it would violate federal standards, state law and county law," he said in an email. According to federal guidelines, in order to justify a crosswalk or signal, 75 pedestrians must cross in a four-hour period, or 93 in the peak hour. But a January 2014 count found only five people crossing in a four-hour period and 14 at peak hour, according to the county. **Hutka** said the crossing is safer now, because the mid-block bus stop was eliminated after Span's death.

Span's memorial is planned for 3 p.m. Oct. 1 at Daybreak Assembly church in Tamarac.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Thomas J. Hutka***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Sun Sentinel (FL)

May 8, 2016

**County Wary of Contractor**

Author: Brittany Wallman

The contractor who would build a Broward County Convention Center expansion and hotel has experience constructing the county's highest profile public works projects. Unfortunately, the experience hasn't all been good, county officials say. Broward County is fighting with Tutor Perini Corp. over delays in building a new courthouse in downtown Fort Lauderdale and construction of the traffic tunnels under the new, elevated runway at Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport. Millions of dollars are at stake, as the county and contractor Perini argue over who is at fault for the delays. "They feel the county owes them money. We feel they owe us money," said Kent George, immediate past aviation director, who still works for the county to resolve this issue, among others. The potential for litigation concerns some county commissioners as they step into their next major project, the convention center.

Commissioners on April 26 accepted the lone development team left in the competitive process to build a convention hotel, Matthews Southwest Holdings Inc. But they said they want to discuss later this month whether to allow Tutor Perini to remain part of that team. An update on the convention center project is scheduled for Tuesday's county commission meeting. Danny Hoisman, executive vice president of Tutor Perini Building Corp.'s Florida division, said he thinks both disputes will be settled. "On either project, the courthouse or the runway, we're not adverse with the county," Hoisman said. "And we have change requests that we are confident we will resolve amicably." The deal is the county's fourth attempt to get a hotel built at the convention center, a top priority of the business community for years. "My eyes are wide open, and we have history," Broward Commissioner Lois Wexler said recently, "and I don't know that I really want to consider that history and say, 'Yeah, go ahead and keep them as part of your team.'" Wexler said she's also concerned that the company has been given so many of the latest major county projects. "I've always subscribed to this philosophy of spreading money around," Wexler said.

Commissioner Chip LaMarca said he isn't concerned about the quality of Tutor's work, but said the rocky relationship with the county has some subcontractors waiting to be paid. "People still are not getting paid. That's my big issue," LaMarca said. "I don't want to endeavor on a new project for half a billion dollars where we have that similar issue." The courthouse is nearly complete, but a year late. In a June memo to commissioners, Public Works Director **Tom Hutka** said underground work along Courthouse Drive and courtroom redesigns requested by judges and other courthouse users were the primary causes of the delays. But there remain disagreements about how much is still owed. Tutor says the county owes it \$11.3 million for the extra work, assistant public works Director Steve Hammond said. "We have every ambition of resolving that amicably, but we are very far apart at this point," Hammond told commissioners. "... We are going to make every effort to hear it out, deal with it fairly and quickly, and hopefully not have to resort to the ultimate end game of litigation. But that's always out there."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Thomas J. Hutka**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Negotiations on the \$226 million airport job, mostly building the above-ground tunnels on U.S. 1, is coming closer, George said. Tutor originally claimed the county owed it \$40 million for the delays brought about by changes in the project, George said, while the county claimed Tutor owed it \$34.6 million. For a major public works project to end in squabbling over money is not unusual, he said. Two other major runway contracts also ended that way. But, he said, they were settled. "This has been a very, very difficult process, more so than necessary," George said. "It does not need to be this difficult and last this long." Matthews Southwest said it expects its convention center expansion and hotel would be complete in 2020.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Thomas J. Hutka***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Sun Sentinel (FL)

June 29, 2014

**Traffic Technology Improvement**

Author: Michael Turnbell and Brittany Wallman

Broward County has been promising for 40 years to fix the problem of unsynchronized traffic lights. Now officials say they have the solution -- a real-time system that can adapt to changing traffic conditions -- but it is still about six years away. The county's current analog system allows for only three traffic patterns, but a new, more reliable digital system will allow as many patterns as needed. For instance, signals will recover timing much faster after a train passes. The digital technology already is installed on all major roads south of Interstate 595 but issues remain on Griffin Road as well as along Miramar Parkway and Pines Boulevard near Interstate 75. Traffic engineers said those roadways are overburdened and the county has hired a consultant to see if improvements can be made. All major roads north of I-595 will be converted to digital by 2015.

The next step is a planned \$22.9 million conversion to fiber optics that will allow video detectors -- the camera-like devices mounted on signal poles throughout the county -- to feed traffic headquarters such information as number of vehicles and length of traffic lines, said Broward's deputy public works director, Tony Hui. That will allow engineers to improve signal timing based on real-time conditions. The county is taking advantage of state road projects wherever it can to install the fiber optics. But that work that will not be complete countywide until 2020. "People are going to notice a difference," Hui said, but "it's not going to be perfect all the time." Blame complexity for some of the problem. For example:

- \*The county's roads are not laid out in a uniform grid, and there are 400 to 500 left turns that complicate matters;
- \*Intersections have to allow time for people on bike or foot to cross;
- \*Trains, drawbridges and emergency vehicles thwart signal timing;

Some roads are just plain overloaded. "We have 150 gallons trying to get into a 100 gallon pipe," Broward Traffic Engineering Director Scott Brunner said. Don Crites, of Pompano Beach, said he would love to use Dixie Highway as an alternative to Interstate 95 at rush hour between Atlantic Boulevard and Glades Road. But the signals stymie him. "All the traffic lights operate counter to the flow of traffic no matter what time of day or day of the week," he said. "I have found that heading farther east to catch U.S. 1 will actually cut 10 minutes ... even though the traffic is much heavier on U.S. 1, all because the lights are timed to traffic on U.S. 1."

Dixie Highway is a trouble spot for signal timing because many roads that intersect it -- such as Sample Road and Copans Road -- have higher traffic volumes. That means green lights for Dixie traffic are shorter. Until now, smooth signal timing on Dixie and other roads hasn't been possible. The county's 25-year-old mainframe computer uses unreliable and "antiquated" technology that "doesn't work very well," said **Tom Hutka**, Broward's Public Works director. Signals currently are timed for three patterns -- morning, afternoon and all other times. Between midnight and 6 a.m., signals operate independently. Between 2009 and 2012, the county retimed

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55 roads and 1,050 intersections. Officials say that cut travel times 10 percent to 43 percent, and reduced stops at red lights by 10 percent to 32 percent. To date, the effort cost the county \$3.3 million. Metro areas with worse congestion have managed to get their lights timed. Los Angeles synchronized every one of its 4,500 traffic signals in a 469-square-mile area. It cost \$400 million and took more than 30 years to complete this past spring. The system relies on magnetic sensors embedded in the road, cameras and a central computer that constantly adjusts signal timing. City officials say average travel speeds are 16 percent faster, and delays at major intersections are down 12 percent. State Sen. Jeremy Ring, D-Parkland, said synchronization should be the county's top transportation priority. "Everyone agrees there is a problem," Ring said. "My eyes tell me it's definitely not fine."



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McClatchy-Tribune Regional News (USA)

January 24, 2013

**Former Broward Official Faces Charges, believed to be in Middle East**

Author: Jon Burstein

Jan. 24--Broward County's former traffic engineering director is a wanted man. There's been an arrest warrant out for Jihad El Eid since August with federal prosecutors accusing him of pocketing more than \$150,000 in bribes from a company that had millions of dollars of contracts with the county. The criminal allegations were unsealed Wednesday with the FBI wrapping up its lengthy investigation into El Eid's relationship with Southeast Underground Utilities, a Davie-based traffic equipment company. El Eid, 53, is believed to have fled to the Middle East, according to the U.S. Attorney's Office. El Eid, who headed the county's traffic engineering division for 13 years, took cash payouts from Southeast as he helped the company overbill taxpayers by at least \$3 million, federal prosecutors allege. He also is accused of ensuring the company had no competition for contracts as well as providing it with inside information.

El Eid was demoted from his job in March 2010 and fired a few months later. He subsequently became the top traffic official for the city of Amarillo, Texas. He stopped showing up for work there in July 2011, a few weeks after it became public that his relationship with Southeast was under federal investigation. El Eid told Amarillo officials that he had to go to Lebanon to attend to his dying father and then needed to be hospitalized himself. When someone from the city went to El Eid's Amarillo apartment in late August 2011, it was empty with spoiled food in the refrigerator, dishes in the sink and the apartment keys on a counter, according to Amarillo city records. Federal prosecutors are accusing El Eid of bribery, mail fraud and extortion. A relative, Wael El Eid, 45, is also facing an aiding and abetting charge. According to court records, Jihad El Eid got Southeast to hire Wael El Eid. Wael El Eid also is thought to be in the Middle East, federal prosecutors said. Jihad El Eid's attorney, Fred Haddad, could not be reached for comment Wednesday. Before he was demoted, Jihad El Eid ran a department of about 140 employees. With an annual salary of \$137,918.30, he oversaw the maintenance, repair and construction of the county's traffic control systems, street lighting and signs.

The criminal allegations against El Eid were unsealed Tuesday after federal prosecutors charged Southeast owner Anthoneel Allen and the company's former vice president, James Hashim, with conspiracy to commit bribery, fraud and extortion. A conviction for criminal conspiracy can carry up to five years in prison. Allen, 40, and Hashim, 50, surrendered Wednesday at the Fort Lauderdale federal courthouse. Their attorneys and Assistant U.S. Attorney Jeffrey Kaplan agreed that their bonds would be set at \$100,000. Hashim, of Plantation, is scheduled to enter into a plea deal on Feb. 1, while Allen's attorney said in court that his client has been cooperating with federal authorities. Allen, of Sunrise, has been liquidating his assets to pay back the county, said his attorney Michael Gary Smith. Broward County awarded Southeast a series of multimillion dollar contracts from 2005 to 2010. The company did repair work on the county's traffic lights and street equipment, installed video detection cameras to monitor traffic flow and laid hundreds of thousands of feet of underground cable to synchronize traffic. Jihad El Eid

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*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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unilaterally assigned Southeast work to lay cables despite the company not having sufficient bonding capacity to bid on the job, according to federal prosecutors. He is accused of repeatedly boosting a contract's budget with it swelling from \$6.6 million to \$21.2 million. Jihad El Eid went before the Broward County Commission at least once to support such budget increases, court records show. Broward County is suing Southeast for more than \$3 million for overbillings, defective work and the cost to repair work.

El Eid's relationship with the company came into question in 2009 when a county employee began finding financial irregularities around the same time an anonymous letter arrived at County Hall, said Broward Public Works Director **Thomas Hutka**. The letter accused El Eid of giving preferential treatment to Southeast, repeating rumors that his family drove a sports car purchased by a company official. **Hutka** said that since the allegations against El Eid were made, the traffic engineering division has been reorganized and all contracts and expenditures now must be reviewed by multiple managers. County staff assisted the federal investigation, he said.

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**Thomas J. Hutka**

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Broward Bulldog (FL)

April 27, 2012

Section: County

**Bureaucrats' Last Minute Demand Alters Broward Trash Negotiations and Could Lead to Higher Rates**

Author: Buddy Nevins

The promise of the lowest price for waste disposal could be thwarted by a last-minute demand from top Broward County administrators. The county was in the throes of negotiating a multi-million dollar waste disposal contract when suddenly the government issued a requirement that any company must provide a list of disposal sites. "This is a big issue, a very big issue... Cities will have problems that they don't know where their garbage is going," **Thomas Hutka**, Broward's public works director, explained during contract negotiations this week.

Newcomer Sun/Bergeron immediately complained that the new mandate favored Wheelabrator Technologies, the Waste Management subsidiary which has held a near monopoly on Broward's waste disposal for over 20 years and already owns a landfill and a pair of waste-to-energy plants here. "When Wheelabrator won this contract 20 years ago, they didn't have a disposal site. We are newcomers," said Aleida "Ali" Waldman, Bergeron's general counsel. Sun/Bergeron Vice President Phil Medico contended residents and businesses could get a better deal by disposing of the waste in whatever facility has the best price rather than tie themselves to one site for five years. Under Sun/Bergeron's proposal, waste would be sent to various transfer stations around Broward and then sorted through for recyclable material. Anything that could not be recycled would be trucked to yet-unnamed disposal sites. Wheelabrator proposes to continue disposing waste in its two company-owned existing sites. The waste is minimally processed for recyclables and is either burned or buried – in a landfill along Florida's Turnpike in North Broward or in an incinerator just south of Interstate 595 in Davie. The burned trash at both locations is used to generate electricity.

The sites were built in the late-1980s under a contract with Broward County that will expire in 2013. Under its current agreement, Wheelabrator handles the disposal for 26 of Broward's 31 cities. Waste removal involves two separate jobs. A hauler has a franchise with each city to pick up waste at homes and businesses. That waste is then hauled to a disposal site that tacks on a fee. The hauling and disposal fees are generally rolled into one fee paid by residents and business owners. The current negotiations involve only disposal, but it is a contract worth tens of millions of dollars over five years. Negotiators are working over details of the contract at this point and no final prices have been set. DEAL TO MAKE OR BREAK TRASH MONOPOLY. With the end of its contract on the horizon next year, Wheelabrator at first proposed extending its monopoly for 20 years through 2033. Sun/Bergeron saw an opening and launched a lobbyist effort to block the renewal of the contract. The lobbying worked. Enough cities, and eventually the Broward County Commission, voted to reject renewal with Wheelabrator. They gambled that better rates could be obtained by pitting Wheelabrator against Sun/Bergeron in competitive bids. Miramar agreed to be the first city to ask for competitive bids from the two disposal companies.

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Wheelabrator's bid was \$52.50 per ton, compared with Sun/Bergeron's \$43.25 per ton. Sun/Bergeron got the nod, and a deal is being negotiated. The negotiations by the county and other cities is their attempt to fine-tune the Miramar bid to see if an even a better deal can be reached. Sun/Bergeron is a joint venture, which is headquartered in Davie in an industrial area near I-595. Sun Recycling, the operating partner, is a subsidiary of the veteran waste company Southern Waste Services of Lantana. Bergeron Environmental and Recycling is the latest venture of Broward entrepreneur Ron Bergeron, who is already a dominant force in road building, storm recovery, real estate and rock pits. Medico, a long-time waste industry executive, is the chief negotiator for Sun/Bergeron. Medico told county negotiators that "supply and demand" would lower the price over the next five years because numerous new waste disposal sites are expected to open in South Florida, and there would be a "surplus of opportunities to dispose of waste." There sites in Miami-Dade, Lee and Okeechobee Counties. Palm Beach County is building a waste-to-energy incinerator that is scheduled to go online in 2015. Any site picked by Sun/Bergeron – like all legal disposal sites in Florida – would have gone through a rigorous permitting procedure by the state. "Any waste will have a final resting place in a legally permitted class one facility," Medico said.

MISSED OPPORTUNITIES? Speaking to negotiators this week, Medico warned that Broward should not make the same mistake it did in the 1980s by binding disposal to one company's sites. The county missed opportunities to lower prices because "you were tied up in a 25-year monopoly. You didn't have a choice" about what sites to use, Medico said. Under the rules of the negotiating sessions, each company gets a day to be grilled and explain its position on why they should be chosen to dispose of Broward's waste. The discussion of the sites came on Thursday when county staffers and two city managers – Lee Feldman of Fort Lauderdale and David Rivera of Coconut Creek – were going over Sun/Bergeron's proposal line-by-line. Thursday was Sun/Bergeron's day to be questioned. Wheelabrator's Vice President of Operations Bill Roberts and Senior Legal Counsel Emily Kahn sat in the audience taking notes. In an interview earlier with Broward Bulldog at Wheelabrator's sprawling computerized incinerator plant in Davie, Roberts made his case for his company to continue the contract. "We have a proven technology that's reliable...The infrastructure exists. These facilities are strategically located," Roberts said. He added that having the disposal sites in Broward contributed \$23 million in wages, goods and services and other indirect spending to the county's economy. He said disposing waste locally takes vehicles off the road because it doesn't have to be transported to another county. "Our system has worked very well for 20 years," he said.

The county led negotiations are scheduled to conclude and go to the County Commission for its approval by May 8. On paper the negotiations only involve the small slice of Broward that is unincorporated, but several cities are expected to piggyback on the agreement, hence the presence of Feldman and Rivera. Deputy County Attorney Noel Pfeffer, who is leading the negotiations, said the company that is chosen is expected to go out and sell the agreement to the 26 cities now using Wheelabrator. "There will be some period of time (built into the final contract) for the company to go out and market the agreement," he said.

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COMPETITION AND LOWER RATES. Competition has already driven down the price of disposing of garbage in Broward. More price pressure is likely. For instance, there is an overcapacity at Wheelabrator's South Broward waste-to-energy plant. The plant was built to handle 1.5 million tons a year. A few years ago it was processing 1.2 million tons. Today, it's just 900,000 tons due to the failure to forecast increases in recycling and the struggling economy. "In the end, they have to have waste to keep that facility going. If they lose this contract and aren't getting enough waste, they'll cut the price and accept waste from other counties," predicted a waste industry source. Roberts confirmed that Wheelabrator's local facilities would have to take waste from other counties if they failed to get enough from Broward. One company that could conceivably help fill Wheelabrator's plant is Sun/Bergeron, if rates drop far enough. Sun/Bergeron would collect the waste at transfer stations in Davie and elsewhere, then send it to the plant for disposal. "We have a contract with them for disposal in other places," Medico said.

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Sun Sentinel (FL)

December 4, 2011

**County Moves at Slow Pace as Businesses Build, Officials in Government Deliberate**

Author: Brittany Wallman

Tired of delays in building a convention center hotel, Broward County commissioners set a deadline of midnight to get a contract signed. Alas, that was 11 years ago. There's still no hotel. Years have passed, too, since the public first heard that a new election headquarters would be built in Broward, and a new county courthouse. Two more projects that have been talked about and worked on for years: a ship "turning notch" and ship-to-rail facility in Port Everglades. A new airport runway has been in the headlines for decades. Why is government so dang slow? "It's painful. It's absolutely painful," Broward Commissioner Lois Wexler said. "It's a disgraceful wonder." Fort Lauderdale developer Alan Hooper has listened to the public discussions about the runway and other projects, while he and his business partner built and opened Tarpon Bend Food & Tackle restaurant, Avenue Lofts, New River Trading Post, and The Mill and The Foundry residential lofts in Fort Lauderdale and opened Yolo restaurant and Vibe lounge, all in Fort Lauderdale. "Time is money," Hooper said, "and we can't waste too much of either." In the same period that Broward focused time, energy and money on the same few unfinished projects, a lot was accomplished in the rest of the world. Navy SEALs found and killed Osama bin Laden. National health care was passed. Downtown Fort Lauderdale erupted in high-rises. The Seminole Hard Rock Hotel and Casino opened in Hollywood.

Back in Broward, Wexler was waiting Thursday for a lobbyist to talk to her about that election headquarters. "And the beat goes on, and on, and on," she said. Businesswoman Barbara Sharief, a self-made multi-millionaire who is new to the County Commission, said the belaboring of things "over and over again" is "probably one of the most frustrating things about being on the commission." The county is like a \$3.2 billion business, she said, and delays hurt when it comes to projects that would build up the economy. The long-planned deepening and widening of Port Everglades would position Broward to handle super-freighters when the expansion of the Panama Canal is complete in 2014. But Miami has a port, too. "You sit around and twiddle your thumbs for too long," Sharief said, "and your competition's going to pass you by."

From the helm of Broward's public works department, Director **Tom Hutka** has a different view. The reason government moves more slowly than a private business would, he said, is they stand in the public eye, they seek competitive bids for the best price, they consider neighborhood concerns. It's not because they don't work as hard, or they're less efficient, he said. Especially now after several years of budget cuts, which forced government to "really look at everything and question the way of doing things."

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**Thomas J. Hutka**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Sun Sentinel (FL)  
September 23, 2011

**Broward Sues Southeast Underground Utilities, Contractor on County Intersections**

Author: *Brittany Wallman*

Broward County has filed suit against Southeast Underground Utilities, the company that was working on county intersections and whose relationship with traffic engineer Jihad El Eid is now under the eye of the FBI. The county's Aug. 3 lawsuit, which is being handled by county chief trial attorney Michael Kerr, alleges that Southeast Underground overbilled the county at least \$3 million, and did work that was defective. I called the Davie-based company and left a message with a woman asking officials to comment on the lawsuit and the FBI probe. If they do, I'll update this.

Broward hired Southeast Underground after a competitive process in 2006, and the contract was effective as of Jan. 25, 2007, for \$4.4 million, with some renewal options. It ballooned into a \$21.3 million contract. The company was to install and restore underground conduit. The contract was expanded to have Southeast upgrade the traffic signal system by replacing old conduits and copper wires with new conduits and fiber optic wires. That job was expanded once again to include replacing the wire-hung traffic signals with the black, metal mast-arms we see in major intersections now. The contract was terminated Jan. 24, 2010.

El Eid, who was not accomplishing the traffic light synching drivers were begging for, was dismissed from the county by then-new Public Works Director **Tom Hutka**. Now El Eid is working for the city of Amarillo, Texas, and is "certainly a person of interest" to the FBI, his attorney, the local Fred Haddad, told us this summer. But he's not been charged with any crimes, nor accused by the FBI of wrongdoing. The FBI executed a search warrant at Southeast's offices in late June. FBI spokesman James Marshall said Thursday that the El Eid-Southeast Underground investigation is still ongoing. It was prompted by an anonymous letter alleging an improper friendship between the public servant and county vendor.

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Sun Sentinel (FL)  
September 5, 2011

**Traffic Signal Upgrades Smooth Out Commutes****Upgrades to Traffic System will Let Engineers Change Signals Remotely After Accidents**

Author: Michael Turnbell

Broward County is embarking on a \$25 million upgrade of its 25-year-old traffic signal system that will give engineers the ability to override signal timing in real time - without going to the intersection - if an accident, crime scene or special event creates problems. For example, if an accident closes northbound Interstate 95 before Commercial Boulevard, engineers would be ready with a response plan to alter signals on routes likely to become detours. "In just a few minutes we can come up with a new pattern at a particular intersection or along an entire corridor," said Scott Brunner, assistant director of the county's Traffic Engineering Division.

By 2016, Broward traffic engineers will be able to do everything from timing signals remotely to giving buses the ability to keep green lights green longer. And they won't have to fret every time there's a thunderstorm or if a contractor hits a cable underground, because the signal timing won't be affected. Poorly timed traffic signals are among commuters' biggest gripes, leading to wasted fuel, lost productivity and time, and road rage. The U.S. Department of Transportation has estimated as many as three out of four of the nation's 300,000 traffic signals need to be replaced or re-timed. In March, Broward finished re-timing signals on 19 major east-west roads plus University Drive and U.S. 1. Drivers now can hit a string of green lights sometimes stretching for miles, instead of keeping their foot on the brake to stop at red lights.

Engineers focused on east-west roads first because motorists on those streets lack high-speed alternatives that their north-south counterparts enjoy with I-95, Florida's Turnpike, Sawgrass Expressway and I-75. Now the county's light-synching workers, dubbed the Green Light Strike Force, hope to finish work on 10 major north-south roads by the end of 2011. They'll also re-time signals on Peters Road, stretches of Griffin Road and Sheridan Street west of Flamingo Road, and on Glades Parkway/Royal Palm Boulevard, Weston Road and Indian Trace, all in Weston. So far they've finished Flamingo Road and a stretch of State Road 7 in the middle of the county. And they're continuing to fine-tune streets they've already visited, like U.S. 1. Commuters are taking notice.

Ghanima Morales, of North Lauderdale, emailed the county in July that he's noticeably less stressed because the signals on his commute are timed better. "This is possibly the greatest thing that has been initiated in my 10 years of driving," Morales wrote. Marcy Whitaker wrote, "The first time I experienced the benefits of the program ... I thought it was my lucky day and bought a Lotto ticket." But not everyone is happy. As the county has improved traffic flow on major roads, it often has come at the expense of side streets where traffic is forced to wait longer for a green light. "When I drive on Northwest 81st Street to Pine Island Road, the light is so long," Jerry Yardley said. "There are times when I come out to a major road with no traffic and still have to wait at the light for minutes. At night time, it is very frustrating." Engineers know they



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have more work to do. They've installed new software at 82 intersections on two east-west corridors - Broward Boulevard and Pines/Hollywood Boulevard. About 200 intersections in downtown Fort Lauderdale soon will be added to the new system. By 2016, all 1,400 intersections in the county are scheduled to be finished. The software will enable engineers to adjust timing remotely and allow individual signal control boxes to keep the correct timing as a backup if the connection between the signal and the county's main computer is damaged or disrupted.

It works: Several times this summer thunderstorms have severed communication between the main computer and the signals on Pines Boulevard, yet the signals kept functioning properly, according to engineers. The county also is placing devices aboard buses that extend the green-light time so buses approaching intersections can make it through. It's designed to get late buses back on schedule. Next year, engineers will begin working to get intersecting major streets working well, a mesh the county calls the "basket weave."

"That's where it gets more complicated," county Public Works Director **Tom Hutka** said. "We'll be using computer modeling to figure out compromises at intersections." For instance, in the morning rush hour, engineers have to figure out a timing pattern that moves traffic swiftly eastbound without penalizing drivers headed in the opposite direction or on north-south streets. "We can make one direction perfect or the other perfect, but we can't make both perfect," **Hutka** said. After a year of vast improvements in signal timing, improvements next year will be more incremental. But every week drivers should notice a difference. "We can't promise you all green lights," he said. "But we're doing everything we can to reduce the number of red lights you stop at."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Thomas J. Hutka***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Broward Bulldog (FL)

July 13, 2011

**Broward Cuts \$107 Million Trash Deal; Calls Start to Disband Resource Recovery Board**

Author: Dan Christensen

Saying it had gotten the best deal it could, Broward's Resource Recovery Board six months ago urged the county to approve its controversial 10-year, \$1.5 billion no-bid trash disposal agreement with giant Waste Management. But Broward County commissioners balked, asking staff instead to negotiate a better deal. The county's skepticism has paid off: before adjourning for summer vacation this month, commissioners unanimously approved a less risky short-term deal worth hundreds of thousands of dollars in additional cost savings to Broward cities and millions in new lease income to the county. The two-year, \$107.3 million disposal agreement is already being felt among cities that participate in the county's solid waste disposal agreement with Wheelabrator, the Waste Management subsidiary that owns and operates Broward's two waste-to-energy plants in Pompano Beach and Fort Lauderdale.

Last week, Oakland Park commissioners voted on first reading to decrease residential trash service rates by 15 percent, or \$3.75 a month – a reduction City Manager John Stunson attributed to the county's new deal. There's been political fallout, too. County Commissioner John Rodstrom, who led the charge for a better deal, told Broward Bulldog that the Resource Recovery Board – elected city and county officials who oversee the disposal of solid waste for 26 Broward cities and unincorporated Broward – must go. "What they were offering us was just ridiculous," Rodstrom said. "The board should be disbanded." He added that \$40 million remaining from a reserve fund to cover recently paid off construction bonds be divided up between the county and the cities. Another \$20 million from that pot went last week to encourage "single-stream" recycling that allows mixing bottles, cans and newspapers in a recycling bin, Rodstrom said. 'Big changes have to occur' Broward Commissioner Lois Wexler, who wants the next long term disposal agreement to be bid out, "would not resist" dissolution. "I think big changes have to occur and big changes include trust, direction and leadership," she said. Wexler mentioned no names, but the RRB's executive director is former state legislator Ron Greenstein. Its chair is County Commissioner Ilene Lieberman, sometimes referred to on the commission as the county's "queen of trash." Oakland Park Mayor Suzanne Boisvenue, a member of the Resource Recovery Board, says the board has made itself irrelevant. "I don't see why the board is needed," said Boisvenue, one of nine board members. "We have a lot of politics and nonsense going on there we don't need."

While last December's proposal by the Resource Recovery Board included significant rate cuts, it came under withering fire from municipal officials who said it didn't go far enough and amounted to a huge giveaway to a multi-billion dollar corporation flush with years of excessive profits made at the expense of Broward customers. The alternative agreement approved by the county commission on June 28 is an interim deal negotiated during the countdown to an Aug. 4 expiration of the decades-old service agreement with Wheelabrator's south plant. The north plant agreement expires next March. Officials intend to negotiate a longer-term agreement with

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Thomas J. Hutka***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Wheelabrator by July 2, 2013 – the expiration of the existing interlocal disposal agreement among the municipalities that make up Broward’s Solid Waste District. A memo to commissioners by Public Works Director **Thomas Hutka** said the options to be explored will include a further extension of Wheelabrator’s contract, a greater emphasis on recycling to reduce the demand on Wheelabrator’s plants, trucking a portion of the garbage to a disposal site in Palm Beach and finding service through other private providers. How the next agreement is reached, and which cities participate in it, will mostly be determined by price. Last year, chafing at Waste Management’s long-standing monopoly and the Resource Recovery Board’s decision not to put the new disposal contract out for bids, a number of cities indicated they might cut their own deals. Miramar recently took bids on its request for proposals for solid waste disposal. Bid prices remain sealed, but the two bidders – Wheelabrator and a joint venture by Bergeron Environmental and Recycling and Sun Recycling – met with city officials this week to describe their proposals. Other cities have indicated they might join with Miramar if a good enough deal can be found. Bergeron looks to become a player. The bid by the Bergeron group signals a determination by wealthy Davie developer and land baron Ron Bergeron to become a player in Broward’s lucrative municipal solid waste disposal business. This spring, Bergeron sought a zoning change in Pembroke Pines that would have allowed him to recycle solid waste at his recycling facility on 57 acres of industrial property off U.S. 27 on the edge of the Everglades. He withdrew his application after unhappy neighbors began to mobilize.

Bergeron, a man of significant political influence in Broward, already has a contract with the county to dispose of hurricane debris. His partner in the Miramar bid is his longtime friend Anthony Lomangino, the chairman and founder of Sun’s parent, Lantana-based Southern Waste Systems. The county’s new disposal agreement sets the base tipping fee at \$57 per ton starting next month at the Fort Lauderdale plant and next March at the Pompano Beach plant. The current rate at the north plant is \$72.57 per ton. Prior contract provisions that allowed Waste Management to hike the tab for inflation and other factors have been eliminated – including the so-called “put-or-pay” requirement that forced cities to kick in extra cash if they didn’t deliver a specified amount of waste within a given period. “These projected rates...are very similar to what the December 2010 (Resource Recovery Board) proposal would have produced, but with significantly less risk to the county and a much shorter term,” says **Hutka**’s memo. In all, the memo says, members of Broward’s solid waste district will save about \$380,000 in fees to Wheelabrator compared to the Resource Recovery Board’s proposal. A new lease also significantly ups the rent Wheelabrator must pay to the county every year to lease the Fort Lauderdale plant site [the north site is privately owned.] The current lease provides for an annual payment of \$100,000. The annual lease that starts next month on the 162-acre site makes that payment \$1.1 million for each of the next five years. A perception that Waste Management has earned an exorbitant profit on the backs of its Broward customers caused **Hutka** to have his staff to examine Wheelabrator’s finances and conduct an analysis of the deal. “The analysis showed that the proposed service agreement would provide what staff considers a reasonable (not excessive) level of income for Wheelabrator...considerably lower” than for any of the past five years, the memo says. Still, the staff’s look-see will remain largely an exercise in faith for any who choose to believe it. “Due to the confidentiality provisions of the existing agreements, staff cannot reveal any specifics of this analysis in a public document,” the memo says.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Thomas J. Hutka***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Sun Sentinel (FL)  
November 2, 2010

**Sewage Beach Marine Environment Pollution Issue  
Is Treated Sewage Safe for the Sea?  
Broward Fights State Mandate to Stop Ocean Dumping, Saying Residents' Bills Would  
Double**

Author: David Fleshler and Brittany Wallman

Broward County wants to escape a state mandate to shut down a pipe that discharges treated sewage into the ocean off Pompano Beach, saying the cost would be huge and the environmental payoff negligible. The pipe is one of six in Broward, Miami-Dade and Palm Beach counties ordered closed by a 2008 state law, after a campaign by environmentalists who argued the pipes were polluting coral reefs and wasting fresh water. The law, which set a deadline of 2025, requires wastewater authorities to improve treatment systems so the water can be used for purposes such as irrigating golf courses, watering lawns and recharging underground water supplies. The Broward County Commission learned last month that it would cost about \$800 million to construct such systems. Sewage bills for the pipe's northern Broward users would more than double, with the average customer's bill rising from \$33.09 to \$69.48.

Now the county is aiming for a way around the requirement - by a change in the law, a waiver or some other exemption.

**Thomas Hutka**, Broward's public works director, said spending hundreds of millions to pump the water into the Floridan aquifer or to lay pipes to spray it on lawns "is not a cost-effective use of taxpayer funds." "The county will continue to work with the state as we have since the year 2007 so that we can continue using the ocean outfall, which we believe to be both cost-effective and environmentally sound," **Hutka** said.

Alan Garcia, the county's water and wastewater director, said the water already is 90 percent clean. "If you take a jar out of our treatment plant it's as clear as can be," he said. "There are no solids in it. It's not yellow or green." Ed Tichenor, director of Palm Beach County Reef Rescue, an environmental group that led the campaign to close the pipes, said environmental advocates would put up "quite a fight" to prevent Broward from keeping the pipe in service. "Solids aren't the problem," Tichenor said. "It's the nutrients, it's the pharmaceuticals, it's the pathogens and viruses that survive the initial treatment. And one reason they passed this legislation was a water shortage in southeast Florida, and southeast Florida doesn't recycle water like the rest of the state." The pipe off Delray Beach shut down last year. Boca Raton expects to be reusing 100 percent of its water by 2015, using the pipeline only for seasonal overflows, said Chris Helfrich, the city's utilities director. Hollywood and Miami-Dade County are exploring options, both saying the change would require a massive investment in new treatment systems.

The Broward-operated pipe, installed in the mid-1970s, discharges 32 million to 34 million gallons of treated sewage daily from Parkland, Pompano Beach, Deerfield Beach, Coral Springs, Tamarac, Oakland Park, Lauderhill, North Lauderdale, Coconut Creek, Lauderdale Lakes, part

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Thomas J. Hutka***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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of unincorporated Broward and a small part of Fort Lauderdale. Environmentalists have blamed this and other pipes for discharging nutrients such as ammonia that fertilize the growth of algae that smothers coral reefs. State legislators said the region can't afford to dump that much fresh water at sea when the region is facing permanent water-use restrictions. Broward Vice Mayor Sue Gunzburger said, "If there's anything we can do to avoid meeting that standard by 2025," Broward wants to do it. "It's a very expensive, unfunded mandate that I don't think would make much difference when it comes to the ocean," Gunzburger said. "The most telling fact is that most of the nutrients that go into the sea are not from the wastewater effluent but from storm water discharge."

Although there have been several swimming advisories in Broward for high bacteria levels over the past year, environmental officials inspected the pipes and plants and found no malfunctions. Health officials say the more likely source of contamination was animal waste washed into the water from birds and other wildlife.

Broward Commissioner Kristin Jacobs, who is known as an environmentalist, said the state mandate was not based on sound science and the alternatives have their own environmental issues. "It is not the intent of Broward County to slip one past the people," said Jacobs. "What we're looking for is a science-based solution." But she said she doubts the county will be allowed to keep using the outfall. "There are politicians who used this in their brochure for their next election: 'I shut off the ocean outfall.' They're going to come back and give us some grace to deal with this issue? I'm skeptical."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Thomas J. Hutka**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Sun Sentinel (FL)

October 21, 2010

**Find the Fat: Why is This Broward Employee Resting in His Truck?**

Author: Brittany Wallman

Be assured that some of our readers are looking out for the taxpayers. Mary Graham, a reader of this blog, is one of the readers who are heeding the call to "find the fat" in the Broward County budget. She snapped photos of a county employee she said was "resting" in his vehicle with the engine running, and sent the photos to county officials, and to me. She said she has "observed many municipal vehicles occupied but parked and engines running for A/C at locations around the county. The locations are odd and the times are rarely lunch time. So when I spotted this today about 2:25 pm in a parking lot with the driver 'resting', I thought you may want to know. ... Frankly I am not real pleased to see tax dollars expended in this fashion, unless there is a real good explanation. Please." Suffice to say the employee in this photo got in trouble.

Public Works Director **Tom Hutka** told Graham in an e-mail that "we are in full agreement with you that all of our tax dollars must be spent wisely, and work very hard to make sure our operations in Broward County are at maximum efficiency." Here is Public Works Director **Hutka's** response to resident Mary Graham:

----- Original Message ----- From: **Hutka, Thomas** To: mga-aia@ix.netcom.com Cc: Corwin, Pete; Henry, Bertha; Keechl, Ken; Gunzburger, Suzanne; Wexler, Lois; Lukic, Evan; Wallman, Brittany; Hui, Tony; Ton, Anh Sent: 10/6/2010 2:32:41 PM Subject: RE: job description Please

Ms. Graham:

Thank you for bringing this issue to our attention. We are in full agreement with you that all of our tax dollars must be spent wisely, and work very hard to make sure our operations in Broward County are at maximum efficiency.

We researched the situation regarding the employee identified in your photograph. The employee was a member of a three-person crew that was working to pump down the road flooding caused by Tropical Storm Nicole. The crew worked through their normal lunch period at noon, and then took their lunch break late on that day. Two members of the crew took their lunches elsewhere and the third member, seen in your photograph, parked the vacuum truck in a convenience store parking lot on the corner of NW 31 Avenue and Prospect Road. The late lunch break was confirmed by a roving supervisor who was responsible for several work crews deployed that day to alleviate flooding around the County.

The County has written procedures against sleeping in County vehicles and running engines unnecessarily. This employee violated those procedures and will be subjected to appropriate disciplinary action.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Thomas J. Hutka**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The County has several mechanisms to ensure that employees are working effectively and efficiently, including GPS devices and mileage/gas usage tracking. Many times these methods are effective in ensuring employee productivity. Nevertheless, we work continually to ensure that our employees are properly supervised and managed and that they work on their jobs effectively. We want to thank you again for your assistance in bringing this matter to our attention. We assure you that it will be acted on.

**Tom Hutka** Public Works Director Broward County

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<https://www.browardpalmbeach.com/news/the-untold-story-of-browards-other-traffic-cameras-part-ii-6470156>

October 20, 2010

**The Untold Story of Broward's Other Traffic Cameras: Part II**

Author: Stefan Kamph

You're sitting in a car, waiting for the light to change, when you notice a spindly little white camera peering down at you. Is this a red-light camera? Some sinister plot to spy on drivers? Nope, just a new way to control traffic at Broward's busy intersections. Last week, we covered the basics of what these cameras do. Now we'll take a look inside one of the traffic-signal control boxes, located near the Traffic Management division's headquarters on West Commercial Boulevard. The cameras send a video signal to a control box at each intersection, where a computer detects the positions of cars in the first few spaces of each lane. This affects light timing. For example, if no cars are waiting in the left-turn lane, the green arrow won't come on.

Broward Public Works Director **Tom Hutka** told New Times that in most instances, the video signal never leaves the intersection. But the boxes do have monitor hookups that allow you to see what the camera sees. "You can see that the cameras don't pick up much detail," says Traffic Signals Supervisor Brett Henderson as he flips on a monitor. A few thumbnail-sized outlines of blurry cars appear on the monitor. There's an overlay defining each spot for a waiting vehicle, and the spots light up as cars enter them: Here's the system that collects and processes the video feed, adding the overlay and gathering information about which lanes are full. Every night, the signals send a report to a central mainframe, where engineers look for anomalies like lights that are failing to cycle or are timed wrong. Here are some more fun facts:

Traffic engineers don't call yellow lights "yellow." They call them "amber."

- Do the cameras stay put in a hurricane or tropical storm? Don't bet on it. Crews go out to check on all of them after a big storm.
- East- and west-facing cameras have to be positioned higher up on their poles, so they can be angled down more to avoid the glare of sunrises and sunsets.
- Complaints about light timing may actually be caused by pedestrians smacking the crossing buttons and then crossing early anyway.
- Speaking of those buttons... if they break, the county actually likes to fix them. So they say. Go to Broward's contact page and give it a shot.

Henderson says the county is always getting wrongly blamed for the red-light camera programs, which are approved by municipalities and administered by Arizona-based American Traffic Solutions. ATS is in talks with the county over one aspect of those operations, though. Currently, ATS sensors aren't allowed to interfere with traffic signals, so they use cameras to sense when a red light comes on. The company wants to install an electromagnetic loop around the wire powering the red bulb -- which is maintained by the county. Negotiations are ongoing, according to **Hutka**.



**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Thomas J. Hutka**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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<https://www.browardpalmbeach.com/news/the-untold-story-of-browards-other-traffic-cameras-6454775>

October 14, 2010

**The Untold Story of Broward's Other Traffic Cameras**

Author: Stefan Kamph

So, you've probably heard about the proliferation of red-light cameras around South Florida. You may have seen last month's news that Fort Lauderdale was adopting the program, beginning with installation of the cameras at ten intersections. But, wait... only ten? What about those white poles and sinister-looking cameras with wispy antennas that you see at nearly every intersection around downtown Fort Lauderdale? Some of you, like me, may have been extra-cautious with your right turns around these eyes in the sky, expecting a \$150 ticket for any infraction. Pay no mind, fair citizen. The ubiquitous white cameras are of a whole different breed.

"They're just to see if there are cars in the lane, so the lights can decide when to cycle," says Broward Public Works Director **Tom Hutka**. "With one or two exceptions, the video signal doesn't leave the intersection." More on those "exceptions" in a minute. The cameras replace the old electromagnetic loop system for detecting cars -- you may notice dark lines in geometric patterns covering the end of each lane at an intersection. The video cameras send a feed -- "not detailed enough to recognize faces or license plates," **Hutka** assures us -- to a computer system in a traffic-control box about the size of a refrigerator, located at each intersection. That computer interprets the signal, figures out how many cars are waiting in each lane, and adjusts light timing accordingly. "We're working through a program to replace the electric loop detectors with video detection devices," explains **Hutka**. "We take advantage of [preexisting] road projects to close the lanes and install the cameras."

If there's a red-light ticketing camera waiting for you, you'll know -- those intersections have to be marked with a sign saying the intersection is "photo enforced." They provide real video feeds to real people who can see who you are. These cameras, on the other hand? "There's very little detail, not so much that there's a privacy concern," says **Hutka**. "Also, we don't save the video signal."

A recent pilot project on Commercial Boulevard allowed the video signal to leave the intersections, traveling to a central facility. Crews installed fiber optic cables instead of the usual analog copper wires, enabling the transmission of video for remote monitoring. But **Hutka** insists that nobody's using this capability and that there are no plans to advance it. "There's a handful of intersections that we can watch in our home office, but nobody watches," he says.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Thomas J. Hutka***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Sun Sentinel (FL)  
September 3, 2010

**Drivers See Green with Re-Times Lights. Traffic Engineers Promise to Ease Stop-and-Go Conditions on 21 Major Roads Across Broward**

Author: Brittany Wallman and Michael Turnbull

Drivers on Broward Boulevard might have already noticed it: All these green lights! For the first time in years, drivers commuting into or out of downtown Fort Lauderdale on Broward Boulevard can actually make it a mile, or two, or three, or four - or more - without hitting a single red light. The same is true on University Drive in the center of the county, where drivers are hitting more green lights than ever. They're spending less time sitting at the reds. The outcry from angry drivers finally has been heard. Broward County officials just announced that they've re-timed traffic signals on the eastern part of Broward Boulevard and much of University Drive, so drivers traveling the speed limit will hit green light after green light after green light. The maddening stop-and-go that drivers endure all over will be eased by early 2011, county officials promise. Signals on 19 major east-west corridors, plus the entire north-south stretches of U.S. 1 and University Drive in Broward County, will be re-timed. After that, a year's worth of more complicated and expensive synchronization is promised; it would re-time more of the road network, adding north-south roads to finesse what traffic engineers call the "basket weave" of intersecting streets.

"We can't promise all green lights," Broward public works director **Thomas Hutka** said, "but we're reducing the number of times you stop at red lights." **Hutka** was hired last year and made the synchronizing of lights "absolutely a priority." He brought the top traffic engineers into one office - they named themselves the Green Light Strike Force - and they work on re-timing signals every day. A website's been set up, and a phone hotline is ready; both will be used to solicit opinions from the driving public. **Hutka** said the Strike Force set out two months ago to make a noticeable improvement to signal snarl using existing staff and hardware, at no additional cost to the county taxpayers. The team re-timed lights on Broward Boulevard from University Drive east to U.S. 1., and on University Drive, from Oakland Park Boulevard to Griffin Road. With the exception of University Drive and U.S. 1, the team's initial signal timing efforts are focused on east-west roads because north-south commuters have high-speed options via Interstate 95, Florida's Turnpike and the Sawgrass Expressway/Interstate 75. The next complicated step will be timing signals on north-south roads and coordinating them with east-west routes. The work is part of a 15-year, \$85.6 million overhaul of the signal network. Timing traffic signals in a progression for drivers is an industry standard and "one of the most cost-effective ways to improve traffic flows and reduce motorist travel time," county auditor Evan Lukic noted in a 2008 investigation. Drivers pleaded for it. County commissioners promised it. Yet, the auditor's office found, Broward County failed to deliver it, falling far short of "industry best practice." The county devoted insufficient staff to the work and let years pass without revisiting signals on heavily traveled thoroughfares such as Griffin Road. The result of the county's lackluster work: Drivers in Broward County the past decade spent more time at red lights than they should have, their drive times were longer than they needed to be, and they

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Thomas J. Hutka***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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wasted gas, auditors said. Before now, it was nearly impossible to travel east or west on Broward Boulevard without hitting half a dozen or more red lights. Now, drivers can make it through more than 20 green lights in a row. On University Drive, **Hutka** said he hit a "small traffic jam" every morning heading south between Sunrise and Broward boulevards. "In the last month," he said, "I haven't done that at all. That alone took five minutes off my commute." The system isn't perfect. On any given day, traffic accidents, gridlock, trains, emergency vehicles that preempt the lights, or road construction and lane squeezes will screw up the light synching. But it'll still be an improvement on what drivers are used to. Another facet of the fix: The county will improve traffic detection on side streets so drivers on the main roads aren't stopped unnecessarily. "When you're driving on a major street and you see a red light turn in front of you for no apparent reason," **Hutka** said, "or because one or two cars are coming in from the side street, this is what it's all about. This will significantly reduce the number of those occurrences."

Broward County is in the midst of a \$14.5 million project to install video detectors at 700 intersections countywide. When the work is completed in about 3 years, 1,250 intersections in the county will have the new technology. The detectors look like cameras mounted on traffic signal poles, but they don't take pictures or record video. Instead, they detect how many cars are lined up at intersections. The images are analyzed by computers that determine how much green time a traffic signal should provide. Let's say a signal is programmed to give 15 seconds of green time for a left turn. If the left turn lane is empty after five seconds, the detector will turn off the left turn arrow and assign the unused 10 seconds of "green time" to drivers going straight through the intersection. That means the green light will last longer for the majority of drivers. Drivers like Pete Tozzi said traffic signals on "pipsqueak" cross streets hold up traffic on major roads. Heading west on Pines Boulevard at rush hour, Tozzi said Pines drivers routinely get stopped for one or two cars entering Pines from 129th and 136th avenues. But the light stays green even though no more traffic is coming. Signals on Pines are scheduled for re-timing later this year. "One would think those two streets are the main thoroughfare with their prolonged green lights," he said. "I could personally drive around and improve traffic with a little common thinking and light time changes."

On Southwest 10th Street, drivers complain of constant stop-and-go conditions between Federal Highway and the Sawgrass Expressway because of poorly timed traffic signals. "At all times of day or night you get stopped at 90 percent of the traffic signals. It is intolerable," said Joseph Healey, who commutes from Coral Springs to Boca Raton. That busy connector between I-95 and the Sawgrass is scheduled for re-timing later this year. But rush hour drivers still likely will be held up at some red lights, as traffic engineers balance the need to keep traffic flowing on north-south highways that intersect it, like Military Trail, Powerline Road and even the I-95 exit ramps to prevent traffic from backing up onto the interstate. "If you hit just one red light, you can be assured that you will hit them all," said Carol Finkelstein, of Boca Raton. As the county gives new focus to drivers' frustration, **Hutka** said he's considering all options, including what Miami-Dade County does on some major roads like Biscayne Boulevard: putting signals into flashing mode - flashing red and yellow - between midnight and 5 a.m. to allow traffic on the major street to flow without stopping. "It's something we want to study more," **Hutka** said. But if the signal re-timing is a success, he said, that might not be necessary.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Thomas J. Hutka**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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US Fed News (USA)

September 17, 2009

**Broward County Names New Director of Public Works**

Author: Judy Sarver

Broward County has issued the following news release:

**Thomas J. Hutka** has been named the new director of the Public Works Department for Broward County. He assumed his new position on September 4, bringing more than 28 years of municipal and county government experience to Broward County. Prior to joining the County, he was the director of municipal program management with the HNTB Corporation out of their Indianapolis office.

The Broward County Public Works Department includes eight county divisions, including construction management, facilities maintenance, highway and bridge maintenance, highway construction and engineering, seaport engineering and construction, traffic engineering, water and wastewater services, and waste and recycling services. **Hutka** will oversee a budget of almost \$400 million and more than 1,000 employees.

In making the announcement, Bertha Henry, Broward County Administrator, said, "We are extremely pleased that Mr. **Hutka** is joining our staff. His extensive experience in the public works field is impressive. I look forward to his leadership as the director of the Public Works Department."

Prior to joining HNTB Corporation in 2006, **Hutka** was the city manager for Port Huron, Mich.; assistant county manager for Osceola County, Fla.; and associate county administrator for capital programs for Hennepin County-Minneapolis, Minn. He has also led public works, finance and growth management programs in positions in Cleveland, Ohio; Raleigh, North Carolina; and New York City.

**Hutka** is a highly respected national and international public works subject matter expert. He has addressed professional associations such as the American Public Works Association International, International Council of Shopping Centers, American Water Works Association and National Council for Public-Private Partnerships. His articles have appeared in such professional publications as Public Management, APWA Reporter and Credit Week.

**Hutka** has a bachelor of science degree in civil engineering from Princeton (N.J.) University and a master's degree in public administration from Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass. For more information please contact: Sarabjit Jagirdar, Email:- [htsyndication@hindustantimes.com](mailto:htsyndication@hindustantimes.com)

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Thomas J. Hutka**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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South Bend Tribune (IN)

October 25, 2005

**City a Beacon of Hope for Lighthouse**

City officials have received federal approval to take ownership of the Fort Gratiot Lighthouse. The ownership transfer, which was recommended by the National Park Service and approved Friday, comes after about five years of work by officials for the city and Port Huron Museum, which will operate the 176-year-old structure. "The Fort Gratiot Lighthouse is such a significant part of this community's history," Stephen R. Williams, Port Huron Museum director, told the Times Herald for a Saturday story. "And that historic symbol is going to keep standing now and be around for generations to come."

Williams said efforts will include restoring the exterior to how it appeared in the 1930s or '40s. The entire project will cost about \$1 million, and work could start late next year, he said. After advances in technology made them obsolete, the U.S. Coast Guard began transferring ownership of lighthouses to eliminate the cost of maintaining them. In 2000, the federal government passed a law giving cities and nonprofit groups the chance to own the lighthouses if they could show they would restore and preserve the structures.

The lighthouse will be a great addition to Port Huron's museum system, City Manager **Tom Hutka** said. "This is a symbol of the city and its history," he said. "And we think it's going to be an attraction that will help with our economic-development efforts."

Joel Garinger, of St. Clair Shores, Mich., said he comes up to the area about five times a year and makes a point of seeing the lighthouse. "It's nice to see that they're going to preserve it," he said. "I know a lot of people who are really into lighthouses, travel all over the place to see them. This will be something special for this area."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Thomas J. Hutka***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Detroit News (MI)

November 16, 2004

**Mich. Gets Terror Fight Technology  
But Critics Say Latest Equipment Installed in Port Huron is Ineffective and a Waste of Money**

Author: Frank Donnelly

It would behoove Osama Bin Laden to stay away from this Michigan city when trying to infiltrate the United States. The border town was one of three cities that unfurled the latest in terrorism-fighting technology Monday. But critics have already labeled the \$700 million program, which takes photos and fingerprints of some foreign visitors, a hornswaggle. They say it will be too expensive, too shortsighted and too ineffective. The only people it will impede from crossing the border, critics said, are travelers and business people. "It's slow enough," said Rick Bunin, 56, a Sarnia mechanic who sometimes works on the U.S. side of the border. "It's one more line we need to wait on."

The system will be expanded to the two Detroit border crossings -- the Ambassador Bridge and the Detroit-Windsor Tunnel -- by the end of the year, possibly as early as Dec. 6, federal officials said. All 165 land border crossings in the United States will have the system in place by the end of 2005, said Kimberly Weissman, of Homeland Security. The nation's 115 airports and 14 seaports have used the program since January. Weissman defended the program, saying the process should be quick and seldom cause delays. That's a concern with Port Huron residents with its well-traveled crossing, the Blue Water Bridge. "We'll continue to evaluate it," she said. "We'll make necessary adjustments to ensure there aren't significant wait times." She said the process should take no more than 15 seconds.

The process, which affects only foreigners who need a visa to enter the U.S., actually began before the visitors reached the Port Huron border Monday. Their first step was to apply for a visa in their home country. Then, when they reached the U.S. border crossing, they inserted their index finger, right then left, into a fingerprinting machine. A digital camera snapped their picture. On the other side of the machine was a border crossing guard who asked the routine questions that all travelers are asked: Where are they going? How long will they be there? Port Huron's first day on the vanguard of the fight against terrorism went off without any major problems, Weissman said. The process for three visitors averaged several minutes apiece. The photo and fingerprint information went into a databank to ensure it matched the information the visitor had given earlier when applying for the visa.

The data also was compared with the FBI's criminal database and with government lists of terrorists. The info was checked against lists of sexual predators. Monday was the first time the so-called United States Visitor and Immigrant Status Indicator Technology program, US-VISIT for short, was used at a land crossing. Besides Port Huron, it also was kicked off at the Mexican crossings at Laredo, Texas and Douglas, Ariz. Federal officials said it was a pilot program geared toward catching mistakes before the system expands to the 50 busiest U.S. crossings by

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**Thomas J. Hutka**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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the end of the year. While some border town politicians and businesses originally balked at the program, a Port Huron officials sounded a conciliatory note for the maiden voyage. "Anything that helps them identify who people are helps us," said **Thomas Hutka**, city manager of Port Huron. He said federal officials have allayed some city fears about the possible delays that could result from the terrorism protection. With one day under their belt, US-VISIT officials said it was too early to judge the program a success. But they said they would continue tinkering to ameliorate any problems.

Weissman said she wasn't aware of any serious stumbles on the first day in Port Huron. "It's too soon to tell," she said. "Of course we'll continue to evaluate and make any improvements when necessary." The system won't be used for all foreign visitors - just those who need a visa to enter the country. Most Canadians also will be exempt from the program. Critics have called the security program a feel-good measure designed more to placate the terrorism fears of residents than actually catch anyone.

When Congress created the system in the wake of September 11, it had hoped it would track foreign travelers who stayed in the U.S. far past the expiration date of their visas. Several of the foreigners involved in the terrorist act had overstayed their visas. But the current system can't track the departures of foreign visitors and program officials said it would be several years before they can do so.

Another critic, Rep. Jim Turner, D-Texas, also said the system doesn't go far enough. Rather than settle for two fingerprints, it would be better to get all them, like the FBI crime database does, he said. That also would raise the chances of getting matches between the border system and the FBI one, he said. Only two fingerprints would lead to more errors. But federal officials said the 10-fingerprint system would be far more costly, and time-consuming.

The Homeland Security department, which is overseeing the program, spent \$340 million to kick off the service. It has budgeted another \$340 million for 2005.

**Border checks**

\* The U.S. Department of Homeland Security is expanding to border crossings its airport program that fingerprints, photographs and runs checks on many non-U.S. visitors.

\* The pilot sites are at Laredo, Texas; Douglas, Ariz.; and Port Huron.

\* The program is expected to be used at all 165 U.S. land border crossings, including the tunnel and Ambassador Bridge in Detroit, by the end of 2005. It already is in place at U.S. airports and seaports.



**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Thomas J. Hutka**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Times Herald (MI)

April 26, 2006

**Cliff Schrader: City Manager `Had No Choice' But to Resign**

Author: Shannon Murphy and Mike Connell

On his radio show this morning, a former Port Huron council member said he'll explain the real reason why City Manager **Tom Hutka** is resigning. "He had no choice," Cliff Schrader said Tuesday. "He no longer has the support of the majority of the council." **Hutka**, who said he's leaving his \$118,000-a-year job for personal reasons, called that nonsense.

"Cliff has never let truth stand in the way of his radio announcements," he said. "This was entirely my decision." He also said rumors of his job being in peril are nothing new. "It's always an issue," **Hutka** said. "Every month for five years, without exception, I've had someone come up and say, 'I've heard rumors. ...'"

Schrader, who was mayor pro tem five years ago when **Hutka** was hired, does a morning radio commentary for WGRT 102.3-FM and writes a column for Blue Water Senior Options, a monthly newspaper. He often focuses on local politics. "They've been negotiating (his resignation) for months," he said of **Hutka** and the council. "Why all this spin? Why hide it? Here's a guy who's making all this money, has this great job with all these big projects going on, and we're supposed to believe he just walks away?" Schrader drew a parallel between **Hutka**'s resignation and the firing of his predecessor, Larry Osborn, in September 2000. "What happened here is not much different than what happened to Larry Osborn," he said. "The mayor sat down and said, 'We have the votes to fire you, but if you resign, we can work this out.' Larry decided to fight it tooth and nail. **Tom** saw the writing on the wall and decided to spare the city another big fight."

Different council members had different reactions to Schrader's analysis. "I've known Cliff for a number of years, and Cliff has always had a conspiracy theory about everything," Mayor Alan Cutcher said. "And I think it's just another one of his theories. There's no truth to this one." B. Mark Neal, the mayor pro tem, indicated Schrader was on target in saying **Hutka** had lost the council's backing. "I think over the last few months, his support has dwindled," Neal said. "It's (a matter of) not getting things done in a timely fashion and a combination of a lot of different things."

A year ago, Neal gave **Hutka** a poor evaluation and wrote: "We need to discuss his future, but I don't know if the votes are there to (fire him)." Asked if he would have voted to fire the city manager, Neal replied, "He and I disagreed on a number of things, and let's just leave it at that." **Hutka** acknowledged he had never been able to win the support of Neal or Councilwoman Sally Jacobs. In 2001, **Hutka** was hired on a 5-1-1 vote with Jacobs opposing him and Neal abstaining. "When I took the job, I thought I could win over the two who voted against me," **Hutka** said. "I was never able to accomplish that." Jacobs confirmed she remained lukewarm on the city manager. "I didn't vote to hire **Tom**. I was the one vote to not hire him," she said. "We

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Thomas J. Hutka***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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have had our differences in the past, and I didn't always give him the best evaluations. But he did start some good projects." Asked if she would have voted to fire him, she replied: "I really don't know how I can answer that. If you take a look at everything, I would not want to go through another Larry Osborn. I don't know if I could go through that again. I think if that was a decision that council had to make, I'd have to really think long and hard on that one."

Kim Prax, a former council member who voted to hire **Hutka** in 2001, said she suspects there's truth to both versions of why the city manager is leaving. "I think there have been some issues between **Tom** and the council," she said. "**Tom** probably wants to move on, and now was probably a good time for him to do that." She gave **Hutka** good marks. "I give **Tom** a lot of credit because he did come in at a very tumultuous time in the city's history, and he worked very hard to build a consensus," she said.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Thomas J. Hutka**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Times Herald (MI)  
April 25, 2006

**Port Huron City Manager Quits  
Hutka to Pursue Other Career Options**

Author: Molly Montag

Port Huron needs a new city manager. The City Council on Monday night unanimously accepted City Manager **Tom Hutka's** resignation request. **Hutka**, city manager since 2001, presented individual council members with his resignation earlier Monday. His last day will be June 30. Mayor Alan Cutcher said he had known for several weeks that **Hutka** was thinking about resigning. He wished him well. "He's been a challenge," Cutcher said. "And I have been a challenge." Saying he was not forced or asked to quit, **Hutka** said he was exploring other career options and plans to focus on his family. He would not say what options he was exploring. "I'm far enough along in discussions that I'm comfortable with a two-months notice," **Hutka** said.

Councilman Jim Fisher feared **Hutka's** resignation would be detrimental to development projects, including several downtown proposals. Among the projects and proposals council members have been discussing in recent months is the possible conversion of the Municipal Office Center into condominiums; the development of a hotel-waterpark-casino; and turning several city-owned parking lots into a mix of business and residential properties. "I have a fear that a minimum, if not a majority, on council would support delaying these projects until they die," Fisher said.

**Hutka** didn't share that concern. He said development supporters and city staff would continue to move the projects forward. "There are too many people working to see the many projects that have been started, completed," he said.

Richard Frasier, 61, said **Hutka** will be missed. The Bancroft Street resident hoped **Hutka's** replacement would respond as quickly to complaints. "I just hope they (the city) keep up with the blight programs," he said. "It's really made a difference."

Councilman B. Mark Neal, who has given **Hutka** unfavorable performance reviews in the past, would not say if the resignation was good for Port Huron. "**Tom** and I haven't always seen eye to eye, and I wish him well," he said.

Council members and city officials need to start searching for **Hutka's** replacement almost immediately, Councilman David Haynes said.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Thomas J. Hutka***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Times Herald (MI)

April 13, 2005

**Hutka Gets Mixed Job Reviews****Port Huron Mayor Says Manager Should Be Fired; Others Praise Work**

Author: Ryan Werbeck

It's become a rite of spring in Port Huron's city government: The City Council produces a wildly divergent slate of opinions on how **Tom Hutka** is performing as city manager. This year features Mayor B. Mark Neal, a longtime vocal critic of **Hutka**, wondering aloud if there are enough votes on the council to fire the city manager. The annual performance evaluations were made public Tuesday. **Hutka**, who's paid \$114,000 annually, was hired in 2001 to replace Larry Osborn, who was fired by the council in 2000 during a bitter political struggle within the city government. With written evaluations in place, **Hutka** can meet with council members face to face to discuss his job performance and respond in writing, both options he plans to pursue.

Councilmen Alan Cutcher, Jim Fisher, David Haynes and Mark Steinborn support **Hutka's** performance, while Neal and Councilwomen Sally Jacobs and Kim Prax said improvement is needed. "It's a shame with the staff working so hard and all of our accomplishments that council members Prax, Jacobs and Neal are attacking the integrity and ability of the city manager," **Hutka** said. "We're not going to let fighting and aggressive politics stand in the way of getting good things done for the city."

Most evaluations praised **Hutka** for work dealing with tight city finances and his relationship with the media. Neal wrote that **Hutka** struggles in his job and wonders if the best person is doing the job. "We need to discuss his future," Neal said. "But I don't know if the votes are there to (fire him)." Councilman Jim Fisher was at the other end of the spectrum in his review of **Hutka's** work. "The city manager we have is one of the most honest and honorable men I've come across in my mind," he said. Among Neal's complaints are not being kept informed of city business and e-mail being used as a means of communication from **Hutka** to council members. Under Port Huron's form of city government, the mayor is a largely ceremonial position, and the daily administrative power is concentrated in the hands of the city manager - who is hired by the council.

Communication is a hot topic lately because of the trouble plaguing the county government a few blocks from the Municipal Office Center. The county is embroiled with budget overruns for its new jail and accusations ex-county Administrator Troy Feltman did not inform commissioners about major cost changes with the project. "I'm hearing about things on the street before I'm notified," Neal said. "I just don't want to be part of the same predicament (as the county)." **Hutka** said his form of communication is dictated by the importance of the topic; phone calls and face-to-face discussions are used for bigger issues and e-mail for informational-type items.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Thomas J. Hutka**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Lifelong Port Huron resident Marty Marshall was surprised the job review again was divided. "I think he's doing a good job," he said. "It seems like the city is going in a good direction." Marshall said the city's work to find more activities for people and rehabilitating neighborhoods - both **Hutka** priorities - must continue. Some on the council agree. Steinborn doesn't agree with Neal's assessment **Hutka** isn't performing well. "I don't get the impression he's struggling," Steinborn said. "He inherited a strong staff that's allowed him to address bigger things the council has put on their agenda, like blight."

**WHAT THEY SAID CITY MANAGER'S EVALUATION**

Port Huron City Council members rated City Manager **Tom Hutka** in seven areas. Here's a sampling of what they said:

**ALAN CUTCHER:** "**Tom** has continued to be an excellent city manager for Port Huron. He has embraced new ideas and opportunities through the year."

**JIM FISHER:** "I have always been pleased with **Tom's** communications with council. His personal integrity ensures his following both the spirit and letter of the city charter."

**DAVID HAYNES:** "The manager has demonstrated good leadership in his involvement and staffs regarding participating in attracting new investment."

**SALLY JACOBS:** "I am very concerned that after four years many of my original complaints and concerns regarding **Tom's** performance have not been addressed."

**MARK NEAL:** "In my opinion, Mr. **Hutka** is struggling as city manager. He has lost some respect in the community."

**KIM PRAX:** "I feel that **Tom** continues to do an exceptional job in the area of revenues. (But) I have a few areas of great concern. While I have always considered my communication with **Tom** to be exceptional, several recent events have led me to believe that the council is not informed of issues in a timely manner."

**MARK STEINBORN:** "In my opinion, the manager is at least satisfactory in every area. That is already enough to exceed expectations."

**A CLOSER LOOK**

**TOM HUTKA, 47**

**RESIDENCE:** Port Huron.

**OCCUPATION:** Port Huron city manager since May 2001.

**EDUCATION:** Bachelor's degree in civil engineering from Princeton University in New Jersey; master's degree in public administration from Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.

**FAMILY:** Wife, Ashley; and grown daughter, Stacey.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Thomas J. Hutka**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Times Herald (MI)  
July 31, 2002

**Hutka Wants to Look Ahead**

Author: Amber Hunt

Some might say Port Huron City Manager **Tom Hutka** is stuck in a carnival game of Whack-a-Mole: As past divisiveness among City Council members rears its head, **Hutka** starts whacking away - to no avail. "Most (residents) are frustrated because it looks like the city's going back into conflict," **Hutka** said Tuesday. "I keep telling them we're still focused on the issues." **Hutka** last week wrote a two-page response to a 10-page evaluation that calls the manager "invaluable" and "anal." **Hutka** was hired in May 2001. His first annual review was compiled this month.

The review, a compilation of the seven council members' individual re-views, sparked debate among council members because some accused Mayor B. Mark Neal of encouraging them to write negative reviews of **Hutka**. The composite review is mixed, calling **Hutka** "the best city manager the city has had in years" on one page, then blasting him for being "almost anal about small, petty things" on another.

In his response, **Hutka** said his first 14 months were challenging. "The first year in any management position is always a challenge," he wrote, "but I think as a team, we worked very hard and got a lot accomplished." He disagreed with some of the council members' individual comments, which were anonymous. He wrote that none of the complaints were discussed with him prior to his review. "Furthermore, none of the serious concerns are accompanied with specific examples," he said.

**Hutka** listed his top priorities as revitalizing the city's neighborhoods, redeveloping the downtown and providing high-quality, low-cost services to residents. He said he'd prefer working on those "important fights" rather than battling "previous conflicts" that seem to be resurfacing.

Resident Loren Richardson, 47, said it seems **Hutka** is caught between trying to please the council and the city employees he oversees. "He doesn't get an 'A' from me, either," he said. "I just want to see some leadership from him." Richardson, who lost a 2001 bid for a council seat, said he'd prefer the city switch to the mayoral form of city government.

**Hutka** was hired after a nationwide search to replace former City Manager Larry Osborn, who was fired in a 4-3 council vote in September 2000.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Thomas J. Hutka**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Times Herald (MI)

July 23, 2002

**Port Huron Council's Manager Critiques Destroyed**

Author: Amber Hunt

If three of Port Huron's City Council members organized to write negative reviews of the city manager, residents - and the manager - may never know. Mayor B. Mark Neal said he destroyed the documents that either would prove or lay to rest the allegation. "I was just following what had been done previously," Neal said Monday. "That's just precedent." The Times Herald asked for copies of the seven council members' individual reviews after some members said Neal encouraged them to write negative evaluations of City Manager **Tom Hutka**.

Neal said he couldn't give the documents to the newspaper because they'd been destroyed. City Clerk Pauline Repp, who's been clerk since 1989, agreed Neal was following protocol. Original copies of former City Manager Larry Osborn's reviews also were destroyed by previous mayors, she said. "The thinking is that it isn't important who said what," she said. "It's meant to be an overall evaluation." Each council member was asked in June to fill out an evaluation of **Hutka**. The final review finished this month was a compilation of the individual reviews. The overall review included comments ranging from glowing to critical, with no indication of who said what.

Neal dictated the overall review to Repp. She saw the reviews to more easily transcribe large blocks of text, and said every comment in the individual reviews was included in the 10-page overall review. Neal said after the final review was compiled, he destroyed the seven individual reviews. "What's the purpose of having them?" he asked. "This way, (**Hutka**) doesn't know who's making the comments, so council members can feel comfortable saying things frankly." Council members Kim Prax and Cliff Schrader last week said most council members were contacted by Neal and asked not to "sugarcoat" the evaluations.

An e-mail sent by Neal to Laurie Sample-Wynn and Jim Fisher refers to "grumblings in the community" about **Hutka**. "If you have heard some (grumblings) as well and you concur, please notate those concerns," Neal wrote. The mayor said he simply asked the council to be open and honest. He denied Schrader's suggestion the council's perceived minority - a 4-3 split in which Neal apparently is aligned with Sally Jacobs and Alan Cutcher - hopes to fire **Hutka** if the three gain an ally and control of the council in the next election.

Cutcher and Jacobs also denied the accusation. They said they wrote their reviews without input from Neal. "Actually, (**Hutka**) and I had gone out to lunch to discuss the evaluation after it was done," Jacobs said, adding the lunch lasted more than five hours. "I had some concerns in some areas. We discussed it, and I'm assuming he heard a lot of the comments and will work from there on them."

The overall evaluation rates **Hutka** a 3.8, or satisfactory to very good, on a scale from 0 to 5. In former city manager Osborn's 1998 review, he rated a 4.0, or very good. In 1999, the rating

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**Thomas J. Hutka**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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dropped to a 3.7. He was fired the next year after an election caused a shift in the makeup of the council. Previous managers were reviewed informally during budget session. **Hutka** on Monday said he has never seen the council's individual reviews. "I don't know what protocol or procedure was used in the past," he said. "This is my first evaluation." Schrader, who's serving his fourth term, said he assumed the individual reviews were put in the city manager's personnel file. Neal acknowledged he doesn't know why the practice of destroying the documents was adopted in the first place. "Maybe it's something we need to review," he said.



**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Thomas J. Hutka**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Times Herald (MI)

July 20, 2002

**Schrader: Neal Faction Takes Steps to Oust City Manager**

Author: Amber Hunt

At least two Port Huron City Council members have accused Mayor B. Mark Neal of trying to sway the council into giving the city manager a negative employee evaluation. Manager **Tom Hutka** was hired in May 2001. His first review, a compilation of individual evaluations written by the seven council members, was finished this month. **Hutka's** overall evaluation was rated a 3.8, or satisfactory to very good, on a scale from 0 to 5.

While some portions declare **Hutka** "invaluable" and "the best city manager Port Huron has had," harsher criticisms come under the headings "management responsibilities" and "leadership." "The lack of communication with other governmental entities is a concern. The inability to convey to his staff what he wants done, plus the lack of finishing projects or ideas is very evident," the review reads. The review consists of snippets of comments from council members, though it doesn't note which member said what.

Councilman Cliff Schrader, who is serving his fourth two-year term, said past managers have scored much higher than **Hutka**. He believes Neal tried to manipulate the evaluation by contacting council members and warning them not to "sugarcoat" the reviews. "He lobbied everyone except me to do a derogatory evaluation," Schrader said. "Mr. **Hutka's** evaluation, to be quite honest with you, was terrible for a CEO." **Hutka**, reached on vacation Friday, acknowledged the review was mixed. He said he's "not sure what happened behind the scenes" between Neal and the rest of the council. "I'm pleased most of the council members see I'm doing a good job for the city," he said. Neal did not return phone calls seeking comment Friday.

Councilwoman Sally Jacobs, who is considered by some to be in the minority of a 4-3 council divide along with Neal and Councilman Alan Cutcher, said Schrader's accusations are off-base. Neal called her about the review, she said, but only to help her out with what would be her first evaluation of a city manager. "He told me just to be honest about your thoughts and feelings and put them down," she said. Schrader said Neal, Cutcher and Jacobs are paving the way to fire **Hutka** if they gain control of the split council in the next election. Jacobs said that's absurd. "I don't enjoy firing anybody. I don't know if the city could go through something like that again," she said.

City Manager Larry Osborn was fired by a 4-3 vote in September 2000. Councilwoman Kim Prax said she, too, was called by Neal. "I thought it was a strange conversation. It was negative," she said. Neal also sent an e-mail to council members Laurie Sample-Wynn and Jim Fisher asking them to "answer each question sincerely and honestly. "There is a tendency to sugar-coat evaluations, so take your time. I have heard rumblings in the community of some concerns," he wrote. "If you have heard some as well and you concur, please notate those concerns." **Hutka** previously was assistant county manager for Osceola County, Fla.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Thomas J. Hutka***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Grand Rapids Press (MI)

August 4, 2001

**Restaurateur Aims to Get Dice Rolling****Tribes Usually Initiate Development of a Gambling Hall. This Time, a Potential Operator Wins Over Port Huron and Woos the Prospective Owners.**

Author: Garrison Wells

Better known for his Mr. Fabulous burgers, local businessman Don Reynolds is putting his money on becoming a Port Huron casino kingpin. The owner of the now-closed Mr. Fables burger chain and the Lakos restaurant in Grand Rapids -- who wants to attach a casino to his Thomas Edison Inn in Port Huron -- has laid out a \$50,000 bet that he can lure an Indian casino to the town of 33,000. So far, the dice are breaking in his favor. In an advisory election he bankrolled in June, Port Huron residents voted 54 percent in favor of his proposal. Talks now are under way with the Bay Mills Indian Community of Brimley, the tribe Reynolds wants to own and operate the proposed 120,000-square-foot casino. The casino would be hooked to his hotel by a walkway.

The tribe already owns the Bay Mills Resort and Casino and Kings Club Casino in Brimley, near Sault Ste. Marie in the Upper Peninsula. Tribal officials didn't return phone calls. The June vote was non-binding, but gives city officials a read on the electorate's opinion. Proponents said the casino is expected to be an economic windfall for Port Huron and has the backing of city officials. Supporters project the casino will bring in \$100 million a year, with \$5 million to be earmarked for city government and \$3 million for local charities. The casino is expected to provide 1,000 jobs with a \$30 million payroll, generate \$2.5 million in sales of goods and services, and boost tourism, a critical component of the area's economy. "We've worked hard on this," Reynolds said. "We're negotiating right now with the Bay Mills tribe and haven't arrived at anything yet." He declined further comment because of the continuing talks.

But critics are concerned that his tack on getting an Indian casino sets a dangerous precedent. Most Indian casinos have opened in Michigan after a tribe wins federal recognition, then obtains a compact with the state. Tribes then hire consultants or a management firm to operate the casino. Reynold's method has turned the procedure on its head. "It's a bad precedent in this state that now has 17 Indian casinos, whereby businesses can decide that they want to develop an Indian casino, and then set about to profit by finding a tribe that will help them get into the casino business," said casino opponent William McMaster of Birmingham, who is head of Taxpayers United. McMaster also questioned corporate funding for an election.

Port Huron city officials, however, defended the election. "He wanted the casino, so he paid for the election. It's was just logical," city manager **Thomas Hutka** said. The casino, to be built with the same decor as the hotel, would be called the Thomas Edison Casino. For Reynolds, at least part of the payoff would come from filling his hotel, banquet and conference rooms and restaurant. Two floors of the three-story casino would consist of gaming. The third floor is planned as an Indian museum. Still, winning the election only begins what could be a long

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**Thomas J. Hutka**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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process. Even if the Bay Mills tribe likes the idea, getting federal recognition can take time.. And Gov. John Engler has repeatedly said he will not negotiate any further compacts unless he is asked the Legislature. That puts the Bay Mills tribe in the same position as the Dorr-based Gun Lake Band of Pottawatomi, which wants to build a casino south of Grand Rapids, but has to get a compact with the state before it can move forward.

The difference, however, is that the Thomas Edison casino has the open support of Port Huron officials. "The project has the potential of not only providing direct cash benefits, but of increasing the number of tourists that come to the city," **Hutka** said. "There are great possibilities for spinoff tourism and trade from the casino." The city, he added, "is prepared to help with the development any way we can." **Hutka** added that money crossing the St. Clair River to the Point Edward Charity Casino in Sarnia, Ontario, would be more likely to stay in Port Huron.

To downtown Port Huron business owner Kathy Noetzel, however, it's too early to start celebrating a casino windfall. Some reports, she said, indicate that casino visitors don't spend money outside the gambling hall, while other suggest they spend freely. "You can take it or leave it as far as I'm concerned," she said. "If it comes to town, though, I hope it is successful."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Thomas J. Hutka**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Orlando Sentinel (FL)

January 28, 2001

**Osceola County Central Florida County Commission Change  
Top Jobs Change in office Shuffle**

Author: April Hunt

Two of Osceola County's three assistant managers will oversee major divisions of restructured government offices. The third, Larry Lenz, will drop down to office director of information services. Lenz will take a pay cut; exact numbers were not released. John Ford, who will become division director of administrative services, and **Tom Hutka**, who will oversee the public-works division, will have no change in their salary. "Change is not an easy process," said county spokeswoman Twis Hoang, noting that Lenz had requested his new post and has extensive experience in the field. Those moves, and several others, will be formally unveiled at the County Commission meeting Monday, scheduled to start at 1:30 p.m.

County Manager Bob Fernandez is restructuring the office hierarchy in an effort to make government more efficient and more responsive to residents. Commissioners have given him unanimous support in the move. The largest change -- eliminating the three assistant positions and creating an office of deputy manager -- is half-done. More than 35 people applied for the deputy position, none of whom now work for the county. The county has not held any interviews on the job, and it will remain open as the shuffling begins.

Another surprise in the restructuring is a decision by Tim Hemphill, executive director of the convention and visitors bureau, to turn down the newly created division director overseeing community services. That job will remain open, as will another division, overseeing public safety. The fifth division job, head of the growth/management department, will go to Mike Kloehn. He already handles that work as planning director and will receive no pay increase with the new title. Also open is the division director for financial services. Current employees have expressed interest in the job, and the county is also accepting outside resumes. A utilities-office head will be kept open indefinitely, as the county slowly reviews whether it wants to add that to the services it already provides, such as trash pickup.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Thomas J. Hutka**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Orlando Sentinel (FL)  
December 6, 2000

**Osceola County Central Florida Neighborhood Controversy  
BVL Struggles to Find Voice  
Buenaventura Lakes Has a Backlog of Unanswered Complaints, and Residents Have  
Become Apathetic**

Author: Pamela Mercer

Nine months ago, the Buenaventura Lakes Community Association seemed doomed. Its president, Tony Costanzo, had resigned after complaining that he was unable to work in an environment of apathetic residents, declining membership and unresponsiveness by the Osceola County government. Then, under a cloud of controversy stemming from disputes about election procedures, a new leadership took over. Beulah Farquharson and Cruz Castillo, two community activists, became president and vice president of the association with a promise to transform the group into an effective voice for the people. Today, the association remains a small and struggling group that finds itself revisiting issues that have plagued the community for years but remain unresolved. Apathy runs high, and despite efforts to publicize its events, many there do not even know the group exists.

Although Farquharson and Castillo have worked to increase the group's membership, the number of people present at the association's most recent monthly meeting did not surpass the usual 12 or 13, according to those present. Because an insufficient number of the five-member board of directors was present, there was not a quorum to make any decisions, Castillo said. Since February, Castillo and Farquharson indicate, the group and the county are no closer than they were when Costanzo left. The unincorporated community of more than 20,000 residents still has no government of its own. Neither does it have a high-ranking county representative to tend to its needs. For many, that person used to be Bob De Gori, the former Buenaventura Lakes director whose duties included listening to concerns and complaints by residents and reporting them to the county's management.

After De Gori's resignation last year, the county opted to eliminate the position and instead hire Maria Alvarez as community coordinator. Earlier this year, Alvarez was dismissed and replaced by Lizette Pagan. Pagan's former duties were taken up by others in the county's parks and recreation department. To some in BVL, this served as the latest indication that the county was leaving its largest voting block at the mercy of mid-level officials. "We have no direct person to deal with our problems with the county commissioners," said Alfred J. Switzer, a retiree who has lived in BVL for 19 years. "If we have someone who is employed by the county whose job it is to take our problems to them, he's speaking for 28,000 people."

**Thomas Hutka**, the assistant county manager, said the county decided to change the way BVL's concerns were dealt with by giving residents direct access to each county office rather than have their concerns centralized through one person. "When Bob De Gori left his position we were able to actually enhance the service that we have at BVL by dividing up his responsibilities and

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Thomas J. Hutka***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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having those responsibilities shared among several people who are with the parks department," said Osceola County spokeswoman Twis Hoang. Farquharson has been one of the most outspoken opponents of the new system, saying that it has made the county less effective in handling residents' concerns. "I get voice mail 24/7 with complaints about BVL such as zoning complaints and complaints that happen in people's neighborhoods," she said. "I call the county, same old joke, and nothing gets done."

Farquharson said she had recorded many of the complaints in a log book and had designed a complaint form for residents to fill out. She declined a request to review those records saying she feared that the county would dispute them. Switzer remembers how it used to be when he arrived in 1981. In terms of services, he said, "we're worse off now." County officials have defended this approach and argued that some residents in BVL may have overestimated De Gori's powers by characterizing him as a go-between for the government and the people.

Yet according to the county's own personnel records, De Gori's job description included acting as "a liaison between the residents of BVL . . . and the county manager's office." At \$51,095, De Gori's salary was more than \$20,000 higher than that of Alvarez or that of Pagan. Paul Owen, a recently elected county commissioner whose district includes BVL, said he plans to address long-standing problems facing BVL and other communities in his district. He met with residents from his district this week. County code enforcement officials say they get more complaints from BVL than anywhere else, usually answering between six and 10 telephone calls a day. But officials said they had no written records of the calls.

Walter Krujaick, the county's chief code enforcement officer said statutory provisions limit his power to enforce the codes. "People have rights, and I can't violate people's rights," he added. "There's a due process by law that's granted to the people." For some in BVL, however, such explanations echo comments they've heard for years. "BVL should be separate or should be part of Kissimmee," said William Franz, one of the residents who attended the community association's meeting and plans to join the group. "But not one or the other. Right now we have no representation."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Thomas J. Hutka***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Orlando Sentinel (FL)  
November 11, 2000

**Central Florida Osceola County Neighborhood Talk****Poinciana Envisions Future****About 300 People Met to Share Their Hopes and Fears and of What Their Community Will be Like in 20 Years**

Author: Pamela Mercer

Think of this community 20 years from now. What do you see? One group of Poinciana residents pondered the question Thursday night during a meeting that drew about 300 members of the nation's second largest master-planned community in the first attempt to devise a roadmap for the future. What they saw were trees, wide spaces and pedestrian-friendly roads.

They saw "the beautiful Florida sun smiling down on a peaceful, quiet community with plenty of vegetation," **Tom Hutka**, an assistant county manager of Osceola County, told the gathering. "The quality of the community is surrounded by trees and recreational facilities."

Others had a dramatically different view. As she held up a sketch on a large piece of paper that she and others used to present their vision, Barbara Erskine, who lives on Darlington Street, spoke of a convention center, a hotel, car dealerships and an auto-repair shop. "We see Poinciana growing and growing," she told the group. And then there were those who envisioned this community of 20,000 suffering through the growing pains of many large, dense suburban areas. Their drawings satirized what could happen.

Mickey Siegel, 72, of Hunter Circle, showed a woman flying from her house to Poinciana's very own Wal-Mart Supercenter with a Buck Rogers back pack. Penny Grace had her own tongue-in-cheek version of sprawl, depicting a busy, urbanized Poinciana "with Big Brother watching, police with traffic lights. I see youth not motivated. I see a YMCA there; there's adults in there, not youth. On one corner of the drawing, she depicted a "fat cat." These visions were shared during a session sponsored by the Kissimmee/Osceola County Chamber of Commerce's Poinciana Area Council at Deerwood Elementary School.

The gathering was led by facilitators from Community Vision, a group with a mission to make Osceola a better place to live. What emerged were almost as many visions as there were ethnic groups and ages gathered in the school's cafeteria. Poinciana, an area of more than 20,000 residents that has the potential to grow to 250,000, has grown slowly through the years. It is changing from an isolated haven of peace and quiet to a suburb whose increasingly younger and more active population is demanding the services of a city in a country setting.

This paradox came to light when facilitators asked groups of residents to write down a list of Poinciana's strengths, challenges and opportunities. What emerged was a group torn by its desire for peace and quiet and the need for amenities that might threaten such a way of life. Many agreed that Poinciana's sense of community, its diversity and its peacefulness were the traits that lured them there in the first place. Yet they expressed a desire for more gas stations, large

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Thomas J. Hutka**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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department stores and easy access to Interstate 4. The three-hour session was the first of its kind in Poinciana -- a chance for hundreds of residents to make suggestions for improving life and looking for ways to bring about those changes by themselves. Armed with these suggestions, the residents will break up into committees and address issues separately. Then, under the guidance of Community Vision, they will go about making their dreams come true. Some decisions involve spending millions of dollars. Others may warrant intervention by the county and the consent of the developer. "We will help them focus, but it's up to the people of Poinciana to make this happen," said Mike Horner, the president of the Chamber of Commerce. "Because not everything is free."



**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Thomas J. Hutka**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Orlando Sentinel (FL)

April 7, 2000

**The County is Looking for a Replacement – and Considering Nontraditional Candidates – for Manager Rob Magnaghi**

Author: Tyler Gray

Osceola County Commissioners talked this week about how and when they would seek interim and full-time replacements for Osceola County Manager Rob Magnaghi.

Magnaghi resigned, effective May 2, but he reiterated this week his willingness to help continue several large projects, including a new courthouse campus, an agricultural center and a county convention center. "Some of them are 20- or 25-year decisions for this county," Magnaghi said. Meanwhile, commissioners will look for a professional with an education in public administration or comparable experience to replace Magnaghi, who made \$100,800 a year. Some said they wanted to be free to pick from business people without government experience or assistant county managers already in Osceola. "I don't want this board to be trapped into only hiring people or to be reviewing people who have only been in city or county government," Commission Chairman Ken Smith said.

Assistant County Manager **Tom Hutka** was mentioned as a potential replacement, as were former Sprint executive and Economic Development Commission of Mid-Florida president Darrell Kelley and former Volusia County managers Tom Kelly and Larry Arrington. Arrington is not related to Osceola County Commissioner Mary Jane Arrington. "In the interim, it would be best if we tried to find someone from the outside to come in," Mary Jane Arrington said. Assistant county managers would then be free to pursue the permanent manager post without appearing to have an unfair advantage because of the interim-manager position, she said. She also recommended speaking with Leigh Root, assistant executive director for the Florida Counties Foundation. Root said she does not keep resumes but is able to help link up managers who are between jobs with counties who need interim administrators. The commission approved an advertisement for local and national publications. The target date for interviews is June 15. Finding an interim replacement will be the first priority, commissioners said. "I think we need to be thinking quickly in terms of getting someone to fill in," Smith said.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Thomas J. Hutka***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Orlando Sentinel (FL)

January 30, 2000

**Column: Osceola 2000 Forecast****A Look Ahead****Buenaventura Lakes Takes New Direction**

Author: Pamela Mercer

The new community coordinator for Buenaventura Lakes has to change people's opinions and overcome community apathy. Maria Alvarez, a social worker from Puerto Rico, vows to bring together children and families and said she would organize sports and social gatherings aimed at building unity within this culturally diverse community. "I'm committed to providing good services for the community," she said. "I'll be here for you, and I'll be hearing what you say." Her arrival signals a ray of hope to many here that the county may be making a commitment to its largest voting bloc. More than 20,000 people live in Buenaventura Lakes. "The county has never really taken BVL into consideration," said the Rev. Vidal Martinez, the pastor at St. Catherine's of Sienna Church, whose congregation includes many Hispanics. "[Alvarez] should be instrumental in seeing how we can work together."

During a recent BVL Community Association meeting, Tony Constanza, the group's president, told a small gathering of residents that he hoped Alvarez's presence would reawaken their interest in the community. Alvarez, 42, has a master's degree in social work from the Interamerican University in Puerto Rico. Previously, she worked at the Department of Children & Families and the Education Department in Puerto Rico. She moved to the Lakeside area 31/2 years ago and was appointed to her current post last month. She will earn about \$30,000 a year. Many say that as the community's main organizer, she faces an uphill battle to muster participation. County officials say their lack of support for recreational activities in BVL was partly because the county was engaged in financing and maintaining buildings and facilities.

**Tom Hutka**, an assistant county manager, said the decision to create Alvarez's position was part of a restructuring effort involving areas of the county bureaucracy that oversees BVL. In other changes, the county has transferred functions such as the maintenance of parks and facilities back to its own corresponding departments. "We want to turn the community center in BVL into a place where we can have our own events," **Hutka** said. "We want to be the instigators and implementers" of events. Most of BVL's upkeep is paid for by revenue from its Municipal Service Benefit Unit fees, a type of fixed tax charged to each BVL house for maintenance projects in the community. It is roughly equivalent to the assessment fees paid by Poinciana residents. A BVL homeowner currently pays \$37.65 per year. Overall, the county raises about \$300,000 annually from the fees, **Hutka** said.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Thomas J. Hutka**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Orlando Sentinel (FL)

January 26, 2000

**Garbage Landfill Cost Controversy**

**Trash is Creating a Costly Dilemma**

**If a Cheaper Replacement for the Southport Landfill Can't be Found, Trash Pickup Fees are Bound to Go Up**

Author: Tyler Gray

By 2007, money stored away for covering trash pickup and disposal in Osceola County will run out, leaders predicted this week. Without a trash fee increase or a money-saving alternative to the Southport Landfill, the cost of trash disposal will jump with inflation and population. The cost will lead to more than a million-dollar shortfall in the budget, leaders said. The good news is that the rates are safe for seven years. "If we find a replacement to Southport that's more cost-effective," said assistant county manager **Tom Hutka**, "we can go for many more years without touching rates." Without a more efficient way to get rid of the garbage county residents bring to the curb twice a week, commissioners will have to consider raising rates in the universal waste program, which started last October and serves most residents. "It's the position we're in," **Hutka** said. "We have to pay the bills."

The pressure is on. By court order, Southport must close by 2005. It is likely to fill up before then, said solid waste director Lenny Marion. The county needs an alternative - something to stretch the \$11.50 trash fee paid by almost every household. Finding the alternative will be a tricky task under a tight time line. Officials are about to open the floodgates. They'll invite companies to pitch trash incinerators, landfills and contract agreements with existing operations. Trash could be shipped to Okeechobee, Lake or Brevard counties. It could be burned or buried within the county limits. Leaders agreed this week to negotiate with the intent of making a decision by summer. Residents will live with their decision for decades.

Commissioners at a special meeting Monday said they wanted to nail down exactly what they wanted before asking companies to negotiate. "Prior planning up front will save you a lot in the rear end of this thing," said Commissioner Ken Shipley. Commissioner Mary Jane Arrington told purchasing manager Rey Palma that his time line for selecting a partner to built a landfill, an incinerator or another type of facility was a bit too ambitious. Palma had suggested soliciting trash company negotiations as early as Feb. 8. "I think you need to give yourself a little more time," Arrington said. She also said she would support a transfer station, regardless of the method of disposal the county chooses. Other commissioners questioned the need for a transfer station if the commission decides to dispose of trash within county limits, but all agreed to study the issue. A transfer station would cost about \$5 million, officials have said. Monday's meeting ended with a solution in motion. Commissioners suggested assembling a negotiating committee that would focus on choosing a trash company for Osceola's future. Palma agreed to return with a lengthier time line. "There are a lot of dollars here," Marion said, "and we need to make sure we make the right choice."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Thomas J. Hutka***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Orlando Sentinel (FL)

June 27, 1999

**Officials will Give Trash Plant Sniff Test****A High-Tech Incinerator, Along with Several Other Options, is Being Considered to Replace a Landfill That will Close Soon**

Author: Chris Cobbs

Osceola officials are flying to Minnesota, not to see snow melt, but to watch trash burn. They will study the operation of a high-tech incinerator to see if it makes sense to build a similar plant here. The Alexandria, Minn., facility also must pass an important sensory test. "As we drive up, we'll roll down our windows and see how it smells," said Assistant County Manager **Tom Hutka**. "We want to make sure it's a good neighbor for people living near it." If the nose says "no," then **Hutka**, Solid Waste Director Lenny Marion and other members of the party likely will return home with a negative recommendation. Until then, a similar trash-burning facility is one of several options being considered by local officials.

The County Commission said it wants to have a long-range plan for Osceola's solid-waste disposal by the end of 1999. That's because the county's Southport landfill may close as soon as 2003. As the county presses forward with plans for universal track pickup, a plan where all county residents will pay an equal fee to have trash and recycling material picked up curbside, it must decide what to do with the trash it collects. It could go to a transfer station, a sort of central holding area. Then it would be trucked to a permanent disposal site. It will be up to commissioners to decide the most economical long-term site for dumping, Marion said. One possibility is a huge landfill in Okeechobee County. Another is a proposed landfill near Holopaw.

If neither alternative works out, the board could send the trash to another site in Florida or possibly South Georgia. Still another alternative: Osceola's trash could be dumped in a new incinerator and sent up in smoke. That's where the trip to Minnesota fits into the planning picture. Unlike an incinerator in nearby Lake County, the Minnesota plant uses new technology, with no moving parts in areas where trash is burned, officials said. It's cheaper to build and operate than older-style facilities, officials said. "We can be economically competitive to a landfill, with fewer emissions and less groundwater contamination," said Ron Barmore, an official with the group that owns the Minnesota plant and proposes to build one here. The cost of the facility would be between \$32 million and \$35 million, he said. It would take six months to develop plans, a year for permitting and another 18 months to build.

Tipping fees likely would be in the range of \$42 to \$49, which is higher than the county wants, **Hutka** said. Current tipping fees at Southport are \$38, and the county hopes that even with inflation and the cost of building a new disposal plant, the cost won't rise past the low \$40 range, **Hutka** said. To get rid of trash via the Lake County incinerator would cost at least \$52 per ton, while it could be taken to a landfill at Okeechobee for about \$40 per ton, **Hutka** said.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Thomas J. Hutka**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The permitting process for the new, no-moving-parts technology could be lengthy because of concerns about air quality, Marion said. "You would be the new kids on the block," he told the County Commission. "This would be new technology in Florida." The county also needs to determine if it would need to build and operate a transfer station if it decides to use the incinerator option for disposal. A transfer station, which would cost about \$5 million, would serve as a collecting point. Trucks would haul trash to the centrally located transfer station, where a group of larger trucks would take it to its final destination.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Thomas J. Hutka***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Orlando Sentinel (FL)  
January 24, 1999

**Courts to Stand for Past, Future**

Author: Chris Cobbs

The best of past and present will help make up the new county courthouse complex. The creaky hardwood floors, tall windows and high ceilings of the third-floor courtroom at the Osceola County Courthouse are stately reminders of the 19th century. The new \$40.3 million courthouse that will soon begin to rise nearby will pay homage to the past, but also will feature modern touches, such as technology allowing witnesses to give testimony from across the country through videoconferencing. On the outside, the new building will look a lot like the old one, with the same red brick and a bell tower topped by a cupola. But the similarities end with the exterior touches, because the new courthouse will be designed with the aid of computers, every square inch catering to the needs of a fast-growing county. The new building will be home to, among others, court administration, judges, clerk of court and public defender employees.

Construction of the new complex is beginning, along with an expanded parking area. If there are no glitches, the building will open late in 2000, officials said. "We will have 12 courtrooms when we open and space for three more," said David Peach, capital projects manager for the county and construction manager for the courthouse. "Ultimately we could have 24 courtrooms in use by the year 2017. And we are trying to make it all as user-friendly as we can, taking into consideration the likes and dislikes of the people who will use it." The courthouse complex will include a six-story central office structure with a three-story wing on the west side.

In the future, a three-story wing could be built on the east, allowing for growth and adding symmetry to the building, Assistant County Manager **Tom Hutka** said. About 15,000 square feet - the equivalent of a couple of good-sized mansions - will be unfinished space, Peach said. The vacant space can be used for future offices or courtrooms. No estimate of the cost of finishing the empty space was available. "It is more cost-efficient to provide unfinished building space than to come back and put new additions on a building," **Hutka** said. "We are planning the building so courtrooms can be adjacent and other agencies will have space on the same floors. We will also have the unfinished space allowing for efficient expansion."

County Commissioner Mary Jane Arrington, who has been meeting regularly with judges, architects and others to plan the building, said the final proposals specified about 40,000 square feet more than discussed. "We realized we needed a little more space than we had been talking about," she said. "The larger building we have come up with gives us a comfort level for another decade. I think we will be in good shape through the year 2007." The courthouse project also takes in new parking, renovation of the administration building and restoration of the old courthouse. The county also is fixing up office space nearby at the site of the old Beaumont School.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Thomas J. Hutka**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Orlando Sentinel (FL)

June 28, 1997

**Osceola Suspends Officials for Inappropriate Activities**

Dateline: Kissimmee

Two zoning inspectors in the Osceola County zoning and code enforcement office were disciplined this week for inappropriate activities during work hours. Don Stewart was suspended without pay pending termination after being cited several times in the past year for leaving his work area without permission, insubordination and deficiencies in performance.

Norman Fout was suspended for five days and placed on special probation for misuse of county time, inefficiency and insubordination. Fout was accused of making "frequent unauthorized visits to your home, to restaurants, shops or stores," according to records.

"We are working hard to ensure that all county employees are putting in a full day's work and earning their pay," said **Tom Hutka**, assistant county manager.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Thomas J. Hutka***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Plain Dealer (OH)

August 23, 1995

**Council to Try to Determine Who Authorized Overruns**

Author: Robert J. Vickers

City Council hopes to find out who authorized \$2 million in cost overruns on the repaving of Prospect Ave. and to approve a lakefront maintenance cost-sharing plan when it meets today for its last monthly summer meeting. "It's fairly routine," Council President Jay Westbrook said of the daylong, meeting-of-the-whole session. "We try to keep the two summer sessions to the basics." On the table before regular meetings resume Sept. 11 will be further inquiries into who in Mayor Michael R. White's administration approved overruns for the street repaving and replacement of curbs and sidewalks on Prospect Ave. "Our big question all along has been, 'How did they occur and who authorized the overruns?'" Westbrook said. "If we can get an answer to that, we can move to settle the bill and get the contractors paid."

Rick Werner, executive assistant to the mayor, said the administration has told the council that former commissioner for engineering and construction **Tom Hutka** authorized the overruns and that the administration is eager to pay its outstanding bills. As a result of the overruns, the council passed legislation forcing the administration to report all city projects to the council that go over budget by 5 percent or more. A related project that Westbrook said the council will discuss with the administration is the Humphries Park and Service Center in Collinwood. Construction on the project has not begun, although it was approved as part of a 1994 bond issue. "We authorized Prospect and Humphries," Westbrook said. "In Prospect we get the work and the overruns and the other one we get no work at all. We want to know why there can be authorized overruns in one and no work begun in the other."

Council also will push to pass legislation so that the cost of upkeep and maintenance of public areas around lakefront enterprises - such as the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum and the Great Lakes Science Museum - is shared with the Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Port Authority. "It's really a way to cushion the cost to the city and create more participation by the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, the science museum and the Mather Maritime Museum," Westbrook said. "We want to see it in place before the opening of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame." The rock hall opens Labor Day weekend. The council is expected to approve legislation authorizing the administration to apply for and accept grants from the Regional CBTransit Authority and the Public Square Preservation and Maintenance Committee for the rehabilitation of Public Square. Westbrook said the council will probably hold off until September to take a closer look at what several council members believe are shortcomings in the Cleveland Public Power system. Last week's heat wave caused neighborhood wide power failures and led to White declaring a four-day heat emergency. "We're going to deal with that in much greater detail when we resume the regular session in September," he said. The council is also interested in learning what the reallocation of city services during the heat emergency cost, Westbrook said. "We've made an inquiry on that, and I don't think there's been an accounting on that," he said. "It's a question we've raised, but we won't expect it answered by Wednesday."



**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Thomas J. Hutka***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Plain Dealer, The (OH)

August 22, 1994

**On Certain City Byways, Residents Do Own the Road ‘It’s A Lot of Hard Work, But You Get to Know Your Neighbors ... and People Watch Out for Each Other’**

Author: Anjetta McQueen

From Lake Shore Blvd., four streets run to a small, grassy hill that slopes down into Lake Erie. They spread no wider than single cars. These streets, nestled in the northern edge of the city's Collinwood neighborhood, are framed by neat, cottagelike houses with children playing and adults strolling out front. At one of them, Meg Mills watches her husband, Nigel, shovel dirt onto stones that are the foundation of his street's new sidewalk. This is the price the Mills and about 80 households pay for streets that are considered theirs. "It's a lot of hard work," said Meg Mills, who grew up on Dalwood Dr. and now lives in the house on that street her grandfather owned. "But you get to know your neighbors really well, and people watch out for each other. It's like having a block group set up automatically." Dalwood, Bonniewood, Groveland Club and Overlook Park drives are designated as private - non-dedicated, the city calls them - which gives residents limited city services and greater power. The residents, paying the same tax rate as everyone else, get fire, police and trash services, but they must maintain their own streets, footing the bills for streetlights, paving and snow removal, among other things. But no one is allowed on the streets unless invited. And these streets boast one of the best lakefront views in Cleveland.

Some of the signs bolted on the trees and telephone poles at the street entrances off Lakeshore Blvd. make the point abundantly clear: "No Trespassing" warns one sign with red letters. "Private Drive" says another. The word "private" even appears under Dalwood's black and white street sign. And on Groveland Club, four signs are tacked to one tree. "It's not like there are armed sentries," said Councilman Michael Polensek, whose Ward 11 includes the private drives. "They're the ones who keep the grass cut, the trash cleared. They are the ones who pay the liability insurance. Because of that, they are entitled to a say in who comes in. "We're not talking about something that was put up yesterday," adds Polensek, who over the years has helped residents with minor trespassing issues such as teen-agers wanting to party by the lake.

The enclave goes back to the 19th century, when Collinwood was a separate village. Some of the streets in that village, which was annexed by Cleveland in 1910, were never built to conform with Cleveland city codes, so they remained undedicated. The area is predominantly white, with a few black families. The modest houses tend to be passed from one family to the next. At least one home has gone through five generations. Many of the deeds date to the 1920s and stipulate membership in clubs that operate much like a cross between a city block club and a condominium homeowners association.

**Tom Hutka**, engineering and construction commissioner in the city's Public Service Department, said streets such as the four in Collinwood are "fairly unusual." The department also has records of some public streets it has vacated, or relinquished, to private ownership. But for

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Thomas J. Hutka***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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the most part, the city doesn't have a complete count of private streets, he said. **Hutka** said he wouldn't even hazard a guess as to how many private streets are out there. Most of the private streets the department is aware of are little more than private driveways in housing subdivisions.

"Sometimes people come to us and say, 'We want you to take the street over.' But that depends on whether it was built to city standards or whether it serves the public interest. That's decided on a case-by-case basis," **Hutka** said. "In many cases, the streets were not built to city standards. The city does not accept a street just because somebody wants to donate it."

Meg Mills said there had been talk over the years of asking the city to take Dalwood and its neighboring streets back, particularly from older and lower-income residents who found street maintenance too costly. But there is less talk about it these days, she said. Polensek said that such an action, which must be approved by the City Council, would be highly unlikely, because the short, narrow streets do not meet city construction codes. "You would have to tear down half the houses," Polensek said. "We all know that's not going to happen."

Christine Story likes her street just the way it is. For the former Glenville neighborhood resident, this private swatch has given her something she's always wanted: a safe and close-knit Cleveland neighborhood. "This is it," said Story, 37, who moved onto Bonniewood with her husband, Carlton, and five children nine years ago. "It was the easiest move I've ever had. I grew up here, so I have had the opportunity to live all over Cleveland. Here, people come to the door and offer you cookies. You can go down the street and people will wave. "Some might ask you what you are doing there," she said. "Even so, they would wave at you first. How many places can you go in the city and see that?" Story, like Meg Mills, doesn't want anyone to think she's a snob on a country estate. In fact, she says, she and her neighbors recognize the greater need of a community that has been historically torn by racial and economic divisions.

That is the feeling behind their work in the Collinwood H.O.P.E. (Help Our Playground Exist) project, a plan to build a playground in nearby Euclid Beach Lakefront State Park. Mills said the playground project is important for more than just the children: "This is good for some of the new people. We're trying to get them involved, give them a little ownership in the neighborhood. "This area's been on the edge," Mills said. "We're fighting crack dealers, fighting litter. ... We might not be able to change things south of the boulevard. But we can spend four hours a Saturday hammering a nail, and that might help somebody find something inside themselves."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Thomas J. Hutka***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Plain Dealer (OH)

August 24, 1992

**Money Poured into City Streets**

Author: Pauline Thoma

Cleveland officials are spreading nearly \$76 million over the city's deteriorated streets and bridges. Having scooped up available dollars from every imaginable source, Service Director William M. Denihan is scrambling to transform that cash into concrete and steel. Denihan, who was hired by Mayor Michael R. White in November 1990, and his staff, which now includes the new commissioner of engineering and construction, **Thomas J. Hutka**, have developed an ambitious plan to repair the city's aging and crumbling infrastructure. They are concentrating this year on the transportation system in neighborhoods that for years have had little attention. To do that, they are using Cleveland's general obligation bonds and income taxes to attract far larger sums from county, state and federal sources, including Urban Development Action Grants and Housing and Urban Development grants.

That combination of money will pay for 39 projects, including improvements just completed, under construction or to be started before the end of 1992. The jobs include bridge replacements or renovations and street resurfacing from downtown to the industrial Flats and the far reaches of the city. The projects' costs total \$75.9 million. Of that amount, Cleveland is paying just \$14.2 million. Results of the endeavor already can be seen. One recently finished project is the new parking lot at the East Side Market, at E. 105th St. and St. Clair Ave., a job done with \$260,000 in federal grants and \$130,000 from the city. There was also the \$2 million resurfacing of West Blvd. completed with a combination of city bond issues and state Issue 2 funding, derived from voter-approved bond issues. Denihan said 154 Cleveland streets were resurfaced in 1991, and he hopes to complete another 160 before the year is over. But he deplores the red tape that prevents quick starts for many projects. "If we had to wait and go through the long process with the state and the feds on every project, people would be killing us because we're not getting things fixed," he said. "If it wasn't for help from Issue 2 and (Cuyahoga County Engineer) Tom Neff, we'd be in big trouble."

The projects, their locations, their total cost, Cleveland's contribution and their completion dates are:

1. PURITAS RD., reconstruction of hillside and roadway from Rocky River Valley to Grayton Rd.; \$1.8 million total; \$273,000 from Cleveland; completion November 1992.
2. W. 150th ST., resurfacing from Brookpark Rd. to Puritas Rd.; \$200,000 total; \$40,000 from Cleveland; October 1992.
3. W. 130th ST., replace Conrail bridge, lower and resurface the road beneath it, upgrade drainage; \$4.6 million; \$920,000; November 1993.
4. WARREN RD., rebuild from Lorain Ave. to Lakewood boundary line, \$1.6 million; \$510,000; September 1992.
5. WEST BLVD., rebuild from Jasper Ave. to Cliff Dr.; \$2 million; \$734,000; completed.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Thomas J. Hutka***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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6. W. 79th ST., demolish footbridge over RTA and railroad tracks and do not replace; \$190,000 from Cleveland only; October 1992.
7. W. 53d ST., rebuild bridge over Train Ave. and Conrail tracks; \$3.5 million; \$700,000; June 1993.
8. STORER AVE., rebuild between W. 65th St. and Fulton Rd.; \$1.7 million; \$425,000; December 1992.
9. FULTON RD., install safety netting on bridge over the Cleveland Metroparks Zoo until major renovation can be done; \$200,000 from Cleveland only; December 1992.
10. W. SCHAAF RD., resurface from Broadview Rd. to Brooklyn Heights boundary line; \$530,000; \$106,000; October 1992.
11. JENNINGS RD., reconstruct retaining wall on hill between Bern Ave. and Bradley Rd.; \$170,000 from Cleveland only; completed.
12. BRADLEY RD., from Jennings Rd. to Brooklyn Heights boundary line; \$500,000; \$250,000; December 1992.
13. W. 41st ST., resurface from Fulton Rd. to Lorain Ave.; \$1.3 million; \$260,000; November 1992.
14. W. 25th ST., rebuild bridge over RTA tracks; \$2.4 million; no cost to Cleveland; September 1993.
15. WASHINGTON AVE., rebuild bridge over abandoned Conrail tracks; \$520,000; \$174,000; completed.
16. CARTER RD., rebuild vertical lift bridge over the Cuyahoga River; \$14.8 million; \$2.9 million; November 1992.
17. EAGLE AVE., rehabilitate ramp and vertical lift bridge over the Cuyahoga River; \$6 million; \$1.2 million; October 1992.
18. ROCKWELL AVE., resurface from Public Square to E. 9th St.; \$83,000 from Cleveland only; completed.
19. E. 9th ST., resurface from Erieside Ave. to Broadway; \$1 million; \$256,000; December 1992.
20. CHESTER AVE., new sidewalks between E. 12th and E. 13th Sts.; \$75,000 from Cleveland only; completed.
21. JEFFERSON BRIDGE, rehabilitation over Norfolk & Western Railway tracks; \$220,000 from Cleveland only; May 1993.
22. INDEPENDENCE RD., reconstruct from Bading Rd. to Broadway; \$2.84 million; \$710,000; December 1992.
23. E. 71st ST., resurface from Grant Ave. to Broadway; \$670,000; \$134,000; November 1992.
24. UNION AVE., rebuild from Kinsman Rd. to Broadway; \$3.1 million; \$780,000; June 1993.
25. OUTHWAITE AVE., rebuild from E. 55th St. to E. 61st St.; \$120,000 from Cleveland only; completed.
26. E. 131st ST., resurface from Union Ave. to Garfield Heights boundary; \$730,000; \$146,000; September 1992.
27. MILES AVE., resurface from Broadway to Bedford boundary line; \$2.53 million; \$76,000; September 1992.
28. LEE RD., rebuild from Miles to Shaker Heights boundary line; \$1.26 million; \$182,000; June 1993.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Thomas J. Hutka**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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29. WADE PARK AVE., rebuild from E. 65th St. to E. 118th St.; \$2.4 million; \$863,400; completed.
  30. EAST SIDE MARKET, new parking lot; \$390,000; \$130,000; completed.
  31. LAKE SHORE BLVD., resurface through Cleveland between Bratenahl and Euclid boundary lines; \$800,000; \$24,000; November 1992.
  32. IVANHOE RD., resurface from St. Clair Ave. to Hillbrook Rd.; \$290,000; \$58,000; August 1992.
  33. E. 185th ST., from I-90 to Euclid General Hospital; \$580,000; \$116,000; August 1992.
  34. E. 55th ST., rebuild deck and replace beams of bridge over the Wheeling & Lake Erie Railroad tracks; \$840,000; \$168,000; December 1992.
  35. JENNINGS RD., erosion control at bridge over Big Creek; \$100,000; no cost to Cleveland; December 1992.
  36. KINSMAN RD., reconstruction of bridge over Norfolk & Western and RTA tracks; \$3.17 million; \$317,000; completed.
  37. LORAIN AVE., reconstruction of bridge over Norfolk & Western and RTA tracks; \$2.87 million; \$287,500; completed.
  38. E. 116th ST., reconstruction of bridge over RTA tracks; \$1.5 million; no cost to Cleveland; July 1993.
  39. EAST MEMORIAL SHOREWAY, reconstruction and safety upgrading from the east end of the Main Avenue Bridge to I-90 at the Inner Belt; \$8.16 million; \$333,000; July 1993.
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**Prepared by:** Amanda Dillabough and Cara Slade  
Colin Baenziger & Associates

COLIN BAENZIGER  ASSOCIATES

EXECUTIVE RECRUITING

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*Section 9*

*Patrick “Pat” S. Jordan*

*Lake Worth Beach City Manager  
Candidate Report*

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*Cover Letter and Resume*

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## Section 9

May 22, 2021

City of Lake Worth Beach  
Colin Baenziger & Associates

RE: Lake Worth Beach City Manager position

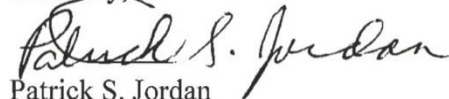
Dear Mayor Resch and Council:

Please accept these documents as application for the City Manager position with Lake Worth Beach. After many years spent in Alaska and Michigan, currently the Upper Peninsula, we look forward to moving to Florida, where our family and friends are, and don't want to wait until we retire.

I've gathered a wealth of experience in municipal management over the course of my career, and always learn more everywhere I go. I would love to meet with you and explore how I could be an asset to your community. While in Unalaska/Dutch Harbor, Alaska, I gained certifications in ICS 100-400. Tsunamis were the main threat in the Aleutian Islands and even though Unalaska was situated facing northeast, away from the "ring of fire", preparation was still necessary.

In addition to the years I've spent in this line of work, I also earned a Master's of Public Administration from Western Michigan University. Thank you for your time and considering me as a possible candidate for this position with your City.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Patrick S. Jordan". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Patrick S. Jordan

**Patrick S. Jordan**

1911 Park Ave  
Escanaba, MI 49829  
231-920-1122  
patrick-jordan@live.com

**SUMMARY**

Seeking a challenging, rewarding position as City Manager with Lake Worth Beach, Florida.

**PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

**City Manager  
Escanaba, MI**

**June 2017 – Present**

Chief Administrative Officer of a full-service municipality of 13,000 with a deep water port. Our budget, that I am responsible for assembling and managing, is \$30 Million including Electric, Water and Wastewater utilities. I am responsible to the 5-member City Council and serve at their pleasure. I am very active as a community liaison with other local governments, working groups, Tribal governments and committees with interest in the community. I oversee Directors of Water, Wastewater, Electric, Public Works, Recreation, Finance, HR/Treasurer, City Clerk, Public Safety and Library. We have a DDA that covers our approximately 1 ½ mile long downtown corridor. I arrived in Escanaba after the Court of Appeals decision in the “Dark Store” case, Menards v. City of Escanaba. I build support for our case through the MML, MTA and MAC and raised over \$200,000 in contributions from member communities to help fight this fight.

**Wexford County Administrator  
Cadillac, MI**

**November 2015 – April 2017**

Chief Administrative Office for the County, serving at the pleasure of the Board of Commissioners. Responsible for ensuring directives and policies of the BOC are implemented. Responsible for the day-to-day business activities of the County, Finance/Budget management and Human Resources including union negotiations. Staff resource to the Board of Commissioners on all matters facing the County and attend all BOC and Committee meetings. I served as liaison for various community commissions.

**Assistant City Manager  
City of Unalaska, AK**

**January 2013- November 2015**

I was the Director of Administration for the City. My duties included management of all HR functions, Risk Management, City Housing program and the Community Grants program, a program with a \$1 million annual endowment. I served as City Manager in his absence and therefore must stay current on all issues facing the city. I worked closely with the Tribe and the Native Corporation on various community projects. Unalaska had several Enterprise Funds. ICS 100-400 certification achieved.

**Borough Manager**

**November 2011-January 2013**

**Bristol Bay Borough, Alaska**

I served as Borough Manager with Bristol Bay Borough. Bristol Bay Borough is made up of 3 villages; Naknek, South Naknek and King Salmon. Children in S. Naknek are flown to school every day. We have an established Port but have also been accepted as part of a GO Bond by the State for \$350 million of which we are \$7 million for property acquisition and port expansion. My general fund budget was \$8 Million, with 40FT employees. In Alaska, the Native Corporations own virtually all lands, so good relationships are a necessity. I worked closely with the Native Corporation and the local Tribe on cooperative issues.

**Vital Records Manager**

**August 2008-November 2011**

**Tarrant County Clerk**

I served as Vital Records Manager for the Tarrant County Clerk's Office. I managed the operation of the main downtown office as well as the 6 Sub-courthouses throughout Tarrant County. Since joining the County Clerk's Office, Tarrant County agreed to assume Registrar duties for the City of Ft. Worth, and I was responsible for implementing organizational improvements to provide for a smooth transition. Under my leadership, we accomplished this and in the process won a 2008 5-Star Award from the Texas Bureau of Vital Statistics and a 2009 Exemplary Award, the first such awards since 2002. Our revenues approximately tripled from this transition. Under my direction, we were able to use new technologies and old ones to offer the 1.7 million residents of Tarrant County the ability to obtain their needed vital records at any of the 7 court house locations around the county.

**Township Supervisor**

**June 2004- August 2008**

**Muskegon, MI**

The oldest Township in Michigan, Muskegon Township has a diverse population of 19,000. As a full-service Township, I supervised Department Heads over Sanitation, Highway, Police, Fire, Inspections, Utilities and Economic Development.

The Township has 50 employees and a \$13 million budget. In addition to budget development and management, I dealt directly with issues related to expansions of our water and sewer systems and related financing, sustainable growth, economic development, industry retention, personnel administration and collective bargaining with 3 unions. As Township Supervisor, I was the Chief Elected Official and Chief Administrative Officer. I spent a good deal of my time and energy in the Economic Development area and I had good success, and that success continues today based upon the positive relationships I maintained with the business community. Muskegon Township maintains 3 enterprise funds, water, sewer collection and sanitation.

I was appointed, then elected, to a 4-year term and worked with a 7 member Board of Trustees elected at-large to 4 year concurrent terms.

**Adjunct Professor, Baker College**

**August 1998 – May 2008**

**Muskegon, MI**

Taught college level courses in American Government, International Relations and Regional Geography.

**Deputy Township Supervisor  
Muskegon, MI**

**March 2004- June 2004**

Appointed by seven member Board of Trustees.

**Deputy County Clerk Supervisor  
Muskegon, MI**

**April 2000- March 2004**

Served as Assistant County Clerk. I supervised the daily operations of the County Clerk's office. Coordinated County Elections which included optical scan programming, training, and facilitation of elections throughout the county with a population of 170,000. Managed the Circuit Court jury system and developed and implemented an enforcement system for "no-show" jurors.

**Friend of the Court Investigator**

**January 1998- April 2000**

Ottawa County Family Court  
Grand Haven, MI

Managed a caseload of 1,400 domestic relation cases, enforced court orders, and investigated child support, parenting time, and custody matters. Facilitated agreements with parents concerning support and parenting issues. Served as the enforcement officer for hearings in open court.

**Corrections Officer**

**May 1994- January 1998**

Ottawa County Sheriff Dept  
Grand Haven, MI

Supervised and performed intake, classification, administration and court commitments and dispositions of inmates. Coordinated LEIN operations. Maintained security of the 400 bed facility.

**EDUCATION**

Master of Public Administration, June 2000  
Western Michigan University  
Kalamazoo, MI

Bachelor of Science, Political Science, December 1995  
Grand Valley State University  
Allendale, MI

**Professional Affiliations**

- Muskegon Area-Wide Plan-Smart Growth/Sustainable Development
- West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission Board /MPO
- COPS (9-1-1) Board of Directors of Muskegon County
- Leadership West Michigan, Class of 2005
- Prison Liaison Committee, Brooks, MCF and Shoreline Correctional Facilities
- Muskegon Area First, Governmental Economic Development Agency Board of Directors

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*Candidate Introduction*

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**PATRICK JORDAN**

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**EDUCATION**

Master of Public Administration, Western Michigan University  
Bachelor of Science, Political Science/History, Grand Valley State University

**EXPERIENCE**

City Manager, City of Escanaba, MI	2017-Present
County Administrator, Wexford County, MI	2015-2017
Asst. City Manager, City of Unalaska, AK	2013-2015
Borough Manager, Bristol Bay Borough, AK	2011-2013
Vital Records Manager, Tarrant County, TX	2008-2011
Township Supervisor (Elected), Muskegon Charter Twp, MI	2004-2008
Director of Elections, Muskegon County Clerk, MI	2000-2004
Investigator, Friend of the Court-Ottawa County, MI	1998-2000
Deputy Sheriff, Corrections, Ottawa County Sheriff Dept	1994-1998

**BACKGROUND**

The City of Escanaba celebrated its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2013. Escanaba is at the center of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan and historically has been a hub for commercial activity involving rail lines and cargo/iron ore ships. We are a community of almost 13,000 residents, a wonderful quality of life, good schools, and 4 seasons of recreation. We are located at the crossroads of Highways 2 (east/west), 35 (north south) and 41 (north/south). Escanaba is a deep-water port with multiple private enterprises, and a public park system unlike anything I've seen in a community this size.

Escanaba has been embroiled in the "Dark Store Fight" with Menards, Inc, a Wisconsin-based home improvement store. I have reached out to municipalities around the state, including the City, County and Township Associations representing municipalities in Michigan, private individuals, and special interest associations both private and public, and have raised close to \$400,000 for this fight. Even the Michigan Dept of Treasury has made matching contributions to this fight, a fight that originated at the Michigan Tax Tribunal when Menard appealed the tax valuation of their new store. This fight has been going on since 2012. We've been to the Court of Appeals, where we were victorious, to the Michigan Supreme Court where we were also victorious, and back to the Tax Tribunal for a retrial where the Tribunal judges completely ignored the parameters handed down by the Court of Appeals. We have filed, again, for an appeal in the COA. We are a smaller town, but every entity in Michigan and elsewhere is watching this case, and we realize we are fighting for all of us.

**GENERAL, MANAGEMENT STYLE AND EXPERIENCE**

Michigan municipalities have only 2 main sources of revenue; property tax and state shared revenue, both of which have been reduced and not recovered even though State Revenue Sharing is constitutional. Locals do not have sales tax authority, and local income taxes are implemented in typically larger cities, and are not popular.

The City of Escanaba, and every other municipality in Michigan, has suffered greatly from reduced property values since 2009. Values are just now getting back to the pre-Great Recession levels. We have streamlined our operation, and are very adept at doing more with less.

My management and leadership style is very inclusive. My Directors/Department Heads are the experts in their respective fields and I involve them in decisions whenever possible. I realize where the buck stops, though.

I haven't met a manager, or anyone else in leadership, whose feet weren't made of clay. I try to always do the right thing, and I often fall short. I have had an employee test positive for marijuana use, an employee who had a CDL as a requirement of their job. I knew the regulations governing such a matter and kept the employee rather than fire him, which was allowed. I had to convince my Board of Trustees, because elected officials almost always believe that because we're public, we always have to come down on the harshest end of the disciplinary spectrum where there is no grace or mercy. I differ...usually. In this case, the employee was corrected, paid for his own drug tests every month for 2 years, and is now a retired employee. I see him occasionally at high school football games and we catch up.

I'm not afraid to show mercy. I am a man of faith and I'm aware of how imperfect I am, and how much mercy I'm given on a daily basis. With that being said, I'm not gullible, either. I've had to fire employees a handful of times.

During my term as Muskegon Township Supervisor, in addition to the previous paragraph's content, our Township and 2 others fought what the media called the "Water Wars" with Muskegon County. During the 80s, groundwater contamination was detected in a neighborhood on our north side that was shared with 2 other Townships, Laketon and Dalton. This neighborhood was downstream from a superfund site. The County received grants to build a water system, but bonding was also necessary. The 3 Townships worked with the County Board of Public Works, a subset of the County Board of Commissioners, and bonded under Public Act 185. PA 185 allows municipalities to bond under a County BPW and gain the bond rating of the County. PA 185 gives the County "ownership" of the system, but in a managerial sense and only as long as there is debt on the system. When the debt is gone, ownership reverts back to the Townships. In 2003, new County Commissioners were elected. They in turn hired the formerly contracted legal counsel as an employee, who mislead them regarding ownership and control of the water system on the north side. Federal EDA and State MEDC grants were applied for and awarded to extend a pipe further to the north to serve Michigan's Adventure, an amusement park



### **PATRICK JORDAN**

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owned by Cedar Fair (Cedar Point). The County thought they owned the system and could do what they wanted, thus the first shot in the “Water War”. I was appointed Muskegon Township Supervisor in early 2004 and this was on my plate.

The Townships pushed back, believing we had the law (PA185) on our side, and we were right. This “War” was fought largely in the newspaper, and the County’s attorney was hoping, goading us in to filing a lawsuit, which we knew strategically was the wrong thing to do. So, we didn’t, and the fight continued for a year. In the end the County Board realized we were right, fired their attorney, and the County Board Chair, who is an honorable, good man, stepped down. He felt responsible for allowing this to happen. I had been attacked publicly many times through this process as I was growing thicker skin. We, the 3 Townships, mended the relationship with the County, bonded again under PA185 to complete the water extension to the north, and served more pockets of the community on the way north that badly needed good water. It’s important during times like this to not “think more highly of yourself than you ought”. Muskegon Township, as I said, was the 800 pound gorilla when it came to development east and north of us, due to our proximity to the City of Muskegon. But I’ve always found that a little humility, and a healthy sense of self, can go a long way toward resolving even the most heated disagreements.

Challenges I see the Lake Worth Beach community facing in the near future are:

- Controlled, intentional development. As folks from other states leave and migrate to Florida, we will need to control the push for development. This must be accomplished while always considering the residents who are living there now, and who have spent their lives in the community.
- We need law and order in our communities; it’s what our taxpayers pay for and have an expectation of receiving. Palm Beach County Sheriff provides police services. We must continue to fully fund such services.

My first six months will involve:

- meeting with and getting to know, and earn the trust of , my department heads, elected officials not just in LWB but in surrounding communities, citizens’ groups and other stakeholders.
- Diving into the budget. Not being from Florida, I’ll need to know the revenue streams as well as the expenditures.
- Analyzing the operation of the city’s various departments. Listening to Department Heads and their suggestions in looking for efficiencies that can be created.

In my free time, my wife and I enjoy travelling, visiting with family, boating and fishing.

**PATRICK JORDAN**

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**SIX ADJECTIVES OR PHRASES I WOULD USE TO DESCRIBE MYSELF**

- Grounded
- Comfortable in my own skin
- Open
- Honest
- Adaptable
- Collaborative

**REASON FOR DEPARTING CURRENT POSITION**

I'm in a good place with a good city Council. My Council appreciates, trusts and respects me, and that is what every manager seeks.

My wife and I know that we will retire to Florida. Her family is there and my closest friend is there. With that being said, why wait to retire? I have worked in different states and have always learned more wherever I have gone. At this point in my career, with the knowledge and experiences I have compiled, I believe I have a great deal to offer the residents of Lake Worth Beach. To be honest, after 4 years in Alaska and 4 years in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, and vacationing in Florida, we're ready.

**CURRENT/MOST RECENT SALARY**

My current compensation is \$133,600 per year, plus an additional 10% into a 457K, this being in addition to the 401a, the standard defined contribution plan, which is an employee 3%, employer 7% mix.

## **Section 9**

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*CB&A Background Checks*

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**Background Check Summary for  
PATRICK "PAT" S. JORDAN**

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**Criminal Records Checks:**

Nationwide Criminal Records Search	No Records Found
County	
Delta County, MI	No Records Found
Wexford County, MI	Results Pending
Aleutians West, AK	No Records Found
Bristol Bay Borough, AK	No Records Found
Tarrant County, TX	No Records Found
Muskegon County, MI	No Records Found
State	
Michigan	No Records Found
Alaska	No Records Found
Texas	No Records Found

**Civil Records Checks:**

County	
Delta County, MI	Results Pending
Wexford County, MI	Results Pending
Aleutians West, AK	No Records Found
Bristol Bay Borough, AK	No Records Found
Tarrant County, TX	No Records Found
Muskegon County, MI	Results Pending
Federal	
Michigan	No Records Found
Alaska	No Records Found
Texas	No Records Found

**Motor Vehicle**

Michigan	No Records Found
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**Credit**

Excellent

**Personal Bankruptcy**

No Records Found

**Sex Offender Registry**

Not Listed

**Background Check Summary for  
PATRICK "PAT" S. JORDAN**

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<b>Education</b>	Confirmed
<b>Employment</b>	Confirmed except for: Wexford County (2015 – 2017) Muskegon, MI (2004 – 2008)
<b>Social Media</b>	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  
PATRICK "PAT" S. JORDAN  
Personal Disclosure**

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**Personal Disclosure Questionnaire**

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Name of Applicant: Patrick Jordan

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?  
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.  
LinkedIn.com
9. Is there anything else in your background that, if made public, would cause you, our client or our firm embarrassment if it came to light through the press or any other mechanism?  
Yes  No
10. Please provide a list of any lawsuits in which you are or have been a party either as plaintiff or defendant.  
City of Escanaba v. Menard, Inc The 'Dark Store' case.

Attested to: Patrick Jordan  
Signature of Applicant

Please email this form via PDF DOCUMENT to [Lynelle@cb-asso.com](mailto:Lynelle@cb-asso.com) or via fax to (561) 621-5965 no later than 5:00 PM PST 06/28/2021.  
(Note: Please be sure to sign the form with your actual signature if you are sending Fax or PDF Document)

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*CB&A Reference Notes*

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**Reference Notes  
Patrick Jordan**

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**Ralph Blaiser – City Council Member, Escanaba, MI 906-553-3644**

Mr. Blaiser has known Mr. Jordan since 2018. Mr. Blaiser enjoyed working with Mr. Jordan. He is extremely good at his job and knows how to get things done.

Mr. Jordan makes good decisions. He weighs out the pros and cons. If a decision is not within his authorization, he sends it to the city council and they vote on it. He knows his responsibilities and how they connect with the rest of the municipality. He does well at following the set processes and doing things the way they should be done.

In order to maintain a transparent relationship with the public, Mr. Jordan talked on the local radio station every Friday morning. City Council meetings are televised and he makes an effort to talk individually with members of the community. In addition to having good communication with the public, Mr. Jordan is a good public speaker as well. He keeps Mr. Blaiser and the city council informed as well through well-written emails.

As a leader, Mr. Jordan is collaborative. He encouraged his team to work together to solve problems. His team all works well together. When faced with problems, he knows how to consult experts so he can solve the issue quickly and correctly. Problems can be stressful. When in a stressful position, Mr. Jordan responds well. He does not act out or push it on other people.

Mr. Blaiser enjoyed working with Mr. Jordan and believes that he would be a good municipal leader in a different community. He does not want to lose Mr. Jordan but understands that career growth is valuable. He has all the necessary skills to succeed. He was not involved in anything controversial or negative. He acts professionally and is respectful to his coworkers and employees.

**Words or phrases used to describe Patrick Jordan:**

- Intelligent,
- Knowledgeable,
- Personable, and
- Talkative.

**Strengths:** Intelligent, knowledgeable.

**Weaknesses:** Talks a lot.

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**Kim Gustafson- HR Director and Treasurer, Escanaba, MI 906-399-5087**

Ms. Gustafson has known Mr. Jordan since 2018. While being in Escanaba, Mr. Jordan has had a good job performance. He and Ms. Gustafson interact almost every day and they are always

**Reference Notes  
Patrick Jordan**

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positive interactions. Since she is the HR Director, she was not able to speak to some of his qualities but gave as much information as she could.

Mr. Jordan is always looking out for his employees. He cares about them and their wellbeing. When he came to Escanaba he noticed that many staff members were underpaid. He advocated for them to the council and made sure that the people who were underpaid received salary increases. He is a strong leader and lets his staff work without hovering or taking control. He communicates with his staff well.

It is important for a municipal leader to be an effective problem solver. Mr. Jordan had to hold negotiations with six different union groups. They all had different demands and expectations, but he was able to settle with all the unions. They did not have to go further into the process.

When interacting with the public, Mr. Jordan helps each person feel heard. He has given out his personal number to individuals. He wants people to feel comfortable coming to him with questions and concerns. He believes that customer service is one of the most important parts of his job. In order to be more accessible, Mr. Jordan participates in community group such as the rotary club. He also attends city events such as the city-wide cleanup.

Ms. Gustafson recommends Mr. Jordan for another municipal leadership position. He has improved Escanaba and brought creative ideas to the community. He is a strong leader and a good communicator. Because of the nature of her job, she was not able to comment on his background or professional conduct.

**Words or phrases used to describe Patrick Jordan:**

- Friendly,
- Outgoing,
- Trusting of employees,
- Team player,
- Innovative, and
- Responsive.

**Strengths:** Knowledgeable about municipalities, gets along with many personalities.

**Weaknesses:** None identified.

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**Rob LaMarche – Employee, Escanaba Public Safety, Escanaba, MI 906-399-2725**

Mr. LaMarche has known Mr. Jordan since 2017. Mr. Jordan is Mr. LaMarche's supervisor. As a supervisor, Mr. Jordan gives support to his employees. He wants them to succeed and grow

**Reference Notes  
Patrick Jordan**

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professionally. He trusts his employees and communicates his expectations well. He is a clear and direct communicator.

As a decision maker, Mr. Jordan tries to be innovative. In Escanaba, there was a beautiful waterfront that was underdeveloped. Mr. Jordan saw the area's potential to be a developed waterfront that would enhance the community. Some community members did not want the area to be developed. In order to compromise, Mr. Jordan developed part of the waterfront and downtown but also preserved the natural beauty of the area.

Mr. Jordan values the members of the public. He shows his personality and is accessible. He is knowledgeable about topics and answers questions clearly and with language that the general public can understand. When he is faced with problems, he researches the issue and discusses the potential solutions with his team. From there, he makes a decision, and they move forward. Problems can be stressful, but Mr. Jordan does not let stress inhibit his work. He never yells or raises his voice.

Mr. LaMarche recommends Mr. Jordan as a municipal leader. He has honed his skills throughout his career and knows how to help communities. There is nothing in his background that would be embarrassing for a potential employer. His conduct is always professional and he respects those that he works with. He would be a valuable asset to any community.

**Words or phrases used to describe Patrick Jordan:**

- Caring,
- Calm under pressure,
- Sensitive,
- Confident,
- Interesting, and
- Attentive to detail.

**Strengths:** Communication, making decisions, can address difficult issues.

**Weaknesses:** He is sometimes easily distracted.

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**John Bergman – City Attorney, Escanaba, MI 906-241-2257**

Mr. Bergman has worked with Mr. Jordan since 2019. Mr. Bergman is the city attorney and they work together on legal matters involving the city. Mr. Jordan's did excellent work while he was in Escanaba. He is productive and ensures that things get done in a timely manner.

Mr. Jordan excels at making sure all a municipality's affairs are done in the proper legal way. He is good at dealing with the city council. He helps each member feel like their voice is heard and

**Reference Notes**  
**Patrick Jordan**

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like they are getting their goals accomplished. He is able to navigate politics and legal processes easily.

When in the community, Mr. Jordan makes sure to be accessible to the public. He has closed the gap between the government and the public by emphasizing transparency. Public perception is important to him and he strives to be honest with the community. He has reached out to the local newspaper several times to share news about the municipality. He values speaking with the public about issues and hearing their questions.

Mr. Jordan is good at solving problems and negotiating difficult situations. In 2021, the labor unions had negotiations with the city. Usually, negotiations are a long and arduous process. With Mr. Jordan and the city's treasurer working together, it went smoothly. Everyone was satisfied with the outcome. He is talented at working out finances and knows how to budget.

As a leader, Mr. Jordan is involved. He likes to be part of projects and aware of his employees. He knows the right people to talk to in order to get things done. He is communicative and makes sure everyone is on the same page. When hiring people to add to his team, he always finds someone who has the right skill set. Instead of worrying about personality fit, he ensures that they will be able to do the job that needs to be done.

Mr. Bergman recommends Mr. Jordan as a municipal leader. He handles stress well and is a dedicated leader. He is responsible and accomplishes things as quickly as possible. He has experienced some friction with the City Council in Escanaba based on personalities, but nothing has escalated or become an issue. He likes to joke around and occasionally says things that are taken the wrong way, but when he realizes his mistake he sincerely apologizes. He is excellent at his job and there is nothing in his past that would prohibit him from applying his skills in a new community.

**Words or phrases used to describe Patrick Jordan:**

- Diligent,
- Caring,
- Dedicated,
- Knowledgeable,
- Enjoys his job, and
- Loyal.

**Strengths:** Knowledgeable about municipal leadership, diligent in follow-through, dedicated to his community.

**Weaknesses:** He says things that he should not at times.

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**Reference Notes  
Patrick Jordan**

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**Thom Bell – Council Member, Unalaska, AK 907-359-5533**

Mr. Bell worked with Mr. Jordan while he worked in Unalaska from 2013 to 2015. While he was there, he did a good job. He was outgoing and met many people from the community. He gets along with many people and their different personalities.

Mr. Jordan was able to make good decisions while in Unalaska. He is able to look at the overall picture and choose a direction that will get the end goal accomplished.

He was active in the community. He was personable and easy to talk to. As a leader, he worked well with his staff and the city council. He is comfortable delegating because he places trust in his employees.

Mr. Bell believes that Mr. Jordan is a good candidate for a municipal leadership position. He handles stress well as a result of his even temper. He was never involved in anything negatively controversial and was always professional. He would be able to apply his talents in any other community.

**Words or phrases used to describe Patrick Jordan:**

- Friendly,
- Outgoing, and
- Knowledgeable.

**Strengths:** Connecting with people.

**Weaknesses:** None identified.

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**Kim Peterson – Recreation Director, Escanaba, MI 906-280-0067**

Ms. Peterson has known Mr. Jordan since 2017 when he started in Escanaba. He succeeded there. He had a good job performance and everyone he met liked him. They interacted well on a professional level. He held weekly meetings for department heads and he remained available to them at all hours of the day. Under his leadership, all the department heads got along and respected each other.

Mr. Jordan is not a micromanager. He encourages his department heads to run their departments. He gives each department head the ability to work on their own projects. He encourages communication between everyone and they have meetings to share their progress.

As a community leader, Mr. Jordan made sure he was involved with local groups such as the rotary club and the chamber of commerce. He ensures that the community feels involved by

**Reference Notes  
Patrick Jordan**

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being on the radio every week to inform them of progress. The community appreciates his transparency.

Ms. Peterson believes that Mr. Jordan is a competent leader who has valuable skills. He has city management experience and is good with working with a team. There is nothing in his past that is concerning and his conduct while in Escanaba was exemplary. He would be a good municipal leader in a different community.

**Words or phrases used to describe Patrick Jordan:**

- Open communicator,
- Finds solutions,
- Team player,
- Community member, and
- Family-oriented.

**Strengths:** Budgeting, financial security for the city, relies on department heads to run their departments.

**Weaknesses:** He was not a local and had to get to know the stakeholders and the people in the community which had been there for years.

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**Beau LaFave – State Representative, Michigan House of Representatives, MI 906-282-3004**

Ms. LaFave has known Mr. Jordan since 2015. She believed that his job performance exceeded expectations. He was in touch with the community and was willing to work with people. The two of them interacted every few weeks. When Mr. Jordan has a problem he asks her for help and vis versa.

Mr. Jordan made sure that he was involved with his community as much as possible. He attended community events such as fundraisers. He also attended public meetings. At meetings and in his regular day-to-day, he listened to the public. He heard their problems and made it clear that he personally cared about their concerns. He would tell members of the public that he would do his best to resolve their issues.

Regarding finances, Mr. Jordan improved the state of Escanaba when he took over. He is not opposed to making difficult decisions even if they aren't widely popular. In order to get more money flowing into the reserves, he made the decision to raise the price of water. This decision was not popular, but it was ultimately beneficial for the city's finances.

Reference Notes  
Patrick Jordan

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Ms. LaFave believes he would be able to implement his knowledge and skills in a different community. He was never involved in anything controversial that would reflect negatively on him or his career. His attitude is always professional and he is loyal to his responsibilities.

**Words or phrases used to describe Patrick Jordan:**

- Considerate,
- Hardworking,
- Thoughtful,
- Engaged,
- Communicative, and
- People-person.

**Strengths:** Communication, listening, problem solving.

**Weaknesses:** Outside the box thinking.

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**Thomas Hogue – Pastor, Sebastian, FL 239-443-9579**

Mr. Hogue grew up with Mr. Jordan. He does not know him in a professional capacity but can speak to his character and personality.

Mr. Jordan is someone who makes a positive and progressive impact wherever he goes. He is a strong leader whose intellect and knowledge lends itself to strong relationships and trust. He has always been a good problem solver. He makes the best judgement call based on the circumstances and facts.

When he is stressed, Mr. Jordan puts things into perspective. He works out a way to get things where he knows they can be. He has vision for communities. He is patient with people working within a difficult process. He knows processes take time and he is empathetic to that struggle.

Mr. Hogue would recommend Mr. Jordan to a community who needs a hard worker with a leadership background. He is an effective problem solver and a dedicated public servant. There is nothing in his personality that is questionable and he acts ethically.

**Words or phrases used to describe Patrick Jordan:**

- Thorough,
- Trustworthy,
- Thinks through decisions,
- Responsible, and
- Has clear objectives.

**Reference Notes  
Patrick Jordan**

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**Strengths:** Understanding people, good sense of administration, smart, has a direction, vision.

**Weaknesses:** None identified.

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**Michael Holman – Former Police Chief, Unalaska, AK 907-359-1206**

Mr. Holman worked with Mr. Jordan from 2013 to 2015. He had a good job performance and handled controversial tasks well.

When faced with problems, Mr. Jordan is organized and collects information. He consults the people involved and comes to a decision. He is not afraid to correct his decision if it turns out another one is better. For example, because of Unalaska's location, housing is expensive and it is difficult to get people to live there. One of his projects when he arrived was securing grants to build reasonably priced homes. This was a solution that had not been considered before and was praised as innovative.

As a leader, Mr. Jordan was always participating. He made an effort to be involved in meetings. He also involved his management in decisions. He sincerely wants the people that work for him to grow professionally and succeed. When interacting with the community, he was always helpful and kind. The public felt like he genuinely cared about their concerns.

Mr. Holman highly recommends Mr. Jordan. He handles stress well and is a strong leader. He works his way through problems in an even-tempered way. He has never done anything unethical and always acted professionally.

**Words or phrases used to describe Patrick Jordan:**

- Intelligent,
- Committed,
- Hard worker,
- Ethical,
- Communicative, and
- Good manager.

**Strengths:** Smart, organized, responsible.

**Weaknesses:** Friction with elected officials.

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**Prepared by:** Trieste Sessions  
Colin Baenziger & Associates





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*CB&A Internet Research*

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**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Patrick S. Jordan**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Daily Press (MI)

March 6, 2021

**No Changes Made to Escanaba Animal Rules**

Author: Ilsa Minor

No changes have been made to Escanaba’s animal ordinance despite concerns raised by an Escanaba woman that limits on the number of dogs that can be kept in a home could prevent foster homes from taking in animals from the Delta Animal Shelter. The issue was first raised last month, when resident Kathy Woodbury approached the council saying she had been visited by an Escanaba Public Safety officer for violating the city’s animal ordinance while fostering dogs that were seized from an alleged puppy mill in Maple Ridge Township. Woodbury, who said she and her husband had been long-time fosterers of animals from the shelter, had dogs of their own, which pushed them above the legal limit of four dogs over the age of four months in a single residence. “We’ve been in this home for 16 years and we’ve never had a problem with any of this, but under the current ordinance it states that we would not be able to foster because we own four dogs,” Woodbury told the council at the Feb. 4 meeting.

While the council had mixed feelings on whether or not it was appropriate to adjust the ordinance in February, both Escanaba Public Safety and the Delta Animal Shelter were quick to say the ordinance should not be adjusted. “The Delta Animal Shelter has created an internal policy to not send any foster animals to homes above the amount in the city (or) county ordinances going forward. It was not ever our intention to put foster people in noncompliance. I do not think the ordinance should be changed. There could be too much room for abuse or manipulation but people not affiliated (with) nor overseen by our organization. Changing the ordinance will also not resolve civil disputes between neighbors. We honor the ordinance as it stands,” Council Member Peggy O’Connell read from an email attributed to Delta Animal Shelter Manager Sue Garland during the February meeting.

In an effort to better understand the issue, City Manager **Patrick Jordan** and Council Member Ralph Blasier, who also sits on the shelter’s board and said he would not vote on the issue, met with Gartland and Escanaba Public Safety Director Rob LaMarche. Both Gartland and LaMarche were still of the opinion the ordinance should go unchanged. “Looking at this whole thing, kind of holistically, this is a matter of our ordinance. This isn’t an animal shelter thing, this is our ordinance. The chief and I don’t feel that any changes are warranted,” said **Jordan** said during Thursday’s regular city council meeting. “The internal controls that the animals shelter uses are more than sufficient and the ordinance that we have in place is sufficient, and I’ve always felt that when you have an extreme situation — a rare, extreme situation — come along and you pass policy based on that rare, extreme situation, you get bad policy.”

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Patrick S. Jordan***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Daily News (MI)  
July 28, 2020

**Delta County Helps Support Escanaba’s Dark Store Fight**

Author: Jordan Beck

The Delta County Board of Commissioners has unanimously approved a \$10,000 payment to the city of Escanaba, supporting the city in its continued tax dispute with Menards. In May 2020, the Michigan Tax Tribunal issued a ruling on the long-running dispute. The City of Escanaba found the ruling — which required it to reduce the taxable value of the Menards store in Escanaba and reimburse the store for previous years’ taxes — unsatisfactory. Because of this, Escanaba City Manager **Patrick Jordan** asked the Delta County Board of Commissioners for additional funding in a letter sent last month.

The board discussed the possibility of providing the funding to the city during a meeting held in early July. As a city representative was not in attendance at that meeting — and the county needed to determine where additional funding in support of the city would come from — the matter was tabled at that time. **Jordan** was present at a board meeting that took place July 21. There, he provided additional context on the tax tribunal’s ruling. According to **Jordan**, one of the three judges that heard the case had their term expire before a decision on the dispute was made, leaving two judges to write the decision. “The way the story was told, they were on opposite ends of the philosophy of the dark store argument. And so after a year, I almost felt like they just said ‘let’s just get this done,’ and they wrote an opinion,” **Jordan** said. **Jordan** said city officials decided to appeal the decision. He noted this process should cost significantly less than the original trial. “There’s no new evidence submitted, so the costs are limited — but, still, we’ve spent so much money on this as it is now,” he said.

Later in the meeting, County Administrator Emily DeSalvo spoke about where additional support to the City of Escanaba could come from. She said previous payments to the city were taken out of a budget line item for professional services. “We looked at where it came from the last few times that we’ve given that, and we could pull some money from that and we’d probably have to supplement from the general fund and the administration line item, as well,” she said. A motion was made to put \$15,000 towards the city’s legal fight. Due to concerns about the amount of money available for this purpose, the motion was ultimately withdrawn and replaced with a motion to provide \$10,000 to the city. That motion was approved by board members.

In other business, the board voted not to rezone a parcel in Perkins from Residential to Commercial 1. This was in keeping with a recommendation made by the Delta County Planning Commission earlier in the month. Dollar General was looking to build a store on the property — a proposal which was controversial among local residents. Significant opposition to the store was voiced by people living in the area at both the planning commission meeting and Tuesday’s board meeting. “There’s no compelling reason to change this property. We already have a store, and I believe we can only support the one store,” Baldwin Township Supervisor Gregory Stevenson told board members.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Patrick S. Jordan**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Radio Results Network (MI)

January 3, 2020

**Escanaba City Council Denies Land Sale Request**

Author: Jack Hall

The Escanaba City Council voted unanimously Thursday night to deny a request from a lakeshore property owner to acquire about three-one-hundredths of an acre of city-owned property. The council voted 5-0 after several people spoke against the proposal during public comment. Those citizens objected on their belief that the city's charter prohibits the sale of city-owned land without a referendum approved by three-fifths of the city's residents.

Escanaba City Manager **Patrick Jordan** says the city was going to give the land to the state DNR, which could then have sold it to this Lakeshore Drive landowner at its discretion. He says the property owners are having a hard time maintaining access to their land because of rising Lake Michigan water levels. "The boundaries of her property kind of shocked me when I saw the survey," **Jordan** told RRN News. "It looks like a parallelogram shape. She just wanted to just buy a small triangular piece of our lot next door to square off her's. They need access to the back of their property to reinforce it against the high lake levels. That's kind of what started the whole thing, and it's kind of morphed into several different arguments over the course of time."

**Jordan** says he doesn't believe that it is against the city's charter. "We were just going to 'quick-claim' 3/100ths of an acre back to the state, who was the original owner of the property," **Jordan** said. "Then the state could do whatever they wanted with it, including selling it to this particular landowner. That was kind of the plan." **Jordan** says there could be a land swap in the future rather than the proposed sale. Also Thursday night, the city council set January 16<sup>th</sup>, February 19<sup>th</sup>, and March 20<sup>th</sup> as dates for public hearings on the next city budget.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Patrick S. Jordan**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Radio Results Network (MI)

November 11, 2019

**Escanaba City Manager Jordan Signs New Contract**

Author: Jack Hall

The City of Escanaba is no longer looking for a city manager. In a surprise move at Monday night's city council organizational meeting, an agenda item was added to discuss the resignation of Manager **Patrick Jordan**, and whether to offer him a contract to stay on. **Jordan** had announced that he was taking a job in Florida, but he accepted the new contract offer after the city council voted, 4-1, in favor of the deal. "It was a tough decision back and forth," **Jordan** told RRN News. "Florida is attractive. We have friends and family down there. But I just feel that right now, this is where I need to be. There's a lot going on right now, and we're going in the right direction. There's good things happening, and I want to be here to see it through."

"He has the knowledge of where we are today, and where we want to go tomorrow," Escanaba Mayor Marc Tall told RRN News. "He's been at the very start of the hotel project, and he's been deep into the dark store arguments. I'm looking forward to working with him, and with our two new council people." The new contract includes a pay increase from the current \$100,000 a year to \$125,000. Escanaba had received 35 applications for the city manager position, but chose the status quo. "I've read all 35 applications that we have to date, and when I go through them, only two have actual municipal management experience," councilman Dr. Ralph Blasier told RRN News. "There are a lot of people with degrees in public administration, but only two actually have real experience. We have one here who we have experience with ourselves for two years. We know his capabilities, and they're really good."

Tyler Dubrow, who along with Karen Moore were sworn in at the beginning of the meeting, voted no. Dubrow argued that **Jordan** should be free to re-apply for the position, but the other applicants should be given a chance. Moore voted yes, saying that **Jordan** was one of the reasons she chose to run for the city council in the first place. Tall, who was appointed to his fifth term as mayor earlier in the meeting, also voted yes, as did Blasier. Councilwoman Peggy O'Connell was pleased, saying several times in her remarks that she did not see this coming, and that it was a total surprise. O'Connell also voted yes, saying that **Jordan** has done a good job, and it would cost the city more to hire and train a new member."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Patrick S. Jordan***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Daily Press (MI)

October 4, 2019

**Escanaba City Manager to Resign**

Author: Isla Matthes

After two years managing Escanaba’s day-to-day operations, City Manager **Patrick Jordan** announced Thursday he is resigning from his position with the city. “It’s with a bit of hesitation that I submit my resignation as your city manager,” **Jordan** read at Thursday’s city council meeting from a letter sent to Mayor Marc Tall earlier in the day. “I’m truly grateful for the opportunity provided to me by the Escanaba council and residents. I’ve enjoyed my time here and the friends that I’ve made, but at this time it’s best for my family and I to transition to a new position. I hereby submit my contractual 60-day notice with my last day — official day — being Dec. 1, 2019.”

**Jordan** was hired to lead the city on June 28, 2017, following the retirement of former City Manager Jim O’Toole, who worked 29 years for the city including 10 as the city’s manager. However, **Jordan** was not the first choice for the council, which initially hired former Negaunee City Manager Jeff Thornton. The offer to Thornton was later rescinded. “This is a sad day for the city. I think most people know Mr. **Jordan’s** not my first choice, but he was the best choice,” said Council Member Ralph Blasier. Prior to **Jordan’s** time with the city, he served as the administrator of Wexford County in downstate Cadillac. He also worked in the public sector as an assistant city manager and borough manager in Alaska, vital records manager in Texas, township supervisor, adjunct professor, and deputy county clerk in Muskegon, and a friend of the court investigator and corrections officer in downstate Grand Haven. “**Mr. Jordan’s** much more intelligent than I ever expected, he’s much more knowledgeable about running a city than I ever expected, and he’s doing a great job. And I thought right (away) that we were underpaying him, and now we’re reaping the consequences of that,” said Blasier.

When it came time to approve **Jordan’s** resignation, Blasier abstained. The rest of the council accepted the resignation. The council took preliminary steps to fill the position Thursday by approving the posting of the same job description used for **Jordan’s** hire through a number of channels including newspapers, direct emails to Upper Peninsula city managers, municipal and government job boards, and social media. “I don’t believe we need to go over every step in the process at this point, but I do believe we need to begin the process, because 60 days will move quickly,” Mayor Marc Tall told the council. Following the meeting, **Jordan** told the Daily Press he will be relocating to Florida. He also said he has enjoyed his time with the city and working with the city staff. “It’s been good. I’ve enjoyed it. I enjoy the community. I love it up here, I do, but right now, now’s the best time,” he said, adding he and his wife are now empty nesters. Tall also reflected on **Jordan’s** time with the city. “He’ll be missed, I think he’s done a fine job for the city over the last the years and especially the work he’s done with (property developer) Proxima to reach an agreement with the county and the developer to transform the old jail property into what we hope will be a new landmark for the city of Escanaba,” said Tall referencing a new hotel planned for the site.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Patrick S. Jordan**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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News Advocate (MI)  
July 30, 2019

**Council Extends Offer of City Manager Position to Patrick Jordan**

Author: Sean Bradley

After extensive interviews Tuesday, the Manistee City Council voted to extend an employment offer for the position of city manager to **Patrick Jordan**. The approving vote of 6-0 — council member Ed Cote left the public discussion before the vote due to an unexpected family emergency — was cast after interviews were conducted with the candidates and after council members held a public discussion. Council also voted to have Michigan Municipal League facilitator Kathie Grinzinger conduct other due diligence including a background check through a third-party firm, a drug screening and reference checks.

A vote was also cast to have city attorney George Saylor begin contract negotiations with the candidate pending the other due diligence being completed. During the public discussion held in the council chambers at Manistee City Hall, council member Eric Gustad, who made the motion to conduct a vote in favor of **Jordan**, said he liked **Jordan's** responses to council's questions. "I do believe he had as strong grasp on what we're looking for" Gustad said. "He understood roles and services, that we have a limited budget and he was familiar with the theater issues and the historical significance of those things." **Jordan** was interviewed along with the other four candidates — Ryan Heise, Kevin Bookout, Anton Graff and Timothy Wolff — after council narrowed down the candidate list last month that was gathered by Grinzinger, who was hired by the city in April to conduct the candidate search.

The assistant city manager of Unalaska, Alaska, **Jordan** served as Muskegon Township supervisor from June 2004 to August 2008, as an adjunct professor at Baker College and as Muskegon County deputy county clerk supervisor from April 2000 to March 2004. He obtained a Bachelor of Science in Political Science in 1995 from Grand Valley State University and a Master of Public Administration degree in 2000 from Western Michigan University. Each council member asked the candidates, including **Jordan**, the same three questions pre-determined by the MML covering a variety of subjects including prior work experiences, management style and how it would help Manistee, challenges the city faces and what each candidate's first three months as city manager would be like. Council members also asked follow up questions when appropriate. Manistee mayor Colleen Kenny asked Wolff how the city would reach an agreed-upon vision and capitalize on setting a unique sense of place.



**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Patrick S. Jordan**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Daily News (MI)  
April 20, 2019

**Tax Panel to Conduct Key Hearing in Michigan ‘Dark Store’ Dispute**

Author: Jordan Beck

Representatives of the city of Escanaba will be heading to Lansing for a Michigan Tax Tribunal hearing on a dispute between the city and Menards next month. Escanaba City Manager **Patrick Jordan** gave community leaders an update during a Delta County Joint Governmental Roundtable at Escanaba City Hall earlier this week. The hearing is set to take place May 13-17. According to **Jordan**, he and Assistant Assessor James McNeil plan to attend the first two days at minimum. “(We’ll) be there for that, at least,” he said, noting these days will likely make up the most important part of the hearing.

Over the past few years, Menards and Escanaba have been involved in a legal battle related to the “dark store” tax method. Menards has claimed the value of their Escanaba store should be based on a closed and empty building, otherwise known as a “dark store.” For years, retailers have convinced the Michigan Tax Tribunal their Michigan big-box stores should be assessed in this manner due to their large sizes and unique layouts. These decisions have resulted in losses of revenue and subsequent budget cuts in numerous affected communities.

Since its first property assessment appeal in 2014, Menards has appealed additional annual assessments with the Michigan Tax Tribunal. The tribunal ruled in favor of the retailer, and the city and other local tax entities were ordered to refund a portion of taxes paid by Menards and to reduce its property assessments. The city of Escanaba continued to fight the decision, and in the spring of 2017, the Michigan Court of Appeals issued a decision in favor of the city. In response, Menards filed a request to have the case heard before the Michigan Supreme Court. As the court declined to take the case, it returned to the tax tribunal.

**Jordan** voiced his confidence in the people helping Escanaba with the case. “We have a very, very good, very professional legal team that’s working on this that’s engaging other professional experts to testify,” he said. According to **Jordan**, the final result of the dispute could have a direct impact on other dark store cases in Michigan. “There is no underlying legislation that governs how to value these properties ... so, in the absence of legislation, some case law is going to have to suffice for the time being until the Legislature can catch up,” he said. The result could also have ramifications for dark store cases across the country.

Due to the case’s potential significance, **Jordan** said the city has requested financial support from other Michigan communities. “We’ve asked municipalities all over the state to contribute to our cause, and they have,” he said. But next month’s hearing may not mark the end of the dispute. “If it doesn’t go in our favor, we’ll have to take a step back, consider the cost of going forward, and make a decision on whether to go forward or not,” **Jordan** said. The case could also continue if the tribunal rules in favor of the city. “I believe the other side would appeal if they lose at the tribunal,” **Jordan** said.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Patrick S. Jordan**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Associated Press State Wire (MI)

October 11, 2018

**Escanaba Passes the Hat for Big Tax Showdown with Menards**

Local governments in the Upper Peninsula are raising money to pay expert witnesses in a major dispute over the taxable value of big-box stores. The Michigan Tax Tribunal will hear a case next year involving a Menards store in Escanaba. City Manager **Patrick Jordan** says Escanaba is trying to raise \$200,000, which would trigger another \$200,000 from the state Treasury Department. **Jordan** says approximately \$171,000 has been raised. Marquette County has given \$10,000.

Big-box stores have been reducing their tax bills by convincing the Tax Tribunal that their stores are so unique that they should be assessed at much less than the cost of construction. The loss of revenue has hurt many communities. The state appeals court rejected Menards' approach and told the tribunal to allow the parties to present more evidence.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Patrick S. Jordan**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Daily News (MI)  
July 10, 2018

**Dickinson May Help Escanaba in ‘Dark Store’ Challenge**

Author: Jim Anderson

Dickinson County will consider helping the city of Escanaba in its legal battle with Menards over property taxes, noting the case has statewide ramifications. Escanaba is seeking \$200,000 in funding from other Michigan municipalities to “set a precedent” in the Michigan Tax Tribunal and “end the dark store war once and for all,” a June 29 letter from Escanaba City Manager **Patrick Jordan** to other Michigan municipal leaders states. The Michigan Association of Counties and Marquette County have each pledged \$10,000, said Dickinson County Commissioner Joe Stevens. A contribution from Dickinson County might be in the range of \$1,000, although no figure has been determined, according to Controller Brian Bousley. In 2016, the Michigan Court of Appeals ruled the Michigan Tax Tribunal had “committed an error of law” when it reassessed the value of Menards’ Escanaba store and reduced the city’s tax assessment on that property more than 56 percent for three years.

Menards appealed the decision to the Michigan Supreme Court, which refused in October to hear the case. After that denial, the Michigan Court of Appeals remanded the case back to the state tax tribunal to allow the two parties to present more testimony on the Escanaba Menards’ property value. The outcome of the remand hearing could have long-term implications on the “dark store” property tax assessment method, which reduces the taxable values of open and operational “big box” stores to that of closed and vacant buildings, **Jordan** said.

The case has been at issue since 2014, when Menards won an appeal through the tax tribunal, resulting in a three-year adjustment to Menards’ property value for its 166,196-square-foot building on 18 acres. The 2012 value dropped from \$48.43 to \$20 per square foot; the 2013 value from \$49.54 to \$21; and the 2014 value from \$50.88 to \$22, according to a May 14 Escanaba Daily Press article. As part of the 2016 appellate court ruling, the tax tribunal has been ordered to hear more evidence on deed restrictions — which limit what buyers can use vacant stores for — and hear more evidence regarding the cost-less-depreciation approach, which is one method used to determine property value.

That is where the need for funding comes in, **Jordan** said, as demand for information far exceeds what would normally be required in a typical tax tribunal case. “Escanaba is aware that it cannot simply ‘show up’ for this critical hearing,” **Jordan** said. It must provide what the tribunal and the court of appeals is looking for: A comprehensive study of the dark store theory. **Jordan** said the issue is “a fight for all local units, not Escanaba’s fight alone, as no single unit can afford the challenge alone.” **Jordan** said Escanaba officials are mindful of the implication that accepting a settlement agreement from Menards may have if it were offered. “Other local units would then be forced to litigate the meaning of the Menards decision without the benefit of precedent in the tribunal that the forthcoming remand hearing could have established.” the letter states. “Because of the impact of a settlement on other local units, the city will refund all contributions if it settles

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Patrick S. Jordan**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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this case.” Dickinson County commissioners agreed Monday to act on the contribution request July 23. Bousley said the county would have to “scrape and scrimp somewhere” even to come up with \$1,000, but added, “I do think we have to do something. This is a very important case.”

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Patrick S. Jordan**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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ABC 10 Up (MI)

March 20, 2018

**Dark Stores Being Fought in Escanaba**

Dark Stores have become a harsh loophole to make the competition obsolete and has affected the communities negatively. But one town is still fighting against these stores and their loop holes within the law. The town of Escanaba is bringing the fight to stop these loopholes from affecting their surrounding businesses and the affect it has on the economy. And the people of Escanaba have been succeeding in their endeavors. “Every head in the audience was nodding in agreement that what I said was that we are all in this boat together. We’re fighting this fight, Escanaba happens to be the one city that challenged that appealed the Wright case and its continuing and we’ve won the court of appeals and we’ve won in the Supreme Court. And now it’s going back to the Tax Tribunal for a retrial,” said, City Manager of Escanaba, **Patrick Jordan**. The Michigan Department of Treasury and the people that are trying to fight these Dark Stores will continue the fight on fixing this issue within the Michigan economy.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Patrick S. Jordan**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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ABC 10 Up (MI)  
December 22, 2017

**City of Escanaba Joins Lawsuit Against Opioid Manufacturers**

On December 15th, the City of Escanaba voted to join a lawsuit suing the manufactures of opioids in order to fight the drug epidemic. The lawsuit comes after statistics revealed that 80 percent of criminal activity in the city is directly and indirectly related to the opioid problem. The Escanaba City Council believes this is the best form of action to take. They are joining 100 other municipalities nationwide in the lawsuit. “The opioid epidemic is real, and it’s in Escanaba. We believe that we have taken the right step in joining with the other cities in counties to collectively sue the manufacturers and distributors of these terribly addictive drugs,” said Escanaba Mayor Marc Tall.

“It will take years to resolve this unless the manufactures, the distributors who are the defendants in this case want to settle which is something they could do, but we had to do it just as a step in the fight to defend our community,” said Escanaba City Manager **Patrick Jordan**. The citizens of Escanaba should be aware that it will not come at a cost for the city to join this lawsuit. All money is being paid upfront by attorneys and if the lawsuit is won, 70 percent of the winnings will be awarded to the participating cities.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Patrick S. Jordan**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Daily Press (MI)  
August 14, 2017

**City Manager Getting to Know Esky**

Author: Jenny Lancour

Escanaba's new city manager has been learning a lot about the city's operations as well as the community since he started working here last month. "I love it here," said **Patrick Jordan** when questioned by the Daily Press about how things are going since he took over for Jim O'Toole who retired after serving 29 years for the city including manager for the past decade. **Jordan**, who most recently served as the administrator of Wexford County in downstate Cadillac, noted that O'Toole is a "tough act to follow" because of his many years of experience with the city and the fact he is a native of Escanaba.

**Jordan** said the most difficult challenge for him, because he is not from the area, has been getting to know the community including his staff, the public, and how to get everywhere. "I think things are going well. I'm learning the faces and names and how the puzzle pieces fit together and finding my way around," he commented after the council's Aug. 3 meeting. **Jordan** said he is learning a lot of positives about the community which he has already grown to love. "I'm learning this is an active community. There is always something going on. There is a lot of group involvement," he said, adding he is looking forward to his family moving to Escanaba after his son graduates from high school next year. He also said it's been tough being separated from his family.

In the meantime, **Jordan** continues to get familiar with the city operations and staff as he fulfills his duties as the new city manager. In addition to tending to daily responsibilities and attending various meetings, he is working to keep the city on budget and on task with the union contracts which have yet to be settled. Council unanimously agreed to hire **Jordan** as Escanaba's new city manager on June 27. He had four days to transition into the job, shadowing O'Toole before he retired on June 30. **Jordan** signed a one-year contract and is earning a pay rate equal to \$95,000 a year during a six-month probationary period after which he will earn a pay rate of \$100,000 a year.

In addition to serving as Wexford County administrator, **Jordan** worked as: an assistant city manager and borough manager in Alaska; vital records manager in Texas; township supervisor, adjunct professor, and deputy county clerk in downstate Muskegon; and a friend of the court investigator and corrections officer in downstate Grand Haven. **Jordan** has served on professional organizations related to municipalities, economic development, emergency management, and correctional facilities. He also has experience regarding waterfront community ports and harbors.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Patrick S. Jordan**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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TV 6 Upper Michigan Source (MI)

June 29, 2017

**Patrick Jordan is in as Escanaba's New City Manager**

Author: Mark Cowman

Escanaba has a new city manager. At a special meeting of the city council Tuesday afternoon, **Patrick Jordan** was officially hired to replace outgoing manager Jim O'Toole. The council announced that they had completed a background check and contract negotiations. The background check revealed nothing that the council found objectionable and both sides were able to come to mutual agreement on a contract.

The council the voted unanimously to officially offer **Jordan** the contract which he signed at the end of the very brief meeting. When asked if he felt ready to start the job **Jordan** replied "I was here this morning bright and early. Just spending time with Jim, just shadowing him. He's showing me around the community. He's showing me the various things that are going on in the community. We talked a lot about the powerhouse, about the shoreline development. Just other issues facing the city". Current city manager Jim O'Toole is retiring this Friday after 30 years of service to the city of Escanaba.



**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Patrick S. Jordan***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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ABC 10 Up (MI)

February 1, 2017

**City of Escanaba Holds Press Conference, Thanks Workers and Community**

The city of Escanaba dealt with a severe water main break Thursday morning that caused the city to lose approximately 1 million gallons of water. Friday morning, the city held a press conference regarding the break and the response to the emergency. The break happened near the intersection of 1st Avenue North and 25th Street. Public safety and city workers had to deal with several issues in the process of fixing the problem. Mayor Marc Tall was the first person to speak at the press conference, which was held at the office of Public Safety. Tall started by thanking the all of workers who worked through the harsh conditions to ensure proper water function throughout the city. “I’m here to thank the city employees for the outstanding work they did yesterday,” Tall said. “To find the problem, to solve the problem, to clear the piles of ice that were created. And to thank our public safety department for keeping us safe and directing people away from the problem while our crews were doing so much hard work.”

Tall’s comments reflected on the work from more than one department in the city, and the way that each department worked together to get through the problem safely and quickly. But there was a lot of water that was being lost throughout the day, at first the break could not be located. “It took us several hours to locate the problem,” said Jeff Lampi, the Water/Wastewater Director for the city. “We lost most of the water in our south water tower. Luckily after several hours we were able to dig through a couple feet of water, DPW made burms to direct the water different directions to allow us access to valves. And we were able to shut that down and do repairs in the afternoon.”

Lampi said that this is a problem that will come up again as water main breaks are something that cities normally have to deal with. However, where the break was located and the weather issues that they dealt with made the problem a bit different than normal. The location of the break was near main highways and roads within the city, which also caused issues when it came to traffic. “It does take a little bit of time and effort to reroute all of that traffic,” said Director of Public Safety Robert LaMarche. “It was kind of nice for the time of the day. It was early enough before the big rush came in, so they were able to get the detours set up prior to the big rush of traffic.”

Overall, city and county officials were happy with the work that was done by the crew and city employees to find the break and contain the problem, as well as the community when it came to helping those workers. City manager **Patrick Jordan** has experience working in other cities, but said the amount the workers were able to accomplish on Thursday was unlike other situations that he’s seen. “These guys are in subzero temperatures and soaking wet trying to fix this pipe,” said **Jordan**. “I’m amazed at what happened yesterday. The amount of water that was coming out of that tank, the fact that it was fixed by 5 o’clock in the afternoon and the hole was filled in and everyone was on their way home was amazing. Because yesterday morning, that seemed like an impossibility, it was going to be a two-day event.”

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Patrick S. Jordan***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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“Kudos to the city, terrific job,” said Robert Berbohm, the Emergency Coordinator for Delta County. “You think of the weather conditions and what they went through and no injuries. No injuries. That comes from the top down. And kudos to the employees, I can’t imagine. I wouldn’t want to work in those conditions.” The city of Escanaba also released a list of individuals, organizations, and businesses that it would like to thank for helping with the fix and donating time or services in the process:

- City of Gladstone Water Department
- Ed Burnnette
- Jay DeShambo
- Mark Rose
- OSF/Bill Farrell
- Delta County Road Commission
- Emergency Management
- Delta County Sheriff’s Department
- Delta County Search and Rescue
- MDOT
- Rampart
- Central Dispatch
- Michigan State Police
- Rosy’s Diner
- Drifters
- McDonalds
- The Store
- Starbucks
- Viaus
- Mo’s Pub
- Oven King
- Bobaloon’s
- Lory Rymkos
- State Senator Ed McBroom and State Representative Beau LaFave
- All city departments that worked or offered help to solve this problem

Anchorage Daily News (AK)  
September 28, 2016

**Unalaska Housing Shortage Hits City Employees**

Author: Jim Paulin

Single police officers in Unalaska sometimes need to live on living room sofas in the absence of quality affordable housing, according to a report presented last week at a crowded special city council meeting on housing for everybody in general and city employees in particular. A housing shortage makes it hard to fill vacant city jobs, according to assistant city manager **Patrick Jordan**. "Oftentimes officers without families must share living space with roommates, sometimes couch surfing, and potential candidates with families are unable to accept offers of employment due to the lack of available and affordable quality housing," **Jordan** wrote in the Dec. 2 memo.

About 50 people packed the city council chambers. "Now I know how to get people to come to the city council meetings. Just put housing on the agenda," said city manager Chris Hladick. If housing is tight now, city officials worry it could get a lot worse in the future, if offshore oil development begins in the Arctic Ocean, with Unalaska as a staging area. According to city planning director Erin Reinders, the oil boom in Williston, North Dakota caused rents to double and then some, as the population grew about 50 percent in only three years, from 14,700 in 2010 to 21,000 in 2013. Much of the meeting's discussion centered on finding land to develop for new housing, and measures the city might take such as extending utility lines.

The prospect of Uncle Sam riding to the rescue was suggested in Reinder's presentation, calling for hosting a housing forum with various federal funding agencies including the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Housing and Urban Development, Aleutian Housing Authority, plus the state Alaska Housing Finance Corp., and Key Bank from the private sector. Local developers opposed the city building more housing for employees, complaining of unfair competition. "You're very lousy at it," said major local real estate owner Coe Whittern, complaining of the cost of the eight-unit apartment complex for city and school district employees in the valley where the city trailer park once stood.

Former city engineer Tyler Zimmerman defended the cost, saying it represented quality housing, although more units could have been for the same amount of money. City natural resources analyst Frank Kelty said the city was once forced to create a trailer park for city workers after waiting for private development that never happened. Kelty said he'd have preferred to see the mobile homes taken to the landfill. The "city trailers" however, continue as employee housing at Offshore Systems Inc. "The city does not want to be in the housing business at all," said mayor Shirley Marquardt.

The city currently owns 16 housing units, according to the planning department, with four apartments reserved for teachers and two units reserved for police officers. Local real estate owner Rufina Shaishnikoff said city housing should only be short-term, and that the workers

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Patrick S. Jordan**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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should eventually purchase their own homes. "I don't think they should live in city housing forever, certainly not for five years," she said. City councilor Zoya Johnson questioned if a housing shortage really existed, but councilor Yudelka Leclere had no doubts, citing multiple families sharing a single house. Councilor Dave Gregory quipped that perhaps the barge the city's hiring to remove scrap metal could arrive loaded with new houses.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Patrick S. Jordan**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Up North Live (MI)

July 6, 2016

**Commissioners Discusses New Option for Central Dispatch Services**

Author: Allison Scott

Central dispatch services could soon be changing in Wexford County. The Wexford County Board of Commissioners had a meeting Wednesday night where they discussed new options of carrying out services. Wexford County Administrator **Patrick Jordan** said the way central dispatch is run now is too expensive. He said the county pays about \$1 million a year to fund 911 services. According to **Jordan**, there are cheaper alternatives to carry out the services. One of those options is collaborating with Michigan State Police in Gaylord.

**Jordan** said if the county does this, it would save them more than \$4 million by 2021. "The number came in surprisingly low. I didn't expect anything like that," said **Patrick Jordan**, Wexford County Administrator. "It's one of those things where, personally I believe collaboration, collaboration is the best way to go if at all possible. It saves money. It saves a lot of money for the taxpayers for the people paying the bill."

**Jordan** said switching controls of central dispatch should not affect the services at all. Wexford County Central Dispatch serves around 33,000 people in the county. Currently the county's emergency services are maintained under the sheriff's office. While no formal action was taken at Wednesday's commission meeting, **Jordan** said the topic will likely come up again at their next meeting later this month.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Patrick S. Jordan***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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High Country News (AK)

August 13, 2015

**Shell Exacerbates Housing Shortage in Alaska Port Town**

Author: Ryan Schuessler

Not much has changed in Unalaska, Alaska, since Flor Luna had trouble finding a place to live when she moved here 14 years ago. “When I first came here, I put myself on every list [for housing] there was available,” Luna recalled. Nobody ever called her back. She wasn’t the first or the last person to struggle to find affordable housing in the town that hosts the country’s largest fishing port. Out of what she called sheer luck, Luna was eventually able to find a place to rent, but not everyone is that lucky. During peak fishing season, Unalaska’s population can sometimes triple, and there still isn’t enough space for everyone who pours into town looking for work.

And now tiny, far-flung Unalaska is bracing for another curveball: Shell. The housing shortage isn’t anything new – longtime residents can remember when people rented broken-down cars as a place to sleep, or made a camp in abandoned World War II-era bunkers. Today, it’s the oil giant’s fleet looming around the city’s harbor that’s making waves, and locals say affordable housing is getting even harder to find as a result. “We have a community who focuses really hard on bringing industry in and making it easy for industry to basically set up shop here,” said lifelong Unalaska resident and former city council member Dennis Robinson. But, he said, the community has “failed miserably” at making sure there is enough affordable housing for all its residents.

Royal Dutch Shell is using Unalaska and the adjacent Port of Dutch Harbor in Alaska’s Aleutian Islands, some 2,000 miles north of Seattle and 800 miles west of Anchorage, as a launching point for exploratory drilling in the Chukchi Sea – another thousand miles to the north. When the Obama administration gave Shell the thumbs up for exploratory drilling in the arctic earlier this year, it sealed Unalaska’s fate: Oil will leave its mark on this fishing town. To what extent is still up in the air, but residents are worried that if Shell finds oil up north, and its employees flood into Unalaska, even more locals will be priced out. “Especially during the fishing season, it’s already stressful enough,” said 25-year-old Unalaskan Andrea Treiber. “It’s going to be a whole lot harder if they live here.”

In the 1970s, a fishing and crabbing boom grew Unalaska’s population of just over 300 people by almost 300 percent. By the 2010 census, the population was nearing 4,500, and locals say the infrastructure never caught up. Unalaska’s remote location in the Aleutian Islands and the challenging topography keep development costs high, resulting in the housing shortage. If it’s available, many Unalaskans live in company housing built by their employers, such as the seafood companies that process fish in Dutch Harbor. Eighty percent of Unalaska’s fulltime residents rent. The lucky ones own their own homes.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Patrick S. Jordan***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Residents reported paying as much as \$800 a month for a small room with a bed, but no bathroom, or up to \$1,500 for a modest studio. Small houses can sell for more than half-a-million dollars. Even the city government has had a hard time finding housing for its employees. “When we have people we hire who come from the outside, they have nowhere to go,” said assistant city manager **Patrick Jordan**. At times, there have been up to a dozen city employees living in Unalaska without permanent housing. A 2010 study by the city found that Unalaska needed more than 300 additional housing units – a number that has since grown as the population increased over the last five years. City leaders have been talking about the housing shortage for decades with little turning up in terms of widespread, long-term solutions.

Now that Shell has come to town, the pressure to solve the problem has intensified. “The unknown is what effect the oil development is going to have on us,” **Jordan** said. “As a city we almost have to react to what happens after the fact.” That all depends on whether Shell finds oil in the Chukchi Sea. The list of unanswered questions keeps getting longer: Would the company keep Unalaska as its hub? If so, how many workers will be coming to town? If they come, where will they live? “We work and communicate locally to mitigate potential impacts in Unalaska,” Shell spokesperson Kelly op de Weegh said in an emailed statement. “As for the long-term future, our first step is to determine whether our Chukchi operations will lead to a commercial discovery.”

Shell employees and contractors have been coming and going since the company’s drill arrived in Dutch Harbor earlier this summer. Many of them stay in a block of rooms now on hold at the town’s one hotel, and rooms are released if they are not used, op de Weegh said. Locals say the company is tying up more of the already scarce short-term housing in Unalaska during peak tourism season. Locals also say the remote town’s cellular and Internet networks have slowed since Shell arrived, and that it takes longer for their mail to arrive. “People raised their [rent] once they heard Shell was coming in,” said Unalaska resident Delores Gregory. Before moving away for school several years ago, Gregory was paying \$1,700 a month for an apartment. A few months later in 2012, when Shell’s activity in Unalaska restarted, she heard that the unit’s rent had risen to more than \$2,000 a month. That’s how much Flor Luna and her husband pay now.

“It’s not like I can go down the road and find something cheaper,” Luna said. “We’d love to have something smaller so we don’t pay so much, but there’s nothing available.” “They’re having to move to Anchorage or other villages or down south to have a place to live,” Andrea Treiber said of her childhood friends. When she finished college a couple of years ago, Treiber wouldn’t have been able to afford to live in Unalaska if she hadn’t moved back in with her parents. “This is my home,” she added. “This is the only place I’ve lived.” Many in town fear that Shell’s arrival will turn Unalaska into the next Williston, North Dakota – the town of less than 15,000 residents that had the highest rent in the country after an oil boom more than doubled its population in 2014. “It’s already happened,” Robinson said of the oil giant putting more stress on Unalaska’s housing shortage. “And it’s going to get worse.”

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Patrick S. Jordan**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Bristol Bay Times (AK)

January 23, 2015

**Unalaska Officials Attend Marijuana Conference**

Author: Jim Paulin

Two senior officials of the Unalaska city government flew to a marijuana conference in Colorado last week. At last week's city council meeting, assistant city manager **Patrick Jordan** said city manager Chris Hladick was absent because he was traveling on city business to Colorado, to learn from that state's experience in legalizing marijuana. Alaskan voters similarly voted to legalize recreational marijuana in November, although it doesn't start taking effect until late February. **Jordan** said deputy police chief Michael Holman also attended the Colorado cannabis conference.

**Jordan** foresees the local city council adopting local regulations on marijuana. "If they do nothing, that's acting too. Then there will be no limit on it," **Jordan** said. Unalaskans voted in support of the ballot question on legalization. More than 500 people from 38 states packed a conference center just outside Denver last week for a crash course in "lessons learned" when it comes to marijuana legalization, according to the Alaska Dispatch News. Of the 500, 40 are from Alaska. They include members of local governments from Unalaska, Fairbanks and Anchorage as well as members of state government who in less than six weeks will begin making marijuana rules.

The Jan. 14-16 conference, "Marijuana Impact on Public Health and Safety in Colorado," was hosted by the Colorado Association of Chiefs of Police, near the "Mile High City" as Denver is known because of its elevation. A contingent of Alaska officials on Jan. 13 also toured several marijuana businesses in the Denver area, coordinated by the law firm, Vicente Sederberg, which specializes in marijuana legalization. Partner and founding member Brian Vicente said the tour sites included marijuana grows and facilities that make edibles. The law firm often leads such tours, he said, in an effort to help people understand the effects of legalization.

"At the end of the day, Colorado's law and Alaska's law are very similar," Vicente said in a telephone interview Wednesday. "... I think perhaps it's a glimpse into the future for those Alaskans that were able to come down here and see how regulated marijuana works." Vicente said he hoped the tour offered a counterpoint to the law enforcement conference. He was critical of organizers, noting law enforcement has consistently opposed marijuana legalization. "I think there is absolutely a degree of bias (at the conference)," Vicente said. "We think its important regulators meet with a diverse set of stakeholders, and law enforcement is an important voice, but when you have people who have opposed and imprisoned people over marijuana, it's tough to say you'll get correct information out of that meeting."

The conference, which costs \$325 per person, was open only to law enforcement personnel, regulators and policymakers. Media and the public weren't allowed in the sessions last week. The conference sold out, according to Marco Vasquez, chief of police in Erie, Colo., and marijuana



**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Patrick S. Jordan***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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director for the Colorado Association of Chiefs of Police. He is also the former chief of investigations for the Colorado Department of Revenue's medical marijuana enforcement division. A spokesperson for the conference said the audience was limited because some of the information presented involves ongoing law enforcement actions and other information that cannot be shared with the public. Vasquez, who helped plan the conference, said he and about a half-dozen other police chiefs approached the conference with a "lessons-learned approach." He said the goal is to share what Colorado officials have learned so far about marijuana legalization in the state. "Whatever is going to happen with marijuana legalization, you don't necessarily want to be the first, but that's what happened with Colorado," Vasquez said in a telephone interview Tuesday. "Alaska can now really benefit from some of our lessons and do things better than we did, simply because they are able to learn from our experience."

Vasquez said he was proud of some of the things the state did right, but there were other areas he felt needed work. Better data collection, especially in public health and safety would help, he said. He also noted Colorado's Amendment 64, which legalized recreational marijuana, had a built-in timeline he described as "strict." Alaska's Ballot Measure 2 also includes a strict timeline, giving the state nine months to craft rules after the ballot initiative goes into effect Feb. 24? Vasquez said that makes it difficult for government to respond, especially when there's limited funding. He suggested Alaska officials slow the timetable as much as possible, though he added marijuana supporters would undoubtedly disagree, saying they wanted it done "yesterday." "There are a lot of moving parts (in the regulatory process) and if you're rushed and don't have adequate resources and don't have adequate funding you're creating a recipe for where you may fail," Vasquez said. Suzanne Caldwell of the Alaska Dispatch News contributed to this report.

The Bristol Bay Times (AK)  
December 12, 2014

**Unalaska Housing Shortage Squeezes City Employees**

Author: Jim Paulin

Single police officers in Unalaska sometimes need to live on living room sofas in the absence of quality affordable housing, according to a report presented last week at a crowded special city council meeting on housing for everybody in general and city employees in particular. A housing shortage makes it hard to fill vacant city jobs, according to assistant city manager **Patrick Jordan**. "Oftentimes officers without families must share living space with roommates, sometimes couch surfing, and potential candidates with families are unable to accept offers of employment due to the lack of available and affordable quality housing," **Jordan** wrote in the Dec. 2 memo.

About 50 people packed the city council chambers. "Now I know how to get people to come to the city council meetings. Just put housing on the agenda," said city manager Chris Hladick. If housing is tight now, city officials worry it could get a lot worse in the future, if offshore oil development begins in the Arctic Ocean, with Unalaska as a staging area. According to city planning director Erin Reinders, the oil boom in Williston, North Dakota caused rents to double and then some, as the population grew about 50 percent in only three years, from 14,700 in 2010 to 21,000 in 2013. Much of the meeting's discussion centered on finding land to develop for new housing, and measures the city might take such as extending utility lines.

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**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Patrick S. Jordan**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Patrick S. Jordan***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Bristol Bay Times (AK)

August 29, 2014

**Unalaska: Iliuliuk Docks Should Stay**

Author: Jim Paulin

The vintage wooden docks that serve as an unofficial small boat harbor at the mouth of the Iliuliuk River probably won't be going away anytime soon, regardless of what a state grant says, according to Unalaska assistant city manager **Patrick Jordan**. The dock removal is opposed by the Qawalangin Tribe, though it favors other parts of the grant, especially a salmon-counting weir. For one thing, the grant's too small, at \$352,000, to remove the old docks and install replacements, "not even close," **Jordan** said. Much of the grant is for a study anyways, not construction. In June, the city council voted to spend \$197,000 of the grant for an engineering study by PND Engineers, though the city is still waiting for final approval from the state Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development.

Said tribal president Tom Robinson in a June 7 letter to the city, "The Qawalangin Tribe of Unalaska appreciates the city's efforts to restore the lake and river to protect salmon habitat" But the docks aren't a problem, he said. "There is certain wording in the Lower River grant award which states the removal of existing boat docks and installation of light penetrating dockage, meant to improve salmon habitat, which we feel would have the potential to deny access of our tribal members to a traditional area they have used for thousands of years," Robinson wrote. The small boat docks have little impact on salmon, Robinson said, and the assistant manager agreed. "Those fish can find their way around that. They're endowed by the creator with pretty good instincts," **Jordan** said last week.

But the docks are occupying city property without permission, **Jordan** said. "It's almost a squatters' rights type thing," he said, though their removal is "not one of our goals." According to the state grant narrative, "Years of foot traffic and skiff storage have damaged growth and prevented regrowth of vegetation along the riverbank, which left unchecked leads to further erosion and sedimentation." The existing docks are home-made structures built with hammers and nails, unlike the expensive potential replacements that likely would be constructed in a factory in the Lower 48 and shipped to the Aleutians on a barge. And since the city doesn't own the present docks, it doesn't charge harbor fees, a preservation incentive.

Robinson acknowledged that "cleaning up derelict boats and docks along the river mouth may have some merit." But he said the bigger problem is upstream. Unalaska city natural resources manager Frank Kelty also said the biggest sedimentation problem is upstream, marked by a "mud island" of runoff at the head of Unalaska Lake. That's where the larger of the two grants comes in, he said. The city council in January voted to accept two Coastal Community Impact Assistance Grants for a total of \$978,000, including the lower river restoration at \$352,000, and the Unalaska Lake Restoration Project at \$627,000. The lake project calls for spending about \$500,000 on three or four sediment traps.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Patrick S. Jordan***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Kelty said the grants had earlier been awarded to the Aleutians West Coastal Resource Service Area, which has since been eliminated by the state government. The city needed to take over the grants this year, or lose the funding, he said. Robinson said proposed fish weir is good news, as "it has the potential to help salmon stocks recover by providing much needed data." Kelty likewise said a fish weir is a good thing, though he said it remains to be seen who would provide the staffing, either the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, although, preferably, he said, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. However, Kelty cautioned, more information could produce a "hot potato" if it turned up that salmon restoration might require the closure of the subsistence setnet fishery on Unalaska's Front Beach. In fact, the issue of potential over-fishing there was raised last year by the tribe, expressing concern about the growing number of set gillnets anchored to the beach and extending into the bay.

The Front Beach is easily accessible by cars and trucks, parking along Bayview Ave. Setnetters mainly catch sockeye salmon, but also pink salmon and Dolly Varden trout, plus some generally unwanted sculpins and flatfish. Regarding the wooden docks at the river's mouth, Kelty said there are "two sides" to the issue, and complained of sunken docks, and batteries dumped in the water. Ultimately, he said, "It's a political issue on how the city council wants to deal with it." According to a May 27 memo from **Jordan** to the mayor and city council, the lake's problem started over 70 years ago. "Development over the years, since and including the military's presence here, has contributed to sedimentation of the once-ideal spawning grounds for the sockeye. The goal of this grant is to restore the breeding grounds of salmon and implement measures to prevent further sediment from arriving in Unalaska Lake," according to **Jordan**.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Patrick S. Jordan**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Muskegon Chronicle (MI)  
August 19, 2008

**Supervisor, gone to Texas, Resigns**

Author: John S. Hausman

It's official: Muskegon Township Supervisor **Patrick Jordan** has resigned — by long distance e-mail. The Muskegon Township Board on Monday night voted 6-0 to accept **Jordan's** letter of resignation, dated Aug. 7 and effective at midnight Sept. 1. There was no discussion. **Jordan's** already far away, having started a new government job in Texas two weeks ago. He scanned the signed resignation letter into a computer and sent it to Township Clerk James Nielsen as an e-mail attachment. Township Attorney Douglas Hughes said that was legally acceptable.

**Jordan** last month announced his intention to leave town, resign and take the month of August as vacation time. But he later postponed submitting his resignation letter until after the Aug. 5 primary election, in which he was on the Democratic ballot for re-election. As it turned out, Dave Kieft Jr. won the primary, which will pit him against nonpartisan candidate Richard Nolan on the Nov. 4 general election ballot.

**Jordan** never did take another action he also said he intended to do: appoint a deputy supervisor to act in his place until his resignation takes effect. On election night, **Jordan** told The Chronicle he intended to appoint Kieft to the temporary post. But Kieft said Monday that never happened. Whichever candidate wins the general election will take office for a new four-year term starting Nov. 20.

In the meantime, the township is operating without a supervisor, the government's top post and a full-time position. Board meetings are being chaired by a "supervisor pro tem," temporarily elected at each meeting for that purpose. On Monday night, that was Trustee John Gilbert, who also chaired the Aug. 4 meeting.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Patrick S. Jordan**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Muskegon Chronicle (MI)

August 6, 2008

**Township Voters Boot Supervisors (Excerpt on Candidate)**

It was a night of upsets in Muskegon County's township races Tuesday. Every single supervisor with a challenger lost, and so did plenty of other township incumbents.

**MUSKEGON TOWNSHIP**

It was nearly a clean sweep in Muskegon Township, where only two of seven incumbents will be back for a new four-year term after Nov. 20. Challenger Dave Kieft Jr. was the overwhelming winner for the Democratic nomination for supervisor, taking 853 votes to John Cox's 496 and incumbent Supervisor **Patrick Jordan's** 328. **Jordan** has left the township for a job in Texas but remained on the primary election ballot. Kieft will face non-party candidate Richard Nolan in the general election.

**Jordan**, reached Tuesday night in Texas, reaffirmed his previously stated plan to resign effective Aug. 31. He said he intended to mail his letter of resignation probably today. And **Jordan** made another surprise announcement in the election-night interview: He said he intends to ask Kieft, the Democratic rival and vocal critic who defeated him, to act in his place as deputy supervisor until **Jordan's** resignation takes effect. **Jordan** has stated his preference for Nolan in the fall election.

**Jordan** was philosophical about his rejection by Democratic voters, saying, "the way it's been written, the coverage of the whole thing, I'm not surprised. But when you look countywide, it's an anti-incumbent year." **Jordan** added, "I turned this whole thing over to Jesus Christ a long time ago, and being angry is not an option."

Kieft was pleased about his victory. "This is a good first-round win for us," he said. "A lot of people helped us with that, and I want to thank them and thank the voters. "I'm going to work really hard in the second round, and hopefully achieve the goal of becoming Muskegon Township supervisor. I want to see the township work together as a board. I want to see a good team effort. I don't want to have any personality clashes like we've had the last four years."

For all other Muskegon Township offices, victory in Tuesday's Democratic primary was tantamount to election because no non-Democrats will be on the Nov. 4 ballot. Eight-year Clerk James E. Nielsen lost his bid for a third term to Muskegon Community College Trustee Ann D. Oakes, who won by a wide margin. Treasurer Carol Bartos lost her job to Jeffrey B. Wood. Also losing his bid for re-election was township Trustee John Gilbert. The only returners will be trustees Carol A. Chaney and Scott Plummer.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Patrick S. Jordan**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Muskegon Chronicle (MI)

July 22, 2008

**Supervisor’s on His Way Out, But Hasn’t Resigned Yet**

Author: John S. Hausman

Muskegon Township Supervisor **Patrick Jordan’s** last township board meeting was, as were so many before, marked by verbal clashes over his plans and legacy. **Jordan** on July 7 announced his intention to resign his post as the township’s top elected official after four years on the job, effective Aug. 31. He said he has taken a government job in Texas and plans to leave Michigan at the end of July — late next week — and take August as vacation time. But he still has not formally submitted his resignation. Asked about that by another board member at Monday night’s board meeting, **Jordan** said he plans to submit his resignation only after the Aug. 5 primary, to see what happens at that election.

**Jordan** is still on the Democratic primary ballot, along with challengers John Cox and Dave Kieft Jr. If **Jordan** wins the primary despite his departure, it’s not entirely clear what will be the impact on the Nov. 4 ballot — whether he would automatically be listed as the Democratic nominee, or could still withdraw his name, or the board could name a successor who would take his place on the ballot. The question came up while the board was debating **Jordan’s** request that they set a salary for a deputy supervisor he plans to appoint to serve in his stead for the month of August until his resignation takes effect — a power the supervisor has under state law.

But several board members, including Trustee Carol Chaney, said they wouldn’t set a salary until they know who he’ll appoint. “It’s none of your business,” **Jordan** finally snapped at Chaney, a longtime political foe. The remark drew murmurs of disapproval from several residents in the audience. **Jordan** also took the opportunity to criticize a recent Muskegon Chronicle editorial criticizing him, saying “they accuse me of fleeing office midterm ... They can’t do math.” He said his four-year term will be 94 percent completed when his resignation takes effect Aug. 31.

Township resident Kenneth Coleman, a candidate for trustee, spoke from the audience to jab **Jordan**. “You came to Muskegon Township as a sheep in wolf’s clothing (sic) ... you’re a Republican,” Coleman said, a reference to **Jordan’s** party affiliation before he took the post in the heavily Democratic township. **Jordan’s** term, since he replaced Don Aley in 2004, has been marked by controversy, personality clashes with some board members and many split votes, often 4-3, defeating initiatives he supported.

In the past year, his policy defeats have included a proposal to hire a professional township manager and cut back the supervisor, clerk and treasurer posts to part time; and, twice, a proposal to allow a “payment in lieu of taxes” plan to make the moderate-income Chapel Hill housing development feasible south of River Road in northern Muskegon Township.



**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Patrick S. Jordan**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Muskegon Chronicle (MI)

July 9, 2008

**Divided Township Adopt Job Policies**

Author: John S. Hausman

Written personnel policies for nonunion employees have been adopted by Muskegon Township officials for the first time. But, as with so many issues facing the township's government, nothing was simple about it. The approval came on a 5-2 vote, with township Supervisor **Patrick Jordan** and Treasurer Carol Bartos dissenting. The policies were developed over the course of about the last 18 months by a panel of three township board trustees — Carol Chaney as chairwoman, Scott Plummer and Carol Ream — in consultation with staff department heads and an attorney.

The goal was to standardize nonunion staffers' conditions of employment and, especially, their benefits, including retirement pay and post-retirement health coverage. Previously, each employee was covered by a separate employment contract, with no overarching policy. Some of the affected employees, including department heads, had expressed concern about the safety of their retirement benefits. But complicating the issue was the lingering impact of an earlier dispute over the salary levels of department heads. In 2006, the board paid \$6,500 for a professional labor consultant to conduct a salary study that included job descriptions for department heads, a proposed personnel policy and recommended salary levels. Recommended were substantial raises for several supervisory employees, based on the prevailing market rate for similar jobs elsewhere.

**Jordan** pushed for adoption of the study's recommendations, especially the pay hikes, but the board rejected the proposals in a 4-3 vote in November 2006. Salary levels remained where they were, other than cost-of-living raises for 2007 and, later, 2008. **Jordan** opposed the board subcommittee's subsequent attempt to develop its own personnel policies, divorced from the pay issue, and he restated his opposition Monday. The supervisor advocated adoption of the 2006 salary-study recommendations, to remove the pay issue from the "passions and politics" of the annual budget process and give potential future job applicants a clear idea of what to expect. "It's very subjective now," he said. "We're too big for that ... We've outgrown that."

But a majority of the board disagreed with him, with several saying pay rates are better dealt with year by year in the budget-making process. The department heads, several of whom were in the audience Monday, also advocated adoption of the new policies, calling them a step in the right direction.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Patrick S. Jordan**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Muskegon Chronicle (MI)

July 8, 2008

**Township Leader Leaving After Stormy Term**

Author: John S. Hausman

Muskegon Township Supervisor **Patrick Jordan** unexpectedly announced his resignation Monday night. The departure of the top elected official in Muskegon County's biggest township is effective Aug. 31. But **Jordan** said in an interview later that he plans to take the month of August off, meaning he has only about three more weeks on the job. **Jordan** has accepted another job out of state — a governmental post in Texas, he said after the meeting, declining to be more specific. But he didn't rule out the possibility of still taking the job of Oceana County administrator if that is offered to him. **Jordan** is one of six candidates scheduled to be interviewed July 29 to succeed longtime Administrator Paul Inglis.

**Jordan** has been Muskegon Township supervisor for four contentious years, which have been marked by personality clashes with some other township officials and repeated defeats on a number of major proposals he has supported, often by 4-3 votes. Most recently, the board narrowly defeated a **Jordan**-backed proposal to move to a professional manager form of government and cutting back to part-time the elected positions of supervisor, clerk and treasurer. In Muskegon Township, which has a population of 18,000, the full-time supervisor is in charge of government administration and day-to-day operations. The supervisor also has the lead role in setting policy, with the cooperation and consent of the seven-member township board. **Jordan's** surprise announcement could throw this year's Muskegon Township elections into confusion. It's too late to remove **Jordan's** name from the Aug. 5 Democratic primary ballot.

He is one of three Democrats on the ballot in the upcoming primary. If one of his challengers wins — either Dave Kieft Jr. or John Cox — that nominee would be alone on the Nov. 4 general election ballot, because no Republican is running. That would presumably all but guarantee the nominee's election to a four-year term beginning Nov. 20, even if the township board appoints someone else as supervisor in the meantime to fill the balance of **Jordan's** current term. But if **Jordan** wins next month's primary despite his pending resignation, it clouds the general election picture. It wasn't immediately clear what would be the result, and Muskegon County's election official was consulting with state officials this morning. **Jordan** made the surprise announcement by reading from notes at the close of Monday night's township board meeting. "I initially decided to ride out the election (before making the announcement) and let the board make an appointment later," **Jordan** said. "I changed my mind Sunday. I was actually sitting in church and it hit me ... I was acting from ego and pride (in concealing his decision until after the primary). "The residents deserve to know." He said it had been an honor to serve as supervisor since his appointment in 2004 to succeed Don Aley, who resigned to become a Muskegon County commissioner. After the meeting, **Jordan** said he accepted the Texas job roughly three weeks ago. However, as recently as last Thursday, he said in a Chronicle interview that he still was running for supervisor and hoped to win next month's election.

The Muskegon Chronicle (MI)

June 26, 2008

**Judge Returns Northshore Hospital Land to Township**

Author: John S. Hausman

A Muskegon judge has ruled that a developer who never redeveloped the former Northshore Hospital property in Muskegon Township must hand the land back to the township. In a written opinion issued last week, Muskegon County 14th Circuit Judge James M. Graves Jr. ruled that Ridgemont Development LLC of Holland must return the deed to the nine acres of the property that lie in the township. Muskegon Township sold the land to Ridgemont in January 2001 for \$1,200, the amount owed in delinquent taxes, with a condition that the land soon would be redeveloped. It wasn't.

At issue is the eastern portion of a 14-acre lot at 1222 Holton formerly occupied by the long-abandoned Northshore Hospital, a tuberculosis sanitarium. The other five acres are in North Muskegon, which years ago sold its portion to Ridgemont as well. Ridgemont's owners said they were blocked from developing the vacant land by the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality's discovery of soil and groundwater contamination. Years of squabbling followed between the township and the company. In 2005, the township board authorized repossession. Ridgemont then sued the township, claiming it had wrongfully thwarted the company's attempts to sell the property for up to \$300,000 to Marathon Oil, which owns an adjacent tank farm and wants the land as a buffer zone.

The two sides conditionally settled the lawsuit in September 2006 under court supervision. The deal gave Ridgemont more time to sell the land to Marathon for redevelopment. If that didn't happen and the property stayed undeveloped, it was to revert to the township. In the meantime, the deed was placed in escrow. As part of the deal, Marathon was to submit a site plan to the township outlining its intentions for the land. According to court documents, Marathon submitted a plan whose only proposed improvements were installing a chain-link gate to block vehicle access and planting some trees.

Township officials didn't consider that a serious site plan, and the township recently filed a motion asking Graves to order the deed returned because Ridgemont had failed to comply with the 2006 settlement. Last week, the judge did so, ruling: "(Ridgemont's) rights in the property are terminated." Graves bluntly rejected Ridgemont's claim that Marathon's gate-and-tree-planting plan met the terms of the settlement. "As a hypothetical example, would a purchaser who proposed only to plant a flat of flowers along the entrance, or who proposed only to replace an existing 100-watt outdoor light fixture with a 250-watt light fixture, be considered as submitting a 'site plan' ...?" Graves asked rhetorically. "This court would answer 'no.' ... The so-called 'site plan' produced by (Ridgemont) does not even remotely rise to the level of being a site plan."

It's unclear what happens next to the land. The Chronicle was unable to reach Ridgemont's

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Patrick S. Jordan**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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attorney for comment. Assuming the court order holds against any potential appeal, the township isn't on a fast track to a decision. "We got the property back," Township Supervisor **Patrick Jordan** said. "We'll probably sit down and come up with a plan, see what the (township) board wants to do. We'll probably sell it. That was always the plan, to have something to add to the tax base." He did not rule out the possibility of the township selling the land to Marathon. Meanwhile, North Muskegon still has taken no action to reclaim its five acres. The city has consistently let the township take the lead in Ridgemont relations.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Patrick S. Jordan**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Muskegon Chronicle (MI)

May 27, 2008

**Township Says Developer Reneged, Wants Land Returned**

Author: John S. Hausman

Muskegon Township might be on the verge of regaining ownership of the former Northshore Hospital property on Holton Road, more than seven years after selling it to a development company that never developed it. The township is seeking a court order forcing Ridgemont Development LLC of Holland to return the deed for nine acres of land the township sold Ridgemont for \$1,200. And a Muskegon County judge's recent ruling on a related issue might be a big step toward granting that demand.

Township officials are vague about their plans for the land if they get it back, except that they'd like to sell it to a private owner. Ridgemont had been trying to sell the land to Marathon Oil for up to \$300,000, according to court documents. Ridgemont bought 14 acres of land at 1222 Holton formerly occupied by the long-abandoned Northshore Hospital, straddling the boundary of Muskegon Township and North Muskegon. Nine acres are in the township, the rest in the city.

The developers bought the township's portion in January 2001 for the amount owed in delinquent property taxes. North Muskegon approved a similar deal. Both communities hoped the land soon would be redeveloped, and the township made that a condition of the sale. But no development happened. Ridgemont's owners said they were blocked by the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality's discovery of soil and groundwater contamination.

Years of squabbling followed between the township and the company. In 2005 the township board authorized repossession. Ridgemont then sued the township and its planning and zoning administrator, Dave Fisher, claiming they had wrongfully thwarted the company's attempts to sell the land to Marathon Oil, which owns an adjacent tank farm and wants the land as a buffer zone, according to court documents.

The two sides conditionally settled the lawsuit in September 2006 under court supervision. The township board unanimously approved a deal that township officials interpret as giving Ridgemont more time either to sell the property to Marathon for redevelopment by the oil company, or else to redevelop the land itself. If neither happened, the property was to revert to the township. In the meantime, the deed was placed in escrow.

As part of the settlement, Marathon was to submit a site plan outlining its intentions for the land. According to court documents, the only improvements Marathon proposed were installing a chain-link gate to block vehicle access, and planting some trees along Holton Road. Marathon stated that it intends to keep the property as a "green space," with the option of future development should the oil company's business needs require it.

Township officials didn't consider that to be a serious site plan and never submitted it to the

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Patrick S. Jordan**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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township planning commission for review. So Ridgemont filed a motion with 14th Circuit Judge James M. Graves Jr., asking the judge to enforce the 2006 settlement agreement by forcing the township to review and approve the site plan so Ridgemont could sell the land to Marathon. On April 11, Graves sided with the township. In a written opinion, he rejected Ridgemont’s motion, ruling that “the installation of a new gate and the planting of a few trees does not rise to the level of a ‘development’ of the property which would necessitate any action by the township under the settlement agreement.”

The township’s attorney, Douglas Hughes, followed up with a motion asking the judge to enforce the settlement agreement by ordering that the deed be handed back to the township. Ridgemont responded by arguing that Graves’ ruling was in error and asked the judge to reverse it, claiming that the settlement deal only called for Marathon to submit a site plan — not necessarily one that promises “physical improvements of a substantial nature.” A court hearing has been scheduled for 3:30 p.m. June 9 on the motions.

Should the judge again rule in the township’s favor, the nine acres would be back in the township’s hands. After that, its future is less clear. “Our desire all along was to see it developed and get it back on the tax roll as an improved property ... to get it back into private hands,” Township Supervisor **Patrick Jordan** said last week. Asked if the township would consider selling it to Marathon, **Jordan** said, “I don’t know. We’d probably hear them out.” Meanwhile, North Muskegon hasn’t taken any action to reclaim its five acres of the property. Throughout the years of the Northshore saga, the city has let the township take the lead. “We’ll just see what happens with Muskegon Township and keep an eye on that,” said City Manager Dennis Stepke last week.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Patrick S. Jordan**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Muskegon Chronicle (MI)  
May 17, 2008

**Proposed ‘Deal’ Draws Accusations**

Author: John S. Hausman

Some Muskegon Township officials are crying foul over a behind-the-scenes proposal that would have granted retirement health insurance to Township Clerk James E. Nielsen if he pulled his name off the Aug. 5 election ballot before Friday’s 4 p.m. withdrawal deadline. Muskegon Township Supervisor **Patrick Jordan** — who, with Treasurer Carol Bartos’ help, unsuccessfully floated the plan to other board members Thursday — says his idea was motivated only by compassion for the 65-year-old Nielsen, a frequent political foe of **Jordan’s**. “We thought we were doing a good thing, and it gets spun around (negatively),” **Jordan** said Friday.

But the supervisor’s political foes, including Nielsen, call the proposal an attempt to hustle the often-controversial clerk out of office by paying him off. “I took it as ... they were just trying to buy a vote,” Nielsen said Friday. Had Nielsen withdrawn, it would have left only one candidate on the ballot: Nielsen’s challenger, Ann Oakes, whom **Jordan** supports. The clerk’s contest, like all others in Muskegon Township, will be decided during the Democratic primary on Aug. 5 because no Republicans are running. **Jordan’s** idea was to reduce from 10 years to eight years the length of time a township elected official must hold office before becoming eligible for post-retirement health benefits. It’s an idea that township officials had discussed before but never adopted.

The proposed change would have made Nielsen eligible for insurance through the Michigan Employees Retirement System once Nielsen’s current four-year term ends in November. Under existing township policy, Nielsen won’t be eligible unless he stays in office until November 2010. **Jordan** said he had heard that Nielsen had been telling his staff and friends that he didn’t really want to run for a third term, but needed the health insurance. “This is a compassionate thing we could do,” **Jordan** said.

**Jordan** said the idea only came to him Thursday morning, one day before the deadline for Nielsen to withdraw from the ballot and two days after the deadline for candidates to file to get on the ballot. So, **Jordan** shared his idea with Bartos, who agreed to present it to Nielsen. The supervisor and treasurer also began talking to other board members individually to get their opinions. Such a policy change would have required a vote of the board at next Monday night’s meeting.

Nielsen heard out the proposal without openly committing himself either way, according to his own and Bartos’ accounts — although Nielsen later told The Chronicle he never seriously considered withdrawing from the ballot. Trustee Scott Plummer, usually on the same side as **Jordan** and Bartos on split votes, expressed support. Trustees John Gilbert and Carol Chaney opposed the idea. Trustee Carol A. Ream says she didn’t take a stand at first but later, after thinking it over, called **Jordan** to express opposition. Bartos has a different memory of their

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Patrick S. Jordan**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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original conversation; she says Ream at first supported the plan. At any rate, the opposition of Gilbert, Chaney and Ream doomed the proposal. With Nielsen presumed to be ineligible to vote on the proposal, the needed four-vote majority wasn't there. But at one point on Thursday, **Jordan's** idea got to the stage of his presenting it to Township Attorney Douglas Hughes to review the proposal. **Jordan** estimated the cost to taxpayers for the legal work at about \$100. But — with the idea scuttled by lack of support from the board — a formal proposal was never presented to Nielsen.

**Jordan** insisted he had no political motive for the proposal or its timing, only a concern for Nielsen's welfare. "I always heard from his staff, his people, that he didn't want to run, but needed his health insurance," **Jordan** said. "He's in poor health." Not true, Nielsen said. "There's nothing wrong with my health," Nielsen said. "In fact, I was offended. Because I have a physical disability doesn't mean I'm in poor health." Nielsen is diabetic and has a prosthetic foot. His foot was amputated a few years ago after a burn became severely infected. Nielsen claimed the proposal was presented to him plainly as only taking effect "if, if, if I would pull my name off the ballot. I didn't put my name on the ballot to pull it off," Nielsen said.

Bartos said it was simple common sense to link the eight-year benefits proposal to Nielsen's withdrawing from the ballot by the Friday deadline, given what she and **Jordan** had both heard was the clerk's reluctance to seek a third term but for the benefits. "This way, he wouldn't have had to run," she said. Both Gilbert and Chaney blasted **Jordan's** proposal, calling it wrong and a political trick. "I was just furious," Gilbert said. "I think that's dirty politics." "It reeks of a payoff," Chaney said. "We just don't do this." Not at all, **Jordan** said. "Our motives were pure ... I thought we were doing the right thing," he said.

The issue

Township Supervisor **Patrick Jordan** offered a proposal to grant Township Clerk James E. Nielsen retirement health insurance if he pulled his name off the Aug. 5 ballot. Had Nielsen withdrawn, it would have left one candidate on the ballot: Nielsen's challenger, Ann Oakes, whom **Jordan** supports.



**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Patrick S. Jordan**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Muskegon Chronicle (MI)  
February 21, 2008

**Road-Funding Dispute in Court**

Author: John S. Hausman

Muskegon Township this week sued the Muskegon County Road Commission to get nearly a quarter-million dollars a year the township says the road commission owes it because the township maintains its own local roads. The road commission's managing director counters that the township is misreading the law and trying to get an unfair advantage over the other townships served by the road commission. The issue is money the road commission receives every year from state gasoline and weight taxes. Money distributed by the state is used by road commissions to maintain county-owned local roads in townships.

For about two years, Muskegon Township officials have been complaining to Road Commission Managing Director Ken Hulka that the township doesn't get its fair share of those revenues. Hulka and the road commissioners who employ him disagree. Many months of discussions led to no resolution. The result was the lawsuit the township filed Tuesday in Muskegon County's 14th Circuit Court. Named as defendants are the road commission, Hulka and the road commissioners: Gary R. Conrad, Clarence Start and Joan Santes.

Muskegon Township is a special case because, unlike virtually all other townships in Michigan, it pays for its own department of public works that maintains local roads in the township, even though those roads are owned by the county. Township officials have said the township began the practice many years ago because residents were dissatisfied with the service they were getting from the road commission. The road commission does perform all large-scale projects on the township's roads, such as reconstruction or widening. The county agency also does day-to-day maintenance of the township's major roads.

But the township itself performs and pays for light maintenance of its secondary or "local" roads: snowplowing, salting, pothole patching, grading gravel and the like. "The fact is, our taxpayers for decades have done that, while the road commission has gotten those (gasoline and weight-tax) dollars from the state for our roads and spent it elsewhere," Township Supervisor **Patrick Jordan** said. The township would like to do more, such as crack sealing, **Jordan** said. But to do that, it needs more money. **Jordan** said the township spent about \$425,000 last year on road work. That amounts to somewhat more than one mill of the 4.35 mills in property tax Muskegon Township levies to support its general fund.

The township claims that a one-mill allocation for local roads is the threshold that requires the road commission to agree to a contract that would siphon state gas-tax funds to the township. They point to a 2005 state law that allows such contracts between county road commissions and townships of more than 15,000 population, such as Muskegon Township, that fund their own highway departments. In the lawsuit, the township contends that the road commission by law should pay it every year for maintaining county-owned local roads, retroactive to 2006, under a

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Patrick S. Jordan**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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per-mile formula that comes to about \$241,000 for 2006. The amounts are yet to be determined for later years. Hulka disputes the township's arguments. "I would anticipate the (road commission) board would do a vigorous defense," he said Wednesday. "I think the law very clearly gives the commissioners the authority to decide if they enter that contract or not. ... I don't think it's mandatory. "They (township officials) do provide a great service for their residents, and I do recognize they spend dollars for that service, but essentially they're demanding a service much higher than provided the rest of the county, and they're trying to guarantee that," Hulka said. "We spend way more than we receive from (the state transportation fund) each year in that township," Hulka said. "It wouldn't be fair to the rest of the county" to agree to Muskegon Township's demands.

If the township eventually gets the money it's seeking, all of it would have to be used for road funding, **Jordan** said. In addition, the township would be legally required to continue spending on roads the revenue it gets from at least one mill of its property tax. One mill generates about \$360,000, **Jordan** said. With the hoped-for gas-tax money added in, the township's road funding could rise to about \$600,000 per year, **Jordan** said. The other \$65,000 or so the township currently spends on roads might be shifted to other uses, **Jordan** said.

What's at issue

Muskegon Township claims Its taxpayers spend more than \$400,000 per year maintaining county-owned local roads in the township. The road commission should pay the township about \$250,000 per year from what the road commission gets in state gasoline and weight tax revenue. The road commission claims the township maintains local roads by its own choice and could let the road commission do it for less cost. The road commission spends more in Muskegon Township than it receives from the state for that township's roads.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Patrick S. Jordan**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Muskegon Chronicle (MI)

February 19, 2008

**Muskegon Twp. Property Tax Shift Stalled for Now**

Author: John S. Hausman

A majority of Muskegon Township board members have beaten back a proposal to ask voters to decide on a measure that would lower taxes slightly for most residents, while increasing them for the rest. The issue isn't dead. It's just resting. The vote was 4-2 against a ballot issue suggested by Township Supervisor **Patrick Jordan** for residents to vote on in May. The proposal, if placed on the ballot and then approved by voters, would have replaced an existing 1-mill "hydrant tax" paid by everyone living within 1,000 feet of waterlines with a new 0.75-mill tax paid by all property-owners. Both taxes would generate about the same amount of money — about \$270,000 in the first year, township officials estimate.

Officials say about three-quarters of the township's residents now pay the hydrant tax, which helps pay for installing large water tanks, making pipes wide enough to offer adequate pressure, and installing and maintaining fire hydrants and valves. One mill is \$1 of tax on every \$1,000 of a property's taxable value. Taxable value is up to one-half of market value. The proposed new tax would have gone for two separate purposes. One-half mill, or about \$180,000 the first year, would have helped pay for local waterline expansions, improvements, maintenance and operation. The other 0.25 mill, or about \$90,000, would have gone for maintenance, preservation and improvement of the township's parks system, including bicycle paths and sidewalks.

**Jordan** and other supporters argued that the new tax would be fairer than the old, because all township property-owners benefit financially from the "hydrant tax" through lower fire insurance rates, but only some pay the tax. **Jordan** and Community Development Director David Fisher argued that the proposed tax also would give greater flexibility in how the water money could be spent — in particular, helping residents not now served by water to pay for line extensions and hookups they might not otherwise be able to afford. That's not legally allowed with hydrant tax funds, he said. "We're talking about planning for your community in the next 15 to 20 years," Fisher said. "I believe it's a win-win situation," **Jordan** said. **Jordan** also defended tacking on the apparently unrelated parks issue. He argued that the new money is needed for matching funds to get state grants for needed projects such as bicycle paths to increase safety for children who now must ride in the streets near schools.

Opponents attacked all three points, disputing whether insurance rates really are lower as a result of the hydrant tax; arguing that residents who choose to be hooked up to waterlines in the future should pay for it themselves; and questioning the need for and suitability of a parks tax in these economically troubled times. "People are hurting," said Trustee Carol Chaney. "Why don't we lower the (existing) millage to one-half mill for five years?" and then come back with the new proposal, she suggested. "Our taxpayers are hurting right now," agreed Trustee John Gilbert. In the end, only **Jordan** and Treasurer Carol Bartos voted to put the proposal on the ballot in May. Voting against it were Chaney, Gilbert, Clerk James Nielsen and Trustee Carol Ream. After the

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Patrick S. Jordan**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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meeting, **Jordan** said he expected to bring the proposal back later, in time to place it on the August primary ballot.

How they voted

The Muskegon Township board Monday, on a 4-2 vote, rejected a ballot issue that would have replaced an existing 1-mill “hydrant tax” paid by everyone living within 1,000 feet of waterlines with a new 0.75-mill tax paid by all property-owners. Here is how board members voted:

Yes: (to place the issue on the May 6 ballot): Township Supervisor **Patrick Jordan**, Treasurer Carol Bartos.

No: Clerk James Nielsen and Trustees Carol Ream, Carol Chaney, John Gilbert.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Patrick S. Jordan**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Muskegon Chronicle (MI)  
December 18, 2007

**Elected Officials to Get 3 Percent Raise**

Author: John S. Hausman

A proposal to freeze the pay of Muskegon Township’s elected officials went nowhere Monday night. But a much bigger money-saving proposal — to cut back the township’s elected supervisor, clerk and treasurer to part time and hire a professional manager — appears to be gathering steam. As part of the township’s adoption of a 2008 budget, Clerk James Nielsen made a motion that would have frozen the pay of himself, Supervisor **Patrick Jordan**, Treasurer Carol Bartos, and part-time trustees Carol Chaney, John Gilbert, Scott Plummer and Carol Ream. Under the budget, all seven are slated to get a 3 percent raise, as are the township’s other nonunionized employees. Freezing the pay of the seven elected officials would save taxpayers \$5,903 next year. “We’re not operating this budget like we’re in a money crunch,” Nielsen said at a township board work session before the formal meeting, when he proposed the pay freeze.

**Jordan** argued against the freeze. He noted that the elected officials took a freeze two years ago and said he couldn’t afford another one. “For me, this is my career,” he said. “It’s my vocation. It’s what I trained for. And I’m asking you to respect that.” He called the proposal “symbol over substance” — for the sake of “image” in an election year — and suggested each official, instead, voluntarily forgo a raise if he or she chose. Trustee John Gilbert spoke in favor of the pay freeze. After **Jordan**, at the regular meeting, asked the reason for it, Gilbert replied, “Because it’s the right thing to do.” But Trustee Carol Chaney — a frequent opponent of **Jordan’s** on many issues — unexpectedly spoke in the supervisor’s support. “I back you,” she said to **Jordan**.

In the end, neither Gilbert nor anyone else supported Nielsen’s motion, which died for lack of support. But Trustee Scott Plummer again brought up the larger issue he raised at the board’s budget work session last month: cutting the full-time, benefits-included jobs of supervisor, clerk and treasurer to part time, and using the savings to hire a professional manager and possibly one or more police officers as well. “Let’s go all the way,” Plummer said. “We’re going to save money. ... I want this township to eliminate those top three (full-time) positions.”

Momentum appears to be building for such a change, which likely would be enacted before next May’s filing deadline for 2008 candidates for the elected offices. **Jordan** — who supports the change — has been researching the issue and recently supplied the other board members with supporting material from the Michigan Townships Association. One audience member spoke in support of the idea: longtime Muskegon Township supervisor, now county commissioner, P. Don Aley. Aley — who suggested the change before he stepped down in 2004 — said he was “thrilled” to read Chronicle reports of last month’s discussion. “I proposed it. It didn’t go anywhere,” Aley said. “Since then, I think every one of you has come to me and said they wished they had done it. “It will pay,” Aley said. “A township of your size and magnitude needs a professional manager.”

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**Patrick S. Jordan**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Muskegon Township, with a population in 2000 of nearly 18,000, is Muskegon County's third-largest municipality and the largest one not to employ a professional manager or administrator. With the 3 percent raises intact, the board unanimously approved a 2008 budget that mostly holds the line. The budget predicts general-fund revenues of \$4,056,841 — an increase of 1.8 percent over this year — and plans expenditures of \$4,047,960, an increase of 1.59 percent.

New wages

Muskegon Township elected officials' wages, in the 2008 budget:

Supervisor **Patrick Jordan**: \$64,610 (counting assessing fee), up \$1,696.

Clerk James Nielsen: \$58,245, up \$1,696.

Treasurer Carol Bartos: \$58,245, up \$1,696.

Four trustees, collectively: \$27,995, up \$815.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Patrick S. Jordan**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Muskegon Chronicle (MI)  
October 16, 2007

**Board Again Narrowly Rejects Housing Project**

Author: Eric Gaertner

A proposed \$4.6 million affordable housing development in northwestern Muskegon Township continues to produce a passionate debate among residents, differing viewpoints among the township board and a disappointed developer and his supporters. For the second time before a large audience, the township board voted 4-3 to reject the tax-break plan for the controversial \$4.6 million development, Chapel Hill Estates. Because more than 50 people showed up Monday, the meeting was moved from the township administrative offices to Orchard View's Cardinal Elementary School. The board had rejected the proposal June 18. On Monday night, the same four — Clerk Jim Nielsen and trustees John Gilbert, Carol Chaney and Carol Ream — opposed the "payment in lieu of taxes," or PILOT, plan for the project.

Based on the proposal, the developer would give the township an annual payment consisting of a percentage of the recent collected, and the renters would have the first option to buy the homes after 15 years. Justin Williams, developer and land owner, originally proposed paying the township 6 percent of contract rent, defined as basic rent payments excluding extras such as utility costs. On Monday, Williams' proposal called for a 6.5 percent payment. "For some odd reason, there seems to be such an outpouring, from some constituents, against Chapel Hill," Williams said. "We're just asking for a fair shake, like what's been offered to everybody else."

Williams was referring to the four existing PILOT projects in Muskegon Township. Chapel Hill supporters pointed out that those projects are apartment complexes that pay only 4 percent of the rent, while this rent-to-own project would lead to home ownership and full taxes being paid after 15 years. Many of the Chapel Hill opponents questioned why the development's residents would not pay full taxes for township services while they are. Three of the board members who voted to reject the plan cited similar concerns at the June 18 meeting. Debra Priest, 2150 N. Getty, said she lost her job two years ago, but she still is paying her full share in taxes. "My house is a basket case because I pay my taxes," Priest said. "I have no problem with this project if they pay 100 percent of the taxes like I do."

The 24 single-family homes are proposed for 11 acres of landlocked property west of North Getty Street and south of River Road. The houses, with a market value of \$120,000 to \$150,000, would be offered to working families who meet low- to moderate-income requirements. Based on the equity paid during the 15 years of rent, the homes would sell for about \$70,000 after that period. Township Supervisor **Pat Jordan**, who supported the project, said he believes Chapel Hill would "kick off development out there." He also pointed to the increased revenue for the township, local construction workers and local businesses.

Based on a township study of the proposed project, the site would bring in \$6,012.77 in taxes over the next 20 years if it remained vacant, which township officials consider likely if this

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Patrick S. Jordan**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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project doesn't occur because it has no road linking it with Getty. Chapel Hill developers would install a paved road. With the PILOT project, the study predicts the township would gain \$116,798.94 in tax revenue over the next 20 years. **Jordan** said Chapel Hill also would produce probably \$35,000 in inspection and permit fees for the township. However, the PILOT still produces far less than traditional taxed homes. Based on the study, \$259,759.22 would be generated in taxes if 24 new homes were built on the site in 2012.

Treasurer Carol Bartos and Trustee Scott Plummer joined **Jordan** in supporting the proposal. Plummer asked for and got a guarantee from the development firm, Love at Work Ministries of Muskegon, that the subcontracted work would come from Muskegon County businesses. As a self-employed worker, Luke Moyer, said the construction work would be appreciated by locals. "I don't really see the development creating a problem at all," Moyer said. "The money would be recycled in the community. I don't see any issues with his development as long as he employs local people."

Racial comments, which were voiced at the June 18 meeting, were kept to a minimum Monday night. **Jordan** told the audience before the public comment portion of the meeting that the "inflammatory comments" would not be tolerated. He cut off a racial comment made by an audience member after the vote. Some project supporters earlier had said some foes were motivated by fear of African-Americans. Williams is black. Despite his obvious disappointment, Williams said he is committed to making the proposed project a reality on the site. "We're not giving up," Williams said after the meeting. "We've gotten a great response, contacted by a number of people interested in these homes. We know the need is there. It's just those four people who don't recognize it."

**How they voted**

The Muksegon Township board Monday voted 4-3 to reject the tax-break plan for the controversial \$4.6 million Chapel Hill Estates development. Here is how members voted:

Yes: Supervisor **Pat Jordan**, Treasurer Carol Bartos and Trustee Scott Plummer.

No: Clerk Jim Nielsen, Trustees John Gilbert, Carol Chaney and Carol Ream.



**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Patrick S. Jordan**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Muskegon Chronicle (MI)

June 21, 2007

**Officials Detail Sewer Repair Plans**

Author: Steve Gunn

Hall Road resident Janis Collis spent last year with her neighborhood dug up for a Muskegon Township sewer installation project. She's not cherishing the thought of living that nightmare over again. But that could happen to Collis next year if Muskegon County follows through on a plan to install a new three-mile stretch of 60-inch sewer main between U.S. 31 and a point on Brooks Road. The new main, which would run primarily along Hall Road, would replace a section of 66-inch pipe just to the north that broke on March 2 and flooded a neighborhood at MacArthur Road and Sheridan Drive. "For the record, I'm not very crazy about this idea of tearing up my road again," said Collis, who joined a handful of other citizens Wednesday night at a public hearing regarding the planned sewer line. "It was very disruptive," she said. "You would leave in the morning and think you knew the route to get back home, and it would change. One day I had to drive an extra 16 miles out of my way to get home."

Engineers from Prein & Newhof, working on behalf of the county, presented a three-part plan Wednesday to improve the integrity of the county's sewer collection system. County officials are expected to implement the plan if they can get a loan from the state. The firm's primary recommendation is to replace the three-mile section of prestress concrete cylinder pipe with more durable ductile iron pipe, from Access Highway and Marquette Avenue just west of U.S. 31 to the intersection of Brooks and MacArthur roads. The approximate cost would be \$18.5 million. Another recommendation is to install the equipment needed for "acoustic monitoring" of the remaining five miles of the old 66-inch sewer main. That equipment would allow for monitoring of the pipe from Brooks and MacArthur east to the county's wastewater treatment plant to make sure breaks are not imminent. The approximate cost would be \$2 million.

The final recommendation is to replace a small section of sewer line in downtown Muskegon near Ottawa Street, where the county's main sewer pump station C is located. That small section is "structurally unsound," according to officials. The approximate cost would be \$500,000. The Muskegon County Board of Public Works will hold a special meeting at 3:30 p.m. Tuesday to finalize its choice of routes for the new line and formally apply for a low-interest \$21 million loan from the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality to pay for the work. The application to the state is due July 1 and a response is expected by September, according to officials. If the plan and loan are approved, the project would go out for bid next April, work would begin in May and the project would be completed in June 2009, according to Prein & Newhof.

Assuming the cost of the loan repayment is passed on to sewer customers, the average resident would experience a sewer bill increase of about \$1.20 per month. While everyone seems to agree there's a need to replace the section of sewer line that broke March 2, the proposed route of the new line has Muskegon Township residents nervous. The township board has already gone on

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Patrick S. Jordan**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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record opposing the route, mostly because of the amount of local sewer installation work that's been done in that community in recent years, particularly on Hall Road. At Wednesday's hearing before the county public works board, Muskegon Township Supervisor **Pat Jordan** asked that alternative routes be considered. "We thought we were going to have a quiet year in 2008, and now we're going to tear the township up again," said **Jordan**, who added that Hall Road is a major traffic thoroughfare and will have water lines installed within a few years. Instead of running the line east on Marquette, then north to Sheridan and east on Hall, **Jordan** said he would prefer that it continue to run east on Marquette to its dead-end at Dangl Road, or continue beyond Dangl through a wooded area to Mill Iron Road, to spare the residents of Hall Road more construction misery, he said.

Muskegon County Commissioner Don Aley, who represents the area in question, noted that Marquette Avenue is in terrible shape, so the street improvements that would come with the sewer project would be much more welcome along that road. There were other concerns from the audience. Bill Lievens, a public relations advisor to Sappi Fine Paper, said he hoped the county would keep the cost of the project down as much as possible. Sappi, which is the county wastewater system's biggest customer, produces about one-third of the wastewater that goes into the system and therefore pays a high percentage of any long-term debt the system incurs.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Patrick S. Jordan***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Muskegon Chronicle (MI)

June 19, 2007

**Race, Taxes Cited After Denial of Homes Plan**

Author: Nancy Stier

Muskegon Township leaders turned their thumbs down Monday to the affordable housing development of Chapel Hill Estates, which developers say would have eventually added \$4.6 million to the community's tax base and spurred other community growth. The decision evoked a storm of protest, primarily from African-Americans in the 50-member audience attending the township board's meeting at Orchard View High School. Some black audience members angrily implied race was the prime motivator for rejection, while two white residents publicly praised the board for its 4-3 vote against the development.

Developer Justin Williams, who has worked with the township for more than six months in an attempt to win approval, said he hasn't given up and intends to ask for reconsideration as soon as possible. He indicated he was puzzled by the vote. It was apparently money and taxes that became the main debate. The township board majority said its primary reason for defeating the development, planned for west of North Getty Street and south of River Road, was that Chapel Hill Estates wants to pay 6 percent of net rent to the township over the next 15 years, instead of the usual property taxes. After that period, the development's first 24 homes to be priced at between \$120,000 and \$150,000 were to be taxed at the normal rate of other residences and sold to existing renters for the balance owed on construction debt.

Williams and a number of other African-Americans said they felt the board majority's reason for rejection didn't make sense. "I'm disappointed in the board," said Monica Manning, 1935 Paul. She said she has worked with children living in the heavily black Russell Road neighborhood and doesn't believe families there are asking for a handout. "They all work hard for what they get," Manning said. "What you guys have done is said, 'because you live in that neighborhood (which is primarily African-American), you don't get a chance.'"

Clerk Jim Nielsen and trustees John Gilbert and Carol Ream all said it isn't fair to existing homeowners in the area to grant a property tax break to this residential development. But Williams and others said by holding to that principle, the board is sacrificing a huge investment in the community and job creation for local contractors suffering from lack of work. "We're trying to create homeowners, so that they can pay taxes," Williams said of the PILOT project. PILOT stands for "payment in lieu of taxes." Four other developments like it already exist in the township, which had their construction subsidized by the Michigan State Housing Authority or federal government.

The other PILOTS are apartments occupied solely by renters, such as Pine Grove Manor on Apple Avenue. Township board members say the annual payment of net rent for the other projects is set at 4 percent, which doesn't begin to cover the cost of township services they get, such as police and fire protection. For that reason, Williams agreed to provide 6 percent of net

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Patrick S. Jordan**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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rent during the first 15 years of Chapel Hill Estates' existence, bring in municipal water and put in both dry sewer lines and septic tanks. When the township extends sewer down North Getty at some future date, the homes would be connected.

When Monday's vote on the development was cast, only Supervisor **Pat Jordan**, Treasurer Carol Bartos and Trustee Scott Plummer supported it. "I feel that this is the right time and place for this kind of development," **Jordan** said. "I think this will really kick off something good for the whole area." He urged fellow board members, who all ran for office as Democrats, to support "the working man" who has his "back against the wall right now" by endorsing the project. "The thing is that \$4.6 million is going to leave town and go somewhere else now," **Jordan** said.

Trustee Carol Chaney said she voted against it with three other board members, because no one had provided her information showing that this type of PILOT project had been successful in Michigan. Williams promised to provide that information and said he had already given it to other township officials. "We have PILOT programs already in the township and they haven't been very successful," Chaney said.

Paul Broussard of the local Trinity Village Non-Profit Housing Corporation asked the board if it would reconsider its vote and approve Chapel Hills Estates if he agreed to be among others that would build additional homes that would pay the usual amount of taxes. He got no response. Marion A. Oakes, 574 E. River, who is among the owners of landlocked property Chapel Hill Estates would use, reminded the board residents have asked many times, during the 50 years she's owned the land, to have utilities extended into their area. "Many times, we have tried to develop and you say you need money. Now we've got the money. What's the problem?" she said angrily. "For many people who felt this was a black issue, I now don't get a house," complained Linda Clark, 589 Courtland. She is a white woman who said she works at a local hospital and hasn't been able to afford purchasing a home since her divorce.

Chapel Hill Estates vote

- Yes: Supervisor **Pat Jordan**, Treasurer Carol Bartos and Trustee Scott Plummer.
- No: Clerk Jim Nielsen, Trustees John Gilbert, Carol Chaney and Carol Ream.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Patrick S. Jordan**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Muskegon Chronicle (MI)  
May 2, 2007

**Board to Discuss Low-Income Housing Today**

Author: Nancy Stier

The Muskegon Township Board will hold a special work session this afternoon to discuss the controversial Chapel Hill Estates development planned for low-income families in the township's northwest corner. Township officials posted the meeting notice Monday on the doors of township hall, but chose not to notify The Chronicle until after the deadline for Tuesday's paper, according to Muskegon Township Supervisor **Pat Jordan**. "There's going to be no public comment. This is a work session," **Jordan** said of today's meeting.

The purpose of the 4:15 p.m. session is to let board members know what kind of protections would be built into any contract the township approves with the developer to construct the development. The supervisor said he wants the subdivision voted up or down when the township board holds its regular meeting at 7 p.m. Monday. Public comment will be permitted at that session. "I want to put this thing behind me," **Jordan** said of controversy Chapel Hill Estates generated since proposed last fall by Justin Williams, a Texas businessman who was raised in Muskegon. "From a business perspective, this is a good thing," **Jordan** said of Williams' development that would bring utilities and roads into the northwest part of the township. "I know there is a section of the community that is objecting for various reasons." But **Jordan** said he's convinced that by writing a detailed contract with the developer, the township can prevent problems opponents predict, such as higher crime.

In December, Williams won preliminary plan approval from the Muskegon Township Planning Commission for the first 24 homes suggested for Chapel Hill Estates. He hoped to break ground on the 40-acre subdivision this year, which is proposed south of River Road and west of North Getty Street. The houses were to be priced at \$120,000 to \$150,000 and offered to low-income families. Williams needs approval from the Michigan State Housing Development Authority to make the project possible. Township board approval also is necessary, because Williams is asking the township to allow him to pay a percentage of rent charged future residents in lieu of the usual property taxes. After 15 years of paying rent, residents of the homes would have the option of buying them at a greatly reduced price.

**Jordan** said he still doesn't have a written proposal in hand from Williams, but wants one in time to distribute it to board members before Monday's meeting. This afternoon's meeting will be in the basement of the township hall at Apple Avenue and Quarterline Road.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Patrick S. Jordan**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Muskegon Chronicle (MI)

April 1, 2007

**Emergency Brought Out Best in Everyone**

Author: **Patrick Jordan**

March 2, 2007, was a day I will never forget: The county's 66-inch force main broke in a residential area. Seven families have been driven from their homes for an extended period of time, with at least one of the homes being ruled forever uninhabitable. The break happened sometime around 9:45 a.m. and was discovered immediately.

County DPW staff sprang in to action, first calling Sappi Fine Paper, then shutting down Pump Station C on Ottawa Street, the station that pumps all of the sewage in the county out to the wastewater site via the 66-inch force main. Sappi immediately began shutting down its operation, as did Howmet and other industries. This greatly reduced the volume being sent down the force main. However, there was still several miles of pipe between the break and the Wastewater, the contents of which, about 6 million gallons of raw sewage, was destined to reverse direction and spill out into the neighborhood at Sheridan and MacArthur.

This is where thanks and respect have to go out to all those involved in minimizing, to the greatest extent possible, the impact of the events described above. County Department of Public Works Director Dave Kendrick and his staff, Muskegon Township staff Dave Fisher, Jeff Ream, Jim Callender and Erik Joslyn, Police Sgt. Jim Patterson, Fire Chief David Glotzbach and Deputy Chief Bob Grabinski of Muskegon Township as well as township firefighters, county engineers Prein & Newhof and township engineers from J & A Engineering, county health department staff including Vicky Webster and Dave Baldwin, and employees of Jackson-Merkey Contractors who were right in the pit fixing the broken pipe, did a fantastic job.

The years of combined experience among these key people and their knowledge of the system helped to mitigate the damaging impact on the community. With reversed flow still coming out of the force main, Dave Fisher suggested pumps be inserted in the main and pump the contents in the township's new sewer system. They pulled the cover off a manhole pumped in to it, saving close to a million gallons of additional sewage from being spilled onto the street and into the homes of residents. Instead, it went in to Muskegon Lake, which has a very good, God-given ability to cleanse itself.

This was an awful experience that I hope to never repeat, but the people mentioned above worked together in such an incredible way. Chief Glotzbach and Deputy Chief Grabinski, who stayed in the Mobile Emergency Command Post belonging to county emergency management, directed retrieval and rescue operations so county DPW staff could concentrate on fixing the pipe. Red Cross came immediately, too, and began doing what they do so well. Muskegon Township Hall became a Red Cross shelter, because we knew when 5 o'clock came around and residents were unable to go home, they would need somewhere to go. In addition to what Red Cross provided, Bonicki's, Some Place Else, Subway and Wesco all donated food for the

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Patrick S. Jordan**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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residents and for those involved in the rescue and cleanup effort. Emergency Services Director Dan Stout and the county's insurance representatives came to Township Hall Friday night to speak directly to the residents, an event that was reassuring to these families. We were given assurances that the county holds itself responsible for these claims. The Muskegon County Board of Public Works stepped up to the plate on Thursday when it unanimously granted broad powers-of-the-purse to Dave Kendrick and Jack Niemic to oversee the cleanup and restoration operation, which is still ongoing at the time of this writing.

All families have been provided long-term, temporary housing and are trying to carry on as much normalcy as possible, given the circumstances. I must commend and thank the residents, the victims of our Katrina, who have demonstrated a patience and strength that amazes me. I would also like to thank all members of the Muskegon Municipal Wastewater Management Committee for their understanding and acceptance of what it is taking and will continue to take to restore our community.

Community is the key word. The county's leadership and the MMWMC's concurrence with the county's restoration plan are what make this a community, and give us a strength and cohesiveness that is evident to all. When attempts are made to lure industry to this area, companies look at the political climate of the area and use it as a factor in their decision-making. Muskegon County has hit some bumps in the road, but we are coming together in a very exciting way, and that is attractive. This unity, together with the incredible assets we have in our wastewater system and our talented work force, is what's going to lead to Muskegon becoming the future economic envy of the state.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Patrick S. Jordan**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Muskegon Chronicle (MI)  
December 2, 2006

**Township Budget Ignores Study Findings on Salaries**

Author: Nancy Stier

Muskegon Township’s proposed 2007 budget ignores consultants’ advice to eliminate disparity in department head pay, but does offer a 3 percent raise for all non-union employees and elected officials. The budget would give all union employees raises ranging from 2.5 percent to 3 percent spelled out in their contracts. Supervisor **Pat Jordan** unsuccessfully pushed this past year for increasing the salaries of eight out of nine administrators, after a recent study showed they were paid less than their peers.

The township assessor, building official, community development director, accountant, fire and police chiefs and public works superintendent all earn less than others working in similar communities, according to the study. The pay for Accountant Erik Joslyn and Community Development Director Dave Fisher was the most significant. The study wasn’t mentioned Thursday during the three-hour budget work session the township board conducted. “I’ve fought that battle enough times,” **Jordan** said Friday. “There is a majority of this board that doesn’t want to see a couple key people get such a big raise. But the reason it’s such a big raise is because the market says it’s so far behind what they should be making.”

The board invested \$6,500 in the salary study, which produced job descriptions for department heads and a proposed personnel policy. The board spent another \$5,000 paying its labor attorney to make any changes necessary in the personnel policy to avoid conflicts with current contracts and the law. Those investments might be wasted. “I can’t see adopting the personnel policy without adopting the salary recommendation as a part of it,” **Jordan** said, adding that the labor attorney recommends approving both simultaneously to avoid labor difficulty. Some department heads might otherwise resist some of the new policy’s language, such as that employees are “at will” and can be dismissed without cause, he said.

The board did agree Thursday to include the 3 percent, across-the-board raise for non-union employees and elected officials — less than the 3.7 percent **Jordan** advocated for at the beginning of the work session. The supervisor said he wanted to compensate for this past year’s increase in the cost of living of 3.3 percent. “If we’re going to take an increase, I wouldn’t feel comfortable with anything more than 3 percent,” Trustee Carol Chaney said.

Trustee John Gilbert agreed, adding, “Why would we give ourselves a bigger raise than our (union) people?” Salaries of elected officials have been frozen since 2005. All seven board members agreed to give up their raise for this year. Besides the supervisor, the board consists of the treasurer, clerk and four trustees.

Trustee Scott Plummer said the amount of time elected officials put into their job should be taken into account in awarding raises:



**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Patrick S. Jordan**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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- Treasurer Carol Bartos has just been sworn into office after beating incumbent Laurel Barnett in the August primary.
- Clerk Jim Nielsen has missed much of the past four months of work because of health problems caused by diabetes.
- Board members and staff privately complain that **Jordan** doesn't spend as much time on the job as former Supervisor Don Aley.

Overall, the proposed 2007 budget of \$5.9 million for all expenses is down \$8,000 from the amended budget for this year. **Jordan** said it won't require any sewer or water rate hikes, but it is based on collecting slightly more property tax revenue than the township could reap without budget hearings set for 7 p.m. Monday at the township hall, located at Apple Avenue and Quarterline Roads.

Township officials still are battling with the Muskegon County Road Commission over whether their community coffers deserve a share of state revenue the commission gets for road maintenance. For the first time, \$200,000 worth of revenue from the road commission is inserted in the proposed budget, although commissioners haven't agreed to surrender any of it. Without those dollars, **Jordan** predicts a budget deficit for the township's road fund in 2007.

The township attorney is trying to get resolution of the matter, **Jordan** said, adding that he hopes the dispute doesn't turn into a lawsuit. "It doesn't need to go there," **Jordan** said. "I think that we have the law on our side." The budget also assumes the township will take in \$250,000 from the sale of some of the land in its new industrial park at Laketon Avenue and Mill Iron Road, although none of the five lots priced at \$30,000 per acre have yet sold.

Among new proposed expenditures are the addition of one police officer, the purchase of a couple of police patrol cars and a new mini pumper firetruck, which would be housed at Fire Station 2 on the north side of the community. The other mini pumper purchased before sewer construction got into high gear is housed at Station 1 on the south side of the Muskegon River. Only \$10,000 is budgeted for park improvements, and all but \$2,000 was donated for playground equipment by the annual Eastside Extravaganza Festival. Contributions to local recreation programs are to stay at the current total of \$40,000.

**Budget talks**

Overall, the proposed 2007 budget of \$5.9 million for all expenses is down \$8,000 from the amended budget for this year. Supervisor **Pat Jordan** said the township won't require any sewer or water rate hikes, but the budget is based on collecting slightly more property tax revenue than the township could reap without a budget hearing. That hearing is set for 7 p.m. Monday at the township hall, located at Apple Avenue and Quarterline Roads.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Patrick S. Jordan**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Muskegon Chronicle (MI)  
November 20, 2006

**Township Breaks Rules by Spending Without Bids**

Author: Nancy Stier

When questions were raised about a \$1.36 million no-bid sewer contract that Muskegon Township awarded to a Canadian firm, township officials maintained the contract was the best deal they could get for taxpayers. They blamed the fuss on jealousy from a competing firm, upset because it didn't get the job. But the complaints have shone a spotlight on the township's failure to follow its own policy stating when it should solicit bids for work. And the angry competitor's claims that other firms would have been interested in bidding on the sewer-lining contract turned out to be true, according to Chronicle interviews with other companies' officials.

Muskegon Township this past summer hired Canada-based Liqui-Force Services to work on the oldest portion of the township's sewer system. The work, which has since been completed, involved a sophisticated process to reline clay sewer pipes without digging them up. Clay sewer lines installed in the 1950s south of Apple Avenue and east of Quarterline Road were infested with roots that occasionally caused sewers to back up in residents' basements. Township officials apparently violated their own policy by making no attempt to seek competing prices due to advice from Johnson & Anderson Inc., the Muskegon engineering firm that designed the township's sewer system, and the township's community development director, Dave Fisher.

In a June memo to the township, Johnson & Anderson President Terry Broemer indicated his firm believed Liqui-Force "has capabilities to rehabilitate sanitary sewers of which other firms are not capable." He cited the business' skill in relining lateral lines leading toward homes as a unique qualification from which the oldest portion of the township's sewer system could benefit. A policy the Muskegon Township board passed in 2002 states that sealed bids are required on goods and services costing \$5,001 or more unless there is an emergency. When the policy is "impractical in a given situation" it may be waived if a majority of the township board, in a roll call vote, agrees on the waiver.

That vote to waive the bidding requirement was not taken before the no-bid Liqui-Force contract was approved. Instead of bidding out the work, Muskegon Township used the prices and conditions of a three-year-old contract with Liqui-Force that Johnson & Anderson had produced for Waterford Township, in Oakland County. In regard to awarding the contract to Liqui-Force, Fisher and Township Supervisor **Pat Jordan** say the township made the right decision. Fisher said he's convinced that accepting Waterford Township's old agreement "saved us a lot of money," partly because those prices are three years old. Muskegon Township was spared paying Johnson & Anderson another \$50,000 to \$60,000 to draft new job specifications, Fisher added. **Jordan** said final costs of the project were below the \$1.36 million budget, though he has yet to release final invoices.

On Oct. 2, three men associated with MidWest Trenchless Services of Grant, a firm that says it

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Patrick S. Jordan***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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competes with Liqui-Force, urged the township board to immediately halt Liqui-Force's work in the township. They called for an investigation into the firm's fees, which they maintained are excessive. They said they and other firms would have sought the contract, and questioned why the township didn't ask for bids on such a large project. Township officials vowed to check out their claims about Liqui-Force. But in the meantime, the board on Oct. 2 approved paying Liqui-Force \$527,229 for its first month of work. The next day, **Jordan** said he had met with Johnson & Anderson and was confident that Liqui-Force was doing quality work and should continue the project. He said Midwest Trenchless Services' complaints were baseless.

One of Midwest Trenchless Services' claims was that the city of Southfield is paying Liqui-Force about half as much per foot for relining its main sewer pipes as Muskegon Township is paying. Southfield sought competitive bids on relining its sewers. Liqui-Force won the contract, and is being paid \$24.50 per foot for relining 8-inch pipes and \$30 for 12-inch pipes, according to bid sheets Midwest Trenchless Services provided. The Chronicle was unable to reach Southfield or Liqui-Force officials to confirm those numbers. Muskegon Township was to pay \$42 a foot for relining 8-inch pipes and \$55 a foot for 12-inch pipes. Fisher said there could be many reasons for the cost difference. Crews here must stay in motels, but can live at home when jobs are scheduled in the Detroit area, Fisher said. Liqui-Force is based in Kingsville, Ont., but has a U.S. office in Romulus.

Southfield may also have gotten a better price because the city awarded a three-year contract that involves more work, he added. In an Oct. 10 memo to **Jordan**, Broemer asserted that although competing contractors alleged "there were improprieties in awarding the contract for sewer rehabilitation to Liqui-Force Services, we stand by it." "As I indicated to you, we feel that the award of this contract was in the best interest of Muskegon Township," Broemer wrote, adding that almost half the work involved relining house and business service lines to prevent future basement flooding. "To the best of our knowledge, Liqui-Force was the only firm that could meet that requirement..." Kim Lewis, Liqui-Force's CEO, has told The Chronicle there is "no basis and truth" to allegations that the company was charging too much.

The company's competitors say otherwise. In Chronicle interviews, they echoed Midwest Trenchless Services' allegations that the township may be paying too much, and that they would have been happy to bid on the sewer project. If the job was advertised, "I would have probably had four or five contractors bid on it," said Rick Gage, national sales and marketing director for LMK Enterprises Inc. of Ottawa, Ill. He claims his firm invented the sophisticated process used to reline sewer pipes leading toward homes and businesses without digging up lines. Muskegon Township might have gotten a much better deal if it broke the job in two parts and took separate bids for main lines and house lines, according to Gage. Most "companies only do one type of pipe or the other, because the equipment involved is different," Gage said.

Shaun Flanery, president of Performance Pipe Lining Inc. of Ottawa, Ill., said his firm does both types of work, but specializes in relining the smaller feeder pipes, and has probably done more than any U.S. company. Flanery said the price Liqui-Force charged for relining Muskegon Township's main lines seems "very, very high." But he indicated that what Liqui-Force planned

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Patrick S. Jordan***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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to bill for relining 150 smaller pipes leading to homes appears “very, very low.” “I’d be interested in whether they really do many of those laterals (house lines),” Flanery said, adding he has done work in West Michigan and would have been intensely interested in competing for both parts of the project. The city of Norton Shores took bids this summer on relining some of its largest sewer pipes. The difference between the low bidder, Ohio-based American Water Services, which got the job, and the high bidder, which was Liqui-Force, was \$308,000, according to city officials. American Water Services bid was \$784,929; Liqui-Force’s was \$1,092,582.

In Norton Shores, a city ordinance requires bids when purchases are likely to cost more than \$10,000. Such policies are in place to make sure work is done by the best firm available, at the lowest cost to taxpayers, as local governments spend thousands and sometimes millions of dollars on public projects. Muskegon Township’s purchasing policy states that for expenditures of \$5,001 and above: “A request for proposals must be prepared and three bids must be obtained.” But the policy includes a clause saying: “If the township board decides that the bid process is not practical in a given situation, they may waive the requirements of this policy on a majority, roll-call vote. A majority shall consist of four or more affirmative votes.”

Interviews with several township officials indicate they apparently weren’t aware of the policy when they voted on the Liqui-Force contract. In an interview long after the board OK’d the no-bid contract, township Trustee Carol Ream said “to my knowledge there is no written policy” about when projects must go out for bid. On Nov. 13, **Jordan** told The Chronicle he didn’t know about the township’s purchasing policy until after the Liqui-Force contract was awarded. “I wasn’t aware of it until after the fact, when I dug it up,” **Jordan** said. When asked if the sewer-lining contract violated the policy, **Jordan** responded: “I’m not going to answer that.” He then went on to say the township has saved money on the project and residents have been spared inconvenience. “We did the right thing,” he said.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Patrick S. Jordan**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Muskegon Chronicle (MI)

October 2, 2006

**Township, County at Odds Over Roadwork**

Author: Nancy Stier

The relationship between Muskegon Township and the Muskegon County Road Commission seems to be sinking into a large pothole. Neither entity can agree on the terms under which the township's local roads will be maintained. The road commission continues to resist Muskegon Township's recent assertion that it invests enough in preserving the county road system to be reimbursed for part of what it spends. Instead, the road commission says the township could save itself money by contracting with the commission to provide the service, rather than relying on the township's public works department. "It appears that substantial savings could be realized if Muskegon Township were to contract with the road commission for the latter to supply adequate manpower to handle snowplowing and other related maintenance demands," read the letter Road Commission Managing Director Kenneth Hulka sent to Muskegon Township Supervisor **Pat Jordan**. "Our residents would be furious if we turned our roads over to the road commission," **Jordan** said, predicting streets wouldn't be plowed by the time residents left for work if the commission took over the responsibility.

Hulka estimated it might cost the township \$250,000 for the first year of contracting with the commission, compared to up to \$400,000 the township says it spends to have its public works department maintain local roads. Hulka's estimate assumed two full-time employees would be needed to do the work. There would also be sharing or transfer of road maintenance equipment. Instead of discussing that proposal last week, the township board unanimously rejected an alternative the road commission provided. That document would have formalized the current arrangement in which the township's public works department maintains local roads, while the road commission handles upkeep of major streets. But the agreement offered the township no money for the service. It added requirements, such as insurance, that would make it more expensive for the township to continue the job. "To me, both offers that they made I believe were intentionally unworkable," **Jordan** said.

He indicated he didn't even mention Hulka's suggestion to his board that the commission be contracted to maintain the township's roads. "Maybe I misinterpreted it, but it didn't really seem like a formal proposal," **Jordan** said of the letter. "We've been plowing our own roads for 91 years. It started in 1915, because the township wasn't satisfied with the service it got from the road commission." Trustee Scott Plummer said he doesn't see how the commission could do an adequate job of caring for local roads, when it provides less than what he considers adequate service on primary streets like MacArthur Road. That road is never plowed until the day after a heavy snow, Plummer maintains. "I don't think they have the people or the money or anything else to do it." When contacted last week, Hulka said he was unaware the township turned one of his two proposals down and failed to discuss the other. "I thought we were still in preliminary discussions with them. I wasn't aware that he (**Jordan**) was planning to take it to the board," Hulka said. Hulka said he plans to provide a report on the matter to the road commission when it

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**Patrick S. Jordan**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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meets Oct. 19. He said he doesn't know whether the two parties can reach agreement before then. For years, the township and road commission had an unwritten agreement in which the township's public works employees handled snowplowing and other routine maintenance for the community's more minor roads. That allowed the road commission to focus on maintaining major arteries. In exchange, county road commission officials said the township got some additional financial support for road projects, such as the recent extension of Walker Road. Muskegon Township is apparently one of only two townships in the state that has its own highway department for road maintenance. It spends up to \$400,000 annually salting and grading, applying gravel, patching potholes and resurfacing. That expense consumes 1.25 to 1.5 mills of the 4.35 mills Muskegon Township levies for support of its general fund.

Township officials assert that because more than a mill is spent on county road maintenance, a recent change in state law permits the township to be reimbursed for at least 66 percent of the cost of what the commission would otherwise have to bear. Road commissioners haven't agreed to any reimbursement. Instead, Hulka offered the two alternatives township officials find objectionable. When asked if the impasse will result in the township ending its maintenance of county roads, **Jordan** said: "I don't know. I'm going to reserve comment." He said he feels negotiations between the two parties are "far from over."

The township did request an opinion earlier from the attorney general on whether it is entitled to road commission reimbursement from state gas and weight taxes for money invested in road maintenance. **Jordan** said the Oakland County Road Commission pays Bloomfield Township for 75 percent of the cost of maintaining local roads. That is apparently the only other township in the state that provides services similar to Muskegon Township, according to the supervisor.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Patrick S. Jordan**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Muskegon Chronicle (MI)

June 12, 2006

**Residents Unhappy with Effects of Massive Project, Failure to Communicate**

Author: Nancy Stier

Since sewer construction started this spring in the Brooks-Hall roads area in Muskegon Township, local roads have turned into obstacle courses for residents like Kris Sherwood. Her shiny new PT Cruiser got stuck in a torn-up road. Normal services like mail and garbage have been disrupted. School bus stops were moved, resulting in students having to walk through construction zones. But the thing that makes residents like Sherwood as mad as anything: They were never informed by the township beforehand about how to deal with the problems. Township officials admit they failed to send out advance notifications because the official in charge was off on sick leave. But they stressed it's such a big project residents will have to just grit their teeth and bear it, and they'll be enjoying major improvements by the end of the summer.

Sherwood is only one of hundreds of residents whose daily routines have been disrupted by the large sewer construction project under way in the northeast portion of Muskegon Township, located south of the Muskegon River. During the last month, tempers flared as crews from Nagel Construction Inc. of Moline, Mich., continually tore up roads in their neighborhood. It became increasingly difficult for residents to get to work or do errands without running into barricaded construction zones that forced them to turn around and try alternate routes. "I really didn't think it would be this bad," Sherwood said of sewer construction. "This is terrible how they tore everything up at the same time. It's just not fun over here."

On Wednesday, even firetrucks couldn't get into the area. Muskegon Township Fire Chief David Glotzbach said the community's new four-wheel drive fire truck got stuck badly enough taking a test run through the construction zone on North Woodview that it required towing. That was the first time this year firetrucks have become mired in a construction zone, although that situation occurred twice last year, according to Glotzbach. Frustration levels rose substantially during the past month, when township staff failed to mail detailed letters in advance about disruptions citizens could expect in service, or where they should park to avoid having heavy equipment blocking their routes. Telephone, mail delivery and garbage pickup haven't always been reliable, either.

Workers who answered the phone at township hall got an earful of profanity from a few residents who found construction blocking their vehicles. Some were upset about going for two to five days without mail before learning the U. S. Postal Service had started placing it in temporary mailboxes they must drive miles to reach. "What you guys have us living in back there is hell," Christine Cavalier, 3932 Forest Edge, told the Muskegon Township Board of Trustees last week. "Nobody in the township has let us know anything (in advance)." She complained contractors tore up too many roads in her neighborhood and accused project coordinators of poor planning.

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**Patrick S. Jordan**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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But Community Development Director Dave Fisher said the construction schedule is necessary if there is any hope of getting all roads repaved with at least one coat of asphalt before school starts again in the fall. Lines to be installed yet this summer are generally north of Apple Avenue from Dangle to Brooks roads. Cavalier said she wouldn't mind if construction dragged on into December. "Just give me a road I can drive on," she said. Pavement has been torn off portions of MacArthur, Brooks, Hall and Mill Iron Roads, leaving washboard surfaces residents complain are tearing up their vehicles. Residents are starting to make vehicle damage claims to the township, which refers them to the contractor.

In addition, residents like Sherwood have lost phone service. She said her phone was out twice within the past two weeks — for four days on one occasion and two on the other. Contractors accidentally cut the line serving her family's home at 185 N. Woodview when sewer installation crews began digging in her subdivision. Each night, her family drifts off to sleep to the hum of an electrical generator contractors run 24 hours a day outside the Sherwoods' residence. "I'm not going to say that it has been handled perfectly," township Supervisor **Pat Jordan** said of the sewer construction project. "But the scope of this project is bigger than this township has ever seen."

This is the largest area construction crews have tackled since the township started pumping millions of dollars into expanding its sewer system in 2003. Fisher predicts the project will make life temporarily miserable for many other residents before crews wind things up this construction season. He indicated problems like the Sherwoods experienced are extreme compared to the amount of discomfort the average citizen undergoes. "But it's going to be a rough summer," Fisher told citizens who complained last week to the township board about things that have gone wrong. He apologized for the situation. He said advance notification the township had provided citizens of potential service disruptions fell by the wayside since he went on sick leave following a neck operation May 7.

**Jordan** and building official Jeff Ream have tried to oversee the project in his place. Fisher told a few angry citizens who showed up for last week's township board meeting that the two men had been "doing a heck of a job" trying to stay on top of the project, "when in fact they don't have a clue" about how to do it. **Jordan** said Fisher gave them a "construction management 101 course" just before his neck operation. But neither man has managed a sewer project before and lacks the 30 years of experience Fisher has. The supervisor said Ream has done an excellent job of keeping track of what contractors are doing in the construction zone. But **Jordan** indicated neither he nor Ream had the background or experience to "plan ahead" and mail out advance notification. "If the letters didn't go out, I'll take the blame for it," **Jordan** said.

Although he sympathizes with residents who are finding sewer construction an unpleasant process, when crews are done "it's going to be a very nice community with brand new roads and utilities," **Jordan** said. Until the recent communication glitch, both Fisher and Nagel Construction, the project's low bidder, say work has gone fairly smoothly and is now 30 percent complete. One thing making the project more disruptive than last year's sewer construction is that the water table in this area is only two or three feet below the surface. Contractors have to



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**Patrick S. Jordan**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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dig temporary ditches and spend more than a week pumping down the groundwater level, before they can install sewer pipe at depths of 20 or more feet. A few residents' wells have gone temporarily dry during that process.

Glotzbach said a fire department official drives through construction areas at least once a day to make sure the roads are passable for emergency vehicles. If they aren't, Nagel Construction is expected to remedy the problem immediately. Contractors remain upbeat about the project's progress. "We've had a few problems. But for the scope of the project, it's a very large project and it's going quite well," said Dirk Hoekstra, job superintendent of Nagel Construction. He denied some residents' claims crews have been rude to residents trying to get past heavy equipment to their homes. "We won't tolerate that," he said.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Patrick S. Jordan**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Muskegon Chronicle (MI)

May 12, 2006

**Another \$1 Million Water, Road Project Under Consideration**

Author: Nancy Stier

Muskegon Township will decide Monday whether to move forward with another \$1 million water and road paving project. Those benefiting from it would pay half the cost as part of a special assessment district. The district would include property along Dangl Road between Apple and Wesley avenues. Besides Wesley, other streets on which waterlines and paving would be installed are Woodland and Jones streets and Oak Avenue.

The estimated cost of the water and paving project is \$958,000. Most property benefiting from it would pay special property tax assessments to cover about 50 percent of the expense. Muskegon Township Supervisor **Pat Jordan** said the township would finance the rest. Depending on how the project is constructed, Muskegon Technical Academy, 2900 E. Apple, might eventually benefit by having a waterline run past its facility on Oak Avenue from Walker Road. But unlike residents of the affected area, the charter school wouldn't have to pay a special assessment, according to **Jordan**.

Currently, the public school's well water exceeds drinking water standards, so it wouldn't be forced to connect unless the well became polluted, the school sold its property or the building was expanded by more than 25 percent, according to **Jordan**. He said the school wasn't petitioned to be in the district, but state officials may require a waterline run along Oak past the school to provide a second source of water to that area. "If they have to connect, it will cost them \$50,000 at least," **Jordan** said, adding schools pay many times what homeowners do for waterline connections because they are heavy users of the system.

Township Trustee Carol Chaney, administrative assistant to Muskegon Technical Academy's superintendent, helped the township board take action last week to get the project moving toward construction. When contacted after the vote, she said she wasn't aware the building she works in might benefit and considers it a conflict of interest for her to participate in the decision. "If it is part of the project, then I'm going to call (**Jordan**) and ask for another vote," Chaney said. The supervisor said he doesn't consider it a conflict of interest.

When the first vote on the project was held, Trustee John Gilbert was the only one of seven township board members who dissented, maintaining the approach being taken isn't fair to all who will have to pay for it. "Some people can't afford it," Gilbert said, objecting to the township's relatively new policy on special assessments. Instead of dealing with one street at a time, the township now upgrades several streets in one area, which Clerk James Nielsen said permits the township to get a better price from contractors on each job. However, that approach also reduces the ability of residents of a particular street to stop creation of a special assessment district.

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**Patrick S. Jordan**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Public hearings will be held on the plan at 7 p.m. Monday in the basement of the township hall at Quarterline Road and Apple Avenue. The proposal for the new water and paving project got an angry reaction during last week's township board meeting from Danny Sutton of 2112 McLaughlin. "Are we going to be absorbing all these extra expenses?" Sutton said of sewer, water and paving projects the township board has added to the list during the past year. "Shouldn't this be a big vote by the people that live in the township?"

**Jordan** asserted that costs in this instance would be paid by special assessments and by the township. Only two other residents who would pay special assessments spoke during last week's meeting. Shane Brown, 3272 Oak, said three out of five neighbors on his street don't want to be part of the special assessment district. He predicted his property taxes would more than double and said one of his neighbors fears the increase would "tax him out of his house." Jeff Wood of 3110 Wesley urged the township board to move ahead with the project, pointing out a majority of those affected support it. If unanimous approval was necessary, "we would never get anything done," Wood said.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Patrick S. Jordan**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Muskegon Chronicle (MI)

March 30, 2006

**Sewer Construction Price Tag Could Jump to \$21 Million**

Author: Nancy Stier

A plan to extend sanitary sewers through a large portion of Muskegon Township was pegged at a cost of about \$12.5 million last year. Now, township officials are considering expanding the proposed new service area and bumping the cost up to as high as \$21 million, depending on citizen reaction. A public hearing is expected to be set for April 17 on areas that might be added to the existing list of projects township officials originally planned to fund. Earlier this month, the seven-member township board directed its top three officers — the supervisor, clerk and treasurer — to identify and prioritize additional projects beyond the original scope. Supervisor **Pat Jordan** was then authorized to ask Muskegon County to sell \$16 million in bonds, rather than the \$12.5 million first contemplated.

Township financial consultants predicted the community could float up to \$16 million in bonds for sewer expansion without having to hike sewer rates before 2009 or 2010. Recently, **Jordan** said property owners in the township whose land wouldn't be reached by the sewer expansion plan asked that lines serving their neighborhood be added to the initial \$12.5 million list of projects. Bonding costs could hit \$19 million to \$21 million, depending on how much expense township board members are willing to add, **Jordan** said. "I'm not real keen on borrowing any more money (other than the \$16 million)," **Jordan** said, adding the board wants public feedback during a public hearing he expects to be set for April 17.

Between now and then, letters will be sent to areas not currently planned for sewer construction that the township is willing to consider adding, **Jordan** said. Lines already scheduled for construction would serve the bulk of the township's more than 8,000 parcels, according to **Jordan**. Another 500 homes mainly north of the Muskegon River won't be included unless the board adds that expense. Sewer connection fees will be \$2,100 per residence, in addition to installation of the home's feeder line. The expense could be spread over three years and is thousands of dollars lower than the norm in Michigan because property owners paid millage for years toward expansion of the sewer system, township officials say.

Sewer construction costs south of the river appear to be holding close to the \$12.5 million projected initially, the township's Water and Sewer Committee reported earlier this month. Township board members previously agreed to invest about another \$1.4 million to run sewer pipe along River Road east of U.S. 31 to the township line this year.

Other areas **Jordan** said are under consideration include:

- Spending about \$1 million to reline aging sewer pipes in an area roughly bordered by Harvey Street and Apple, Sauter and Francis avenues.
- Becker Road.
- Deerwood and Northside roads.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Patrick S. Jordan**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Muskegon Chronicle (MI)  
October 29, 2005

**Township Leaders Embroiled in a Tempest**

Author: Nancy Stier

Six Muskegon Township department heads say infighting among several township board members has escalated to the point where it cripples their ability to do their jobs and may prompt resignations. In a letter to the township board, the department heads called for an end to the “turmoil.” “If not addressed, these problems among you will hurt our community for years to come,” administrators predicted. The Oct. 21 letter bore the names of Muskegon Township Police Chief Don Schrupf, Department of Public Works Supervisor Randy Wilkerson, Building Official Jeff Ream, Fire Chief Dave Glotzbach, Community Development Director Dave Fisher and Assessor Penny Good.

Township Clerk Jim Nielsen, the only board member criticized by name in the letter, blamed the problem on lack of communication between the board and department heads. “We’re all guilty of it. The whole board is guilty of it,” Nielsen said. When contacted about the letter this week, Township Supervisor **Pat Jordan** said he feels some internal problems intensified since he took the job, because he’s been cautious about exercising his authority. **Jordan** was appointed supervisor in spring 2004, replacing Don Aley, who held the post 15 years. **Jordan** was elected to a four-year term in November 2004. **Jordan** said he felt it would be counterproductive to begin his new job “with guns blazing.” He wanted to “evolve into the leader that was expected of me.” “It’s been very difficult,” **Jordan** said. “It’s been very challenging. I spend a lot of time crying about it, and trying to behave in a way that does not dishonor my Lord. “I know I don’t quite have that part mastered yet.”

In an attempt to improve relations, the township board’s executive committee — comprised of **Jordan**, Nielsen and Treasurer Sandra Bird — this month started weekly meetings and will try to include at least one department head in those sessions, according to Nielsen. Another option under consideration is a half-day or full-day board retreat during which a facilitator would be brought in to help explore ways of working together, **Jordan** said. Drafting of an ethics policy is another possibility. “I do accept a certain amount of responsibility for a certain amount of the broken relationships at township hall,” **Jordan** said. “But I’m only one person, and I can’t keep an eye on everybody all of the time.”

In their letter, the department heads wrote that Nielsen’s treatment of township employees is part of the problem and complained that those issues go unresolved. In addition, “ongoing public and personal attacks” involving several board members recently prompted “childish” behavior at a staff meeting that was “embarrassing and disgusting” to witness, the letter read. “We ask the board to note that Clerk Jim Nielsen has been intimately involved in all the above situations,” stated the letter. “A pattern is emerging that is becoming disturbingly predictable.” The infighting, combined with “an overall lack of leadership, vision and positive interaction by and within the entire board” makes it more difficult for department heads to “serve the needs of our

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Patrick S. Jordan***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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residents and community,” administrators wrote. “Based on these and other issues, the working conditions are deteriorating to the point where ... resignations are being considered.”

Administrators urged the seven-member township board to “unite for the good of Muskegon Township and demand that current behaviors and resulting infighting cease.” Board Trustee Scott Plummer supplied the letter to The Chronicle after first getting permission from all of his colleagues except Nielsen, whom Plummer said he didn’t consult in advance. “I just want people to know what is going on and that we want to fix this,” Plummer said. “We need to work together better and there is a lack of leadership going on at township hall right now.” As clerk, Nielsen has had difficulty getting along with staff since he was first elected to his post five years ago. His former office manager, Diane Stafford, quit in 2002. Building Official Cindy VerBeek resigned to take a job with Grand Haven Township soon afterward. His elections clerk, Gloria Vega, ceased working for Nielsen on election night a year ago, when their relationship broke down.

All blamed Nielsen’s treatment of them as reasons for their dissatisfaction, although the clerk denied any blame. Nielsen was re-elected clerk in a close race last November. In July, Community Development Director Fisher filed a complaint with the township board’s labor committee asserting Nielsen verbally abused him when the two got in an argument. Nielsen submitted a written apology to the committee for his behavior, but this week denied Fisher’s assertion that he swore at Fisher during the exchange. The department heads’ letter indicated a “questionable closed session” was held by the township board regarding that matter, but staff didn’t feel the matter was resolved.

**Jordan** and Bird acknowledge that they don’t get along with Nielsen. Consequently, the three don’t communicate well and that has caused problems for staff, **Jordan** said. Tension between Nielsen, **Jordan** and Bird erupted Oct. 4 when they met with department heads to clarify procedures for business license applications, according to **Jordan**. Bird said Nielsen asked the treasurer’s office to verify information that business licensees put on their applications. “It is the clerk’s responsibility to make sure business application forms are filled out completely,” Bird said. She maintained Nielsen verbally lashed out twice at her, before she got fed up and left the room. “Everyone just kind of rose to her defense and I initiated it,” **Jordan** said. Someone who attended the meeting, who refused to be identified, said the supervisor stomped out of the room soon after Bird and said something insulting to Nielsen. “I don’t think I did anything that was childish,” **Jordan** said. “I guess for the three of us, that was very unprofessional,” Nielsen said of what transpired between executive committee members that day.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Patrick S. Jordan**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Muskegon Chronicle (MI)

November 15, 2004

**Savings Account Raided to Meet Budget Needs**

Author: Nancy Stier

Muskegon Township plans to continue the same services next year but isn't planning to tackle any large projects other than millions of dollars worth of sewer and waterline construction. Township officials plan to dip into the general fund's financial cushion again to make ends meet in the face of state revenue-sharing cuts. They project that fund's surplus used to bail the community out in emergencies might drop to \$400,000 or less by the end of 2005. "With (state) revenue sharing getting cut, it's taking a huge toll on us," said the township's new supervisor, **Pat Jordan**.

State officials recommended having enough cash on hand to cover 10 to 15 percent of the community's proposed \$4.6 million general fund budget. What administrators suggest leaving unspent of the surplus by Dec. 31, 2005, is "minimal," according to Erik Joslyn, the township's office manager and accountant. Township finances may deteriorate further if voters again refuse to pass the street lighting millage, which they rejected in both the August primary and Nov. 2. "People voted to turn the lights out, basically," **Jordan** said, adding many citizens were under the erroneous impression the street light millage was a new tax rather than a renewal of an existing levy expiring after this December's property-tax collection.

Township officials asked for 0.65 mill in August, which was slightly higher than the 0.5 mill initially approved for streetlights. The township board dropped its renewal request to 0.5 mill on the November ballot. Voters still rejected the tax, which would have raised more than \$150,000 the first year. General and public safety expenses were reviewed for more than three hours last week by the township board, which will hold a budget and truth-in-taxation hearing when it meets at 7 p.m. today at the township hall, 1990 E. Apple. What Community Development Director Dave Fisher should be paid generated the most discussion among township board members.

**Jordan** unsuccessfully advocated a 10 percent raise in Fisher's current \$50,940 salary. **Jordan** argued, as former Supervisor Don Aley did before retirement, that Fisher is underpaid compared to other local government administrators handling similar duties. Fisher received a total of 8 percent more than the normal raises given to township employees during the past few years, according to Trustee John Gilbert. Gilbert said he is opposed to giving Fisher more than the average 3 percent raise built into the 2005 budget for most employees with settled contracts and elected officials. "Dave is an extremely valuable employee," **Jordan** said, reminding the board that Fisher's duties are increasing as the township borrows \$21 million to extend its sewer and waterlines. "It's just that I think he is someone that has more qualifications than anyone in this county."

Besides heading the sewer and water department, Fisher also deals with economic development

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Patrick S. Jordan**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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and grant applications, **Jordan** said. The supervisor promised to bring the issue of a larger raise up again if the township board doesn't approve it now for the community development director. Trustee Carol Chaney agreed with Gilbert that a 3 percent raise is sufficient, particularly because the township board added employees recently to lessen Fisher's load. Trustee Carole Carter, who will leave the board following her loss in the August primary, disagreed. "If you don't vote for the 10 (percent increase in Fisher's salary), I think you need to at least give another 8 (percent)," Carter said. The 3 percent raise proposed for all elected officials would put the annual salaries of **Jordan**, newly elected Treasurer Sandra Bird and Clerk Jim Nielsen at \$54,902 beginning Jan. 1.

In addition, **Jordan** is asking for another \$8,222 in compensation for the amount township supervisors get for serving as chief assessing officer, which would put his yearly salary at \$63,124. Aley was making \$59,500 when he retired with 15 years of experience and Level 2 certification in assessing. **Jordan** was hired as Aley's replacement last spring and expects to achieve Level 1 certification in March.



**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Patrick S. Jordan**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Muskegon Chronicle (MI)  
March 10, 2004

**Deputy Clerk for County Appointed as Supervisor**

Author: Nancy Stier & Steve Gunn

It took less than an hour Tuesday to appoint **Patrick Jordan** as Muskegon Township's next supervisor. He'll take over when Don Aley retires May 28, after 15 years as supervisor. **Jordan**, 38, of 3315 E. River, has been considering the position since last summer when he was encouraged to seek the appointment by Muskegon Township Clerk Jim Nielsen. The township board Tuesday unanimously decided to make **Jordan** the community's next supervisor and pay him \$53,303 annually, plus benefits, beginning May 29. In the meantime, he will serve as Aley's deputy and be paid \$800 per week, with his first day on the job being March 22.

As deputy clerk supervisor of the Muskegon County clerk's office for the past four years, **Jordan** had hoped last year to be appointed county clerk. He switched from the Republican to the Democratic Party last fall and jumped into township politics after Karen Buie, a Republican, got that appointment. Since then, **Jordan**, who has a master's degree in public administration, has regularly attended township meetings. Aley said **Jordan** visited him on almost a weekly basis to learn more about what it would be like to become the community's next supervisor.

Showing that interest paid off. Aley initially recommended scaling back the supervisor's pay and duties and hiring the community's first professional manager to run daily operations when he retires, and Aley said he still believes that would have been the best option. But after becoming acquainted with **Jordan**, who is the brother-in-law of Muskegon Township Fire Chief David Glotzbach, Aley recommended in February that the township board appoint **Jordan** as the next supervisor.

The board did so Tuesday without advertising the position in trade journals. Aley abstained from the vote because he can't legally act on who becomes his successor. **Jordan** was the only one interviewed for the post and was one of two to submit an application. Scott Banninga, 1824 Riegler, executive director of the Dowagiac Housing Commission, also applied. He said his work schedule didn't permit him to attend Tuesday's interviews after it became apparent **Jordan** was the favored candidate. Aley said Tuesday that Banninga wasn't technically eligible for the job because he's a registered voter of the Dowagiac area and would need to switch to Muskegon Township.

Township board members seemed interested Tuesday in making sure Aley's successor is home grown. Although raised in the city of Muskegon, **Jordan** has lived in Muskegon Township for the past 11 years and teaches government classes at Baker College. He said both his father and grandfather lived in the township. **Jordan** told the board he didn't suddenly become a Democrat to run for supervisor in the August primary and November 2004 election. "There was no room for me in the Republican Party," **Jordan** said, adding he has been welcomed by Democrats and plans to stay with that party "for a long time." When asked about his strengths, **Jordan** said

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Patrick S. Jordan**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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“probably communication, when I’m not so nervous.”

The weakness he identified was not being willing to delegate responsibilities to others as often as he should. He said his family connection with the township’s fire chief shouldn’t cause problems running the community. **Jordan** indicated his goals include continuing to serve as supervisor five or 10 years from now. But he also expressed a willingness to consider whether the township will need to switch to having a manager to run daily operations at some point. The supervisor’s main duty would then be to handle politics and conduct township meetings. **Jordan** indicated that the three years he served as an investigator for the family court of Ottawa County’s 20th Circuit Court taught him to be “a good mediator” of disputes.

Aley intends to give **Jordan** five weeks of training before the longtime supervisor leaves April 30 for a monthlong vacation. Aley pledged to support **Jordan** in his supervisor’s election campaign. “If you mess up, I’ll be your worst enemy,” Aley said. **Jordan** said Aley has left township affairs “in fine order and I intend to keep them that way.” The top priority, he predicted, will be resolving a dispute between Muskegon County and townships over extending waterlines east to the county’s proposed industrial park in Moorland Township and north to Michigan’s Adventure Amusement Park. **Jordan** said his last day in the county clerk’s office will probably be March 19. His departure from the clerk’s staff will leave a void. For the past four years, his duties have included oversight of elections and jury selection in Muskegon County.

The election responsibilities alone can be extremely challenging, according to **Jordan**. His duties included collecting the name of every candidate for every office, developing ballots for every municipality in the county, and providing election supplies to precinct voting sites throughout the county. **Jordan** said he’s been training a replacement from the clerk staff who was chosen by Buie. The county clerk could not be reached for comment this morning. “There’s enough experience in the office,” **Jordan** said. “I think they’ll be fine.”

**FAXBOX:**

Personal file

- Who: **Patrick Jordan**.

- New job: Supervisor, Muskegon Township.

- Education: Graduate of Muskegon High School and Grand Valley State University. Earned master’s degree in public administration from Western Michigan University.

- Employment: Deputy clerk supervisor, Muskegon County clerks’ office; investigator for Ottawa County Friend of the Court; deputy corrections officer, Ottawa County Sheriff’s Department.

- Personal: 38; married to Cathy Jordan, two children.

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Research Compiled by:           Amanda Dillabough  
  Colin Baenziger & Associates

COLIN BAENZIGER  ASSOCIATES

EXECUTIVE RECRUITING

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*Section 10*

*Gregg J. Lynk*

*Lake Worth Beach City Manager  
Candidate Report*

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*Cover Letter and Resume*

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Gregg Lynk  
1309 Braun St NE  
Palm Bay, FL 32905  
[glynk61@gmail.com](mailto:glynk61@gmail.com)  
908-230-1850

After years of leading large-scale programs in the private sector, which involved government at every level, I crossed over to run one of Florida's largest cities, Palm Bay. For 3 ½ years, I was the CEO for the 15<sup>th</sup> largest City in the State of Florida. Having over 20 years of executive experience from both the private and government sectors provided me a unique perspective for how to successfully navigate unnecessary bureaucracy while working to meet the aggressive performance demands of a for-profit company. Please consider this letter as a formal request to be considered for the position of City Manager for Lake Worth Beach, Florida.

Whether in private or public sector, I have succeeded with the same formula:

1. Hire great people and let them do their jobs.
2. Measure the things you want done.
3. Focus on results and reward accordingly.

In the recruitment brochure for City Manager there were several topics of interest that Council was looking for in a candidate.

1. Demonstrated track record. Achieved tremendous success in public and private sectors working with lobbyists at local, state and national levels.
2. I am certified thru FEMA . Led Palm Bay thru two hurricanes, Matthew and Irma.
3. I am not a person that shrinks under adversity. I have a can-do spirit and surround myself with successful, experienced and creative staff. In other words, I am a change agent that realizes the vision of the board and creates and implements the strategy to get the City moving in the right direction and ultimately to the right place.
4. I am an excellent communicator that will understand the board and be able to fully execute their directives to not only meet but exceed their expectations.
5. Worked with Charter Review Committee to address and update City Charter. Led to 7 City referendums. Two of particular interest were non ad-valorem issues to address the \$45 million stormwater shortfall and the other initiative was the \$150 million bond to repair and pave all the streets in Palm Bay.
6. I added to the Public information Staff. Social media can be brutal. However, there are ways to get positive information out and stay on top of mis-information to those that may not be as familiar with policy and or the process. Social media staff have a challenging job ahead of them; however, they are an integral piece of getting the message out and increasing transparency.
7. I learned early on in my career, it is not just customer service, we are about providing extraordinary customer service.

## **Section 10**

As the former City Manager of Palm Bay, the most populist city in Brevard County, I enjoyed an extraordinary degree of success in recognizing and implementing strategic initiatives that enhance business relationships and have been proven to build revenues. I am also recognized as a team builder and a leader who knows how to motivate staff and key stakeholders to communicate more effectively. My ability to organize and focus the efforts of others was paramount to the successes I've experienced. My strong work ethic coupled with the many other proven abilities depicted in my résumé, were critical to helping the organization achieve their mission. I feel certain that the City of Lake Worth Beach will also benefit significantly from my management experience, business development, marketing, and customer relations expertise which was important to my successful relationship working with legislative bodies and elected/public officials.

Sincerely,

Gregg Lynk

**Gregg Lynk**

Email: [glynk61@gmail.com](mailto:glynk61@gmail.com) Phone: (908) 230 – 1850

**Driven, Results-oriented, Executive from both Private and Public Sectors**

**Summary of Experience and Qualifications**

- As Chief Executive of Florida’s 16<sup>th</sup> largest city, oversaw all aspects of planning, operations and management of a municipality with 900+ employees and an annual budget of over \$180 million.
- As an executive in the private sector, implemented and oversaw all aspects of business and community management, including: strategic planning, finance, business development, facilities, and community programs while increasing public safety, improving service quality and substantially reducing costs.

**Employment History**

**Legislative liaison/Project Manager  
Catai Solutions**

**2019 - current**

Responsibilities:

Orchestrate improvements in communities and technology at many levels, including:

- Gather intelligence on needs, requirements and scope.
- Shape budget and financing options.
- Inform critical decision makers of review process, criteria and timetable
- Cultivate champions and partnerships.

Key Accomplishments

- Engaged local leaders from a variety of business sectors and all levels of government to facilitate targeted local workshops to learn, educate and design plans to address critical needs.
- Educated decision makers on key issues and champion impactful initiatives through digital media and communications.
- Launching of and funding new deployable and integrated platforms. Worked step by step with partners and researched inventory of a diversity of funding streams, from private sector financing to philanthropic programs to government investment.

**City Manager/Chief Executive Officer  
City of Palm Bay**

**2015 - 2018  
Palm Bay, Florida**

Responsibilities:

Day-to-day administrative operations of the municipality, including: Preparation, monitoring, and execution of the city budget, which includes submitting each year to the council a proposed budget package with recommendations for its consideration; Advisor to the council on overall governmental operations; Public relations, such as meeting with citizens, citizen groups, businesses, and other stakeholders; Operating the city with a professional understanding of how all city functions operate together, making the best use of city resources; Oversight of all recruitment, employee development, disciplining and suspensions.

At the direction of the City Council, manage departments, including Police, Fire, IT, Public Works, Utilities, Parks & Recreation, Facilities, Community Planning & Economic Development, Finance, Procurement, General Services and Personnel. Executive Director for CRA.



Gregg Lynk

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**Driven, Results-oriented, Executive from both Private and Public Sectors**

Key Accomplishments:

- Developed, led to passage and executed a \$60 million, 10-year plan to address decades of deferred maintenance of critical city infrastructure.
- Initiated and strategically led a \$150 million referendum to repair and pave 800 miles of roads in City limits.
- In first 90 days, capitalized on bond refinancing opportunities which resulted in savings of over \$3.6M for Palm Bay taxpayers.
- Oversaw establishment of KPIs for all departments.
- Converted employee healthcare system to self-funded entity saving over \$10 million.
- While improving union employee morale, renegotiated Public Safety contracts, reducing pension liabilities by 15%; Initiated changes in administrative code which reduced city liabilities for the “other city benefits” category by 60%.
- Surpassed three-year goal of economic development by \$200 million. Captured the 20% goal of commercial growth in same time period.

**Business Development & Operations Executive  
Correctional Healthcare Company (CHC)**

**2012 - 2015  
Del Ray Beach, FL (HQ in Greenwood Village, CO)**

Responsibilities:

Recruited by SVP to expand company to Southeastern US region. CHC was the largest provider of inmate medical services in the US. Oversaw all aspects of sale, creation and ongoing management to government entities that outsources those services to the company.

Key Accomplishments:

- Won and implemented contract for Muscogee County, GA within one year of opening office, resulting in operational cost savings to Muscogee of \$7.5 million over five years.
- Navigated complex government relations at state, local and federal levels to establish effective regional operations in Southeastern US.

**Executive Consultant  
Atlantic City Rescue Mission (ACRM)**

**2010 - 2011  
Atlantic City, NJ**

Responsibilities:

Brought in by CEO to evaluate operations and develop/implement a plan to improve efficiency, maximize use of resources and secure funding for budget shortfalls. ACRM provides food, shelter, healthcare, education and job-placement services to individuals and families in need. Serving over 1000 meals per day, ACRM is the largest service provider of its kind in New Jersey.

Key Accomplishments

- Assessed operations and designed/implemented changes that improved efficiency and enabled organization to consistently meet its budgetary and operational goals.
- Designed and executed strategy to meet funding goals through grants, government programs and private donors.
- Implemented an employee training program in cognitive methods.
- Collaborated with hospitals, NGOs and government entities to ensure seamless delivery of services to ACRM patrons.

Gregg Lynk

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**Driven, Results-oriented, Executive from both Private and Public Sectors**

VP, Non-Residential Services  
Community Education Center (CEC)

2009 - 2010  
West Caldwell, NJ

Responsibilities:

Brought in to create, staff and operate new business unit providing a new variety of services. CEC was the largest residential, correctional services provider in the world. Oversaw all executive functions for creation of new division.

Key Accomplishments:

- Established and maintained highly successful business relationships and promoted CEC services to clients including NJ Division of Parole, Federal Government, Drug Court Administrators, Juvenile Justice and Federal Division of Probation.
- Had an immediate impact on company's bottom line by leveraging existing customers to quickly establish a base of revenue for new division's services.

AVP, East Coast  
BI Incorporated

1998 - 2009  
Elizabeth, NJ (HQ in Boulder, CO)

Responsibilities:

Promoted to positions of increasing responsibility and established a record of significant accomplishments within BI, Inc., a leading provider of offender monitoring and reentry services. Provided oversight and management of new program development/implementation, including all executive planning (financial, facility and staff), contract fulfillment and all operations and compliance requirements of regional centers.

Key Accomplishments:

- Supported all business operations to support the growth of one center to five centers in New Jersey over six years.
- Led expansion from state business to a regional enterprise with over 20 centers throughout the eastern US.
- Programs led State of New Jersey to realize a savings of \$60 million in a single year, while reducing recidivism rates without compromising public safety.

New York Department of Corrections & Florida Department of Children & Families

1985 – 1994

Held positions of increasing responsibility in public safety, community operations and management.

**Education**

Master of Education, Florida Atlantic University, Boca Raton, FL – 1997

Bachelor of Arts, Psychology, Trinity International University, Miami, FL – 1994

**Professional Affiliations & Certifications**

- FEMA and Emergency Management Institute Certified
- International City/County Management Association
- Florida City/County Management Association
- Recognized as the Brevard County 2015 City Manager of the Year by Florida Puerto Rican/Hispanic Chamber of Commerce.

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*Candidate Introduction*

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**Gregg Lynk**

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**EDUCATION**

Master of Education, Florida Atlantic University  
BS, Trinity International University, major in psychology, minor in theology  
FEMA Certified

**EXPERIENCE**

Legislative liaison/Project Manager, Catai Solutions	2019 – current
City Manager, Palm Bay, Fl	2015 – 2018
Executive Director CRA	2015 – 2018
Area VP, Correctional Healthcare Company, Greenwood Village, Co	2012 – 2015
Executive Consultant, Atlantic City Rescue Mission, AC, NJ	2010 – 2011
Area VP, Community Education Center, Caldwell, NJ	2009 – 2010
East Coast Manager, BI Incorporated, Boulder, Co	1998 – 2009

**BACKGROUND**

Palm Bay is the largest city in Brevard County with just under 120,000 residents and currently the 15<sup>th</sup> largest city in the State of Florida. The challenge with Palm Bay, is that for many years it was the residential hub of Melbourne and was lacking in commercial base and growth. The major employer in Palm Bay is Harris Corporation with approximately 3,500 employees. Harris continues to grow and just completed another merger recently to strengthen their position in the aerospace and defense industries. Palm Bay experienced a financial crisis when the housing market crashed during the recent recession. The majority of their ad valorem is residential, Palm Bays general fund took a tremendous hit as housing values plummeted, ultimately leading to a reduction in ad valorem and a financial crisis. Palm Bay was the second hardest hit city in the United States in the foreclosure market, just behind Las Vegas. The leadership and Council had difficult decisions to make. There were staff terminations, layoffs, furloughs and perhaps some early retirements. Before I was selected as City Manager, personnel numbers went from just over 1,200 to under 800. The general fund budget is approximately \$70 million, and the total budget is \$185 million.

The three most significant issues facing the City are:

- Revenue reductions. In 2016, the Council appointed a City Charter Review Commission as they felt it had been many years since some items on the current City Charter needed to be addressed. Because of the recent economic crisis this country went thru, Palm Bay delayed many purchases and projects which they simply could not afford at that particular time. One of the Charter items which passed was an annual 3 % cap on an increase of the general fund budget. This 3% cap could be surpassed with a super

majority vote of City Council. The possibility existed that the City could handcuff itself as millions of dollars of purchases and/or projects were not completed as the City could not afford to do these things at this time with the significant reduction in what the city received for the ad valorem. The first year of the 3% budget implementation the departments priority one requests were over \$14 million. As per the new City Charter, a 3% increase for the general fund budget, provided an additional \$792,000 plus the new construction on the tax roll which was exempt for one year from the 3% cap. For the next 2 years Council did vote to exceed the 3% cap. If Council did not use its super majority option the City would have continued in delaying the purchase of critical needs and the possibility existed that without the funds available to the City, additional roads may have to be closed when a stormwater pipe failed and the road caved in and would have to be closed. The first year the City was able to purchase over \$3.4 million in mainly one time purchases and or projects that have not been completed or just neglected in past years. The only reoccurring expense was the addition of six additional police officers and 3 code enforcement officers. Everything else was a purchase for the City or a one-time project that had been delayed.

- Infrastructure. Palm Bay was a GDC community, a pre-planned, platted community. There were six GDC communities in Florida. Some here may remember the old cliché, “buy and fly” when folks would fly in and buy a parcel in the City. Folks from all over the world own property in Palm Bay and were taken in by this scam and ultimately, years later, folks from GDC went to jail. Regardless, the City had poorly constructed roads, 50 year old rotting, metal stormwater pipes with a 25 year lifetime, poor infrastructure and a City that was designed to handle stormwater with swales. Roads were being closed and there was a \$45 million price tag to fix just the identified failing stormwater pipes, and add to that , the price tag to bring roads up to acceptable standards was a whopping \$230 million. As these stormwater pipes collapsed the roads over these pipes had to be closed as the roads were not navigable under these circumstances. Once again, the City Charter had to be changed as the City could collect a fee for stormwater, however, because of how the Charter was written, this fee was more of a voluntary fee than an annual contribution so the City could take care of its infrastructure. The residents voted and spoke loudly and stated that they wanted their infrastructure fixed. Not only to provide City Council the ability to charge stormwater fees and have that fee placed on the tax bill, the residents also allowed Council to levy special assessments so their roads could be repaired. With the new stormwater fee in place, all the identified failing stormwater pipes could be replaced and/or repaired to the tune of \$45 million. There is a 5 year plan to have these pipes fixed so then the stormwater fee could be reduced to a maintenance level of approximately \$11 million per year. As the administration prepared to repair the streets unit by unit a Councilman brought up the topic of a \$150 million bond and repair every road in the City. The issue was placed on the ballot and the referendum passed and in 2020 the road projects in Palm Bay commenced. In other words, Palm Bays 850 miles of roads will be repaired by either full depth reclamation or thin lift overlay.

**Gregg Lynk**

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- Palm Bay has desired a downtown district for years while also realizing that the City must increase its commercial base. Imagine, the largest City in Brevard County and no downtown. At the end of the day if you wanted a nice dinner or watch the sparkle of the sun off the Indian River you more than likely had to go to a neighboring town. Palm Bay needed to grow and do so in a smart way. Working with Council, Palm Bay attracted some developers and we were able to make some things happen. A 324 unit apartment building was built in the CRA, the first of 3 phases. There are several other apartment projects lining up and as of right now 2 new hotels are being built. When my administration started, we set some goals, the first of which was an aggressive 3 year goal of \$300 million of new development being processed thru Growth Management Department. The City surpassed that goal by \$240 million. \$540 million of new development in 3 years with 20% of that new growth being commercial.

**GENERAL, MANAGEMENT STYLE AND EXPERIENCE**

I'm extremely interested in the City Manager job at Lake Worth Beach for several reasons. Today, Lake Worth Beach has a remarkably similar start and path as Palm Bay did. I have reported to boards most of my professional career, whether in the private or public sector. When I started with Palm Bay there was a significant turnover in the Council. They made it known that they were looking for a City Manager candidate that had private sector experience dealing with local, State and Federal legislators as well as a successful track record in business development. In the private sector I spent a significant amount of time on the road and truly enjoyed working with elected officials pursue goals that were important to them and their constituents. I truly enjoy meeting new folks as well as trying to understand how the City can partner with other entities and create a win-win situation.

Lake Worth Beach has a very bright future. If you recall, most of my career was as an executive in the private sector. Business Development (Economic Development) was a critical responsibility in my job. Starting with a small office in New Jersey in 1998, we were able to expand our office thru the Northeast and eventually thru the Northeast corridor and coast. I am a fixer and a results-oriented person. I am one that lives by 3 simple words..."firm, fair and consistent." I also have been extremely fortunate in my career to have the ability to build dynamic teams that are doers, have integrity, are creative and always make the decision with the greater purpose in mind---is this the right thing for the City? I have been a consensus builder and a leader that loves to get the team together and figure out how to best resolve a situation. When challenges present themselves and have to be addressed, I know that there will be people in the room with me that will be open, honest and challenge the team to figure out the best course of action in how to move forward in the best interest of Lake Worth Beach.

My staff would say that am available, flexible, open minded and expect to be kept up to speed on issues and or projects. I always tell staff...no surprises, lets always remember to communicate. I provide staff leeway, as they are the subject matter experts. I expect them to make the right

**Gregg Lynk**

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decisions. That doesn't mean that they just make them all the time, I am only a phone call away so let's talk about it and move forward. There are times where we need certain data or more information, so let's take that additional time and make the right decision the first time and save the taxpayer money. I truly believe that I have things to learn from my staff and I hope that my staff can take something away from me based upon our interactions. Staff would also say that I listen to what they have to say. They will tell you that I am respectful but that I am also very direct as I just do not want to waste time. They all know that we work with taxpayer money and we must be more careful with their money than we do with our own as we are entrusted with that responsibility.

The majority of my elected officials would say that I keep them informed and make the best decisions based on the data available to me. They would say that I am prepared and that I am an ethical, honest and direct person. Council would say that my staff and I were creative in ways to get things done and that we got them done quickly and usually within a fairly tight budget. The elected officials I worked for would say that I was always available to them and get back to them if they had any questions, comments or concerns.

My greatest strength is and has always been to build a dynamic team that gets things done. It has brought me tremendous satisfaction over the years to see different departments work together toward a common goal. I also am a good decision maker. We may get there different ways, whether it be a meeting with departments heads or some required data, but I'll be darned if we don't make the right decision. The wrong decision is what costs the City money and we won't have that. A recent project we had involved one of our Regional Parks. We received \$1.7 million in TDC money and the decision was made to build camp sites at that specific park. The City had to come up with some money of its own to contribute to the project, however, the directors suggested that we do the infrastructure work in house. The employees would appreciate the extra money at a greatly reduced rate of hiring a contractor. Between utilities, public works, some impact fees and a small contribution from general fund the project could be completed. Once this project was completed there was projected additional annual revenue of \$750,000.

In terms of a weaknesses, I have recognized that at times I have a tendency to "give the benefit of the doubt" to individuals. If I am ever faced with a situation such as this again, I'm crystal clear about expectations and updates. Folks make mistakes, however, how are staff ever expected to grow and improve on their skill sets if we do not allow them the opportunity to make decisions.

In the private sector we measure variables thru KPI's (Key Performance Indicators). The big KPI for this administration was aggressive smart growth. Palm Bay went from the 18<sup>th</sup> largest city in Florida to the 15<sup>th</sup> largest within 3 years. The 3 year goal for new growth was \$300 million, with 20% of that growth being commercial. The 3 year actual was \$540 million. We surpassed the 3 year goal by \$240 million and 20% of that growth was commercial.

**Gregg Lynk**

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One of the biggest regrets that I have is that I will not be able to see all of the hard work that not only I did, but the staff of Palm Bay did come to fruition. There are 2 hotels planned, several apartments buildings, thousands of homes and HOA's that we were involved with, building a new road to connect to a new exit on I-95 that opened up the entire Southwest quadrant for development and sorry to say, I will not be able to see that come to fruition. This is just the nature of the business. The biggest thing I hope that does not fail is the maintenance and repair of all the roads in the City. I always stated that before I left, the City would have their roads fixed. Council was one vote away from getting the roads done unit by unit until Council suddenly decided to have the folks vote on a referendum to assess and perhaps pave the entire City. I just hope and pray that there is enough money in the bond and that the bond is managed properly so that all of the residents that are paying into this bond receive their new road in front of their house or business.

I have had to fire people, however, usually when I have to terminate employment it is just me bringing the news as the deliverer of the message. We have to adhere to policy and/or procedure otherwise there would be complete chaos. If a person is going to get fired, they've usually been thru some of the process either with HR or the unions. Employees know when they've violated the rules and regs and it's more of a formality to fire them. I've always tried to be professional and civil about terminations. I do my best so the employee can land softly and hopefully they can find work elsewhere quickly.

Lake Worth Beach is facing challenges that most of the country is facing now, a failing or failed infrastructure. An issue at hand is how to address the growth and redevelopment of the City. Challenges remain just that, until you do something about them. Palm Bay was the 2<sup>nd</sup> fastest growing in the City during my administration. Challenge with utilities was that they were quickly nearing their capacity to handle sewer. We were able to address that issue and the City Utility is currently starting phase 1 with a \$30 million dollar expansion of the treatment facility. Every budget in this administration, reduced the millage rate. That can be done by working together with developers and implementing smart growth. Growth management department skillfully worked with developers to assist and expedite the permitting process. There has to be a solid relationship between the City Manager and City Council. Clear goals and expectations need to be laid out with updates provided There has to be clear direction and an understanding of Council direction and I believe that can only be done meeting with the Council whether it be individually or at workshops. A bridge that needs to be built and maintained is with the residents. We were able to do that as a new department was added with a Public Information Officer as well as a Communications Specialist. The internet and City website are valuable tools that can disseminate valuable information. I also believe that a manager can't just be behind the desk. There are so many relationships that have to be made and nurtured so partnerships can be established with other entities such as the County Board and the Board of Education.

When looking for a home to purchase, a family not only looks at the value of the home, they also look at the school system and the parks that are available to them. The homes in Lake



**Gregg Lynk**

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Worth Beach are affordable, the school system is exceptional and parks are available to the families. All very similar to what I experienced in Palm Bay. Palm Bay has about 40 parks and 18 schools within its boundaries.

The first months alone would be dedicated to meet with the elected officials and staff. I would make an effort to meet with the local HOA's and citizen groups as well as the local County, School Board officials and the Chamber of Commerce. I would need to quickly understand the City's financial situation and then be able to establish short, medium and long term goals. I would need to familiarize myself with City policy and code. I would need to spend time with members of Council to once again, clearly understand what their objectives are for the future of Lake Worth Beach. I would also spend an appropriate amount of time with the staff of Lake Worth Beach. Staff are the most valuable asset. They are truly the ones that maintain and carry out the vision of the City.

I work well with the media and answer their questions and inquiries. I tend to defer to the Mayor and Council when it comes to media and policy related issues, however, am absolutely OK if Council prefers me to be the spokesperson in certain situations. The only time I took absolute lead was during the 2 hurricanes, Matthew and Irma, when the Mayor declared a state of emergency. I became the spokesperson for the City per the City Charter.

In my spare time, I enjoy traveling, golfing and fishing. I am an avid reader and history buff.

**SIX ADJECTIVES OR PHRASES I WOULD USE TO DESCRIBE MYSELF**

- Integrity
- Engaging
- Accessible
- Inclusive
- Highly Ethical
- Proactive

**REASON FOR DEPARTING CURRENT POSITION**

I have a tremendous relationship with the CEO of Catai. He is aware that I am pursuing this opportunity with Lake Worth Beach. The challenge of building a dynamic team and facing significant situations as a team excites me and brings me an enormous amount of satisfaction. The Commission deserves excellence as well as the residents of Lake Worth Beach.

**Gregg Lynk**

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On November 21, 2018 my contract with Palm Bay was terminated without cause. I would not expect that anyone would contact the City and receive negative information about me.

**CURRENT / MOST RECENT SALARY**

My final compensation at Palm Bay was \$182,000, including a vehicle.

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*CB&A Background Checks*

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**Background Check Summary for  
GREGG JOHN LYNK**

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**Criminal Records Checks:**

Nationwide Criminal Records Search	No Records Found
County	
Brevard County, FL	No Records Found
Ocean County, NJ	No Records Found
Arapahoe County, CO	No Records Found
Atlantic County, NJ	No Records Found
Essex County, NJ	No Records Found
Union County, NJ	No Records Found
State	
Florida	September 1995, DUI Disposition = September 1995, Guilty / Monetary Fine / DWI School / Probation <i>See Personal Disclosure</i> <i>Explanation for record found</i>
Colorado	Records maintained by County
New Jersey	No Records Found

**Civil Records Checks:**

County	
Brevard County, FL	No Records Found
Ocean County, NJ	No Records Found
Arapahoe County, CO	No Records Found
Atlantic County, NJ	No Records Found
Essex County, NJ	No Records Found
Union County, NJ	No Records Found
Federal	
Florida	No Records Found
Colorado	No Records Found
New Jersey	No Records Found

**Motor Vehicle**

Florida	No Records Found
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**Credit**

Very good since his 2011 bankruptcy.

**Personal Bankruptcy**

Chapter 7 filed December 2011  
Closed December 2013  
*See Personal Disclosure*  
*Explanation for record found*

**Sex Offender Registry**

Not Listed

**Background Check Summary for  
GREGG JOHN LYNK**

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**Education** Confirmed

**Employment** Confirmed

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  
GREGG JOHN LYNK  
Personal Disclosure Explanation**

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**Personal Disclosure Questionnaire**

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Name of Applicant: Gregg Lynk

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?  
*see separate paper*  
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?  
Yes  No
7. Have you ever sued a current or former employer?  
*see separate paper*  
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

Please email this form via PDF DOCUMENT to [Lynelle@cb-asso.com](mailto:Lynelle@cb-asso.com) or via fax to (561) 621-5965 no later than 5:00 PM PST 07/18/2021.  
(Note: Please be sure to sign the form with your actual signature if you are sending Fax or PDF Document)

**Background Check Summary for  
GREGG JOHN LYNK  
Personal Disclosure Explanation**

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To: Lynelle Klein, Vice President for Operations  
From: Gregg Lynk, [glynk61@gmail.com](mailto:glynk61@gmail.com)  
Re: Personal Disclosure Questionnaire

Question number 3- declaring bankruptcy

My wife died of ovarian cancer in June of 2013. Prior to her death, she valiantly fought cancer for over 8 years. We exhausted all our savings and resources and fell into significant debt. There were moments that I was just so surprised when we would be notified that our health insurance plan would not cover what we at that time believed to be lifesaving options. As we were going thru this situation, the decisions that we were making seemed to be easy because they were the decisions that were going to keep my wife alive. 8 years later Maureen succumbed to this disease. While my wife was still alive, we agreed, after consulting with legal counsel, that the best course of action for the family to get out of the bottomless pit of debt and keep our home would be to declare bankruptcy.

Question number 6 – DWI

Simply answer is yes. I did plea to a DWI in 1994.

When I was hired as the City Manager for Palm Bay, both of the instances above were vetted by the authorities and City. Florida Today, the local newspaper for Brevard County, also featured these items in articles that were printed for public consumption.





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*CB&A Reference Notes*

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Reference Notes  
Gregg J. Lynk

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**Harry Santiago – Former Councilmember, City of Palm Bay, FL 321-557-3823**

Mr. Santiago was one of the Councilmembers who voted to hire Mr. Lynk in 2015. Mr. Lynk's job performance was great. He is very smart and capable, and does a great deal of thinking outside the box. He works as efficiently and effectively as possible.

Mr. Lynk hires a great team in order to accomplish the goals and he made good decisions in general. He was wonderful with the budget in terms of looking at the overall picture, what priorities need to be dealt with, and then finding the savings to meet the priorities. He maintains operations at a high level.

One of Mr. Lynk's foremost strengths was working with the public. He was very well liked in the community because he continuously met with key civic leaders. He was very well respected. He always kept the Council informed, not only through email but he called them individually if he needed to provide more details. He was very informative in situations that had to be brought to their attention. He was a leader who boosted morale and rallied employees around him and the priorities of the organization.

Their administrative policy had some antiquated language that was never addressed because of the politics. Because Mr. Lynk hired the right people and communicated with staff and the Council, they ultimately revamped the administrative policy which saved them about a quarter of a million dollars.

Another example of Mr. Lynk leading a team was helping the public works department be more collaborative with the Council in explaining the dire situation related to their infrastructure, specifically the roads and storm water. It defeats the purpose to put new roads on old pipes. He was instrumental in passing one of the largest assessment increases. The program will amount to \$11 million per year to fix the 30 years of unmaintained storm water infrastructure.

Also, Mr. Lynk staffed the charter review commission and gave recommendations that led to, for the first time in the City's history, seven referendums, which was a catalyst for the infrastructure program. All of these projects happened as a result of his leadership and management.

Overall Mr. Lynk is very timely in completing his work. When delays were inevitable, the factors were always out of his control and he kept the Council informed. He responds very well to stress, better than most. He is very calm under storm and does not let the stress affect him. He has a very high level of emotional intelligence. He thinks very well and implements a really good decision even in high stress situations.

On a personal level Mr. Lynk has not been involved in anything controversial, though he has been subject to the typical controversy of a political environment. He has never acted in a way that incites controversy or embarrasses his employer. He left Palm Bay when the majority of the new Council voted to dismiss him, a typical occurrence in City management unfortunately.

**Reference Notes**  
**Gregg J. Lynk**

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Mr. Santiago would definitely hire Mr. Lynk, he was a great Manager. He makes good decisions, was always calm under pressure, tried to satisfy everyone's needs while accomplishing what he needed to do. One trait that really stands out is his ability to rally the staff and the community around what needed to be done.

**Words or phrases used to describe Gregg Lynk:**

- Calm,
- Strong,
- Decisive,
- Positive,
- Innovative, and
- Resolved.

**Strengths:** Ability to boost morale among the staff, builds a great team in order to accomplish the goals, budget – seeing the priorities and finding savings, his main strength is advising.

**Weaknesses:** Though not a bad weakness, he tends to lean more towards the staff and their needs rather than looking at the entire political picture.

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**Tres Holton – Former Deputy Mayor, City of Palm Bay, FL 321-960-2378**

Mr. Holton first spoke with Mr. Lynk in 2013 and immediately felt that Mr. Lynk was an extraordinary person. He has a very contagious personality and was very professional and resolute. They met when Mr. Holton was running for public office and Mr. Lynk expressed interest in serving in the administration of a municipality. They got to know each other and Mr. Holton was impressed with Mr. Lynk's background and what he accomplished in the correctional world. He thinks outside the box which is uncommon in government and was very attractive. Mr. Holton has a long history in politics, he was first elected in his 20's and has served on the state and county level. Mr. Lynk struck Mr. Holton as someone who could amalgamate the processes.

After Mr. Holton was elected, they chose to seek a new Manager because theirs was not a good fit. Mr. Lynk was a wildcard candidate selected by the Council. Mr. Holton liked two candidates, one with South Florida with management experience and Mr. Lynk from the private sector. Mr. Lynk was hired and came into Palm Bay as a disruptive force in a positive way. Unfortunately, that meant that he implemented mandates in what he believed the majority of the residents and the Council wanted, which led to the dismissal of some personnel. He created enemies in the process and years later this may have led to his dismissal, which was unfortunate.

**Reference Notes**  
**Gregg J. Lynk**

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When hiring personnel and in general Mr. Lynk made good decisions. He was often out in the community and worked with the public exceedingly well because he is a chameleon and able to adapt to whatever environment he is in.

Mr. Lynk was great about keeping everyone informed. He rallied employees around the vision of the elected body. One of the largest problems facing Palm Bay was storm water drainage. They have very old culverts and were closing streets left and right, in a few years 40 or 50 roads in the community would have been closed. They were operating under very limited special assessment provisions in the charter and the only solution was to work with staff and community leaders to revise the charter so they did not have to put special assessments to a ballot. Mr. Lynk worked with staff to present a public relations campaign and the fallout was significant. Mr. Holton lost his bid for reelection, which was fine because sometimes elected officials have to sacrifice their position for the good of the community. Mr. Lynk and the staff provided data to give the Council the credibility to justify the vote to change the charter.

Mr. Lynk has good financial skills and accomplishes tasks in a timely matter. He is very resolved in stressful times and usually tries to find humor without being uncouth. He does not dwell on the negatives.

The Manager carries the burden of anything that happens in the City and Palm Bay had a great deal of controversy. One controversy was a program called Homes for Warriors where they gave wounded veterans homes through the national stabilization fund and HUD grants. The program was initiated prior to Mr. Lynk's arrival but a disgruntled employee was involved in the program and blew up at the City. He made false allegations against Mr. Lynk and Mr. Holton. The Attorney General dismissed the case. Many other political battles occurred during Mr. Lynk's tenure. His greatest liability was hiring what Mr. Holton calls the A Team. A group of misfits that were mavericks within their own specialty. This team, working with Mr. Lynk, had the goal to increase the commercial tax base by \$200 million in two years. Mr. Lynk and his incredible team far exceeded the goal and increased the tax base by over a half a billion dollars. The team itself, however, was controversial as some were alpha males. They were disruptive but they accomplished much. Mr. Lynk maintained his resolve even when accusations were flying and some employees had to be let go. He cooperated with staff to resolve the controversy.

Mr. Lynk's background is clear of any incident that would embarrass or concern an employer. The only person who might give Mr. Lynk a negative reference is a Councilmember who never voted yes on anything.

Mr. Holton hired Mr. Lynk once and would do so again. He is a good Manager who cares and he listens.

Reference Notes  
Gregg J. Lynk

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**Words or phrases used to describe Gregg Lynk:**

- Firm,
- Fair,
- Consistent,
- Resolute,
- Jovial, and
- Compassionate.

**Strengths:** His resolve, he is steady which is an important quality when you are dealing with the minutia as well as the ever-changing political climate, operates by the mantra 'Firm, Fair and Consistent'.

**Weaknesses:** Compassion. He wants to satisfy the goals and objectives of multiple bosses. He truly wants to do the best for all of them and find the balance that everyone can agree on. Sometimes through his compassion he takes heat undeservedly and fails to defend himself. He lets the gossip and rumors stew and could have been more defensive.

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**Jim Stables – Former Fire Chief, City of Palm Bay, FL 321-292-4057**

Mr. Stables was the Fire Chief when Mr. Lynk was hired in 2015. Mr. Stables reported to Mr. Lynk for three years. They had a good professional relationship. Mr. Lynk was respectful, responsible, and able to have difficult conversations without alienating anyone. He had to tell people what they did not want to hear but delivered the message in a good way. He was goal oriented and focused on the mission.

Mr. Lynk believes in surrounding himself with the best of the best. He is more engaging than other managers. Generally, managers allow situations to evolve and refuse to have difficult conversations. Mr. Lynk had the difficult conversations and redirected staff as needed. The City suffered the consequence of bad actions by employees, he accepted responsibility and moved through it. He progressively disciplined, and let employees go, as needed. He was never quick to judgment but he was quick to move through the process in the right way. He was very level in taking all the information into consideration before moving forward both when hiring and in general. He seemed to have good financial skills and accomplish tasks in a timely manner.

Palm Bay wanted a Manager who was innovative and a change agent, so they put lofty goals on Mr. Lynk. He is capable of leading an organization at a high level but he was tasked with leading change. He was asked to focus on economic development and recruiting business to the City. He far exceeded the goals by involving the right people and being involved in bringing the mission forward. He kept everyone informed.

## Reference Notes Gregg J. Lynk

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Palm Bay has Friday fests, fireworks events, and other special events. Mr. Stables is engaged in the community quite a bit because of his role and Mr. Lynk was at every single event that Mr. Stables was at. Mr. Lynk was involved in the Chamber and Rotary. He was always engaged.

Sometimes public officials are publicly attacked. Mr. Lynk was good at not engaging in inappropriate banter or frustration at the attack. His conflict resolution skills were great. He was able to translate the value of the projects being criticized to show the community benefit instead of the negative aspect of tax increases or inconvenience.

Municipal management is controversial and as such Mr. Lynk was involved in it. However, he was a consummate professional. He never blamed the circumstances and moved it through. He dealt with issues that were a result of past political footballs that had been kicked down the road. While the controversy cost him his job in the end, he did nothing wrong. Politics will get the best of any Manager at times. Mr. Stables was no longer with Palm Bay but watched it on the internet and was impressed with the professional way that Mr. Lynk handled what was dealt him.

Mr. Stables is not aware of anything in Mr. Lynk's background that would concern an employer. The challenge of leadership is that those who are on the wrong side of an issue might blame the manager. He had to hold people accountable when they did not want to be, but Mr. Stables never found Mr. Lynk to be unreasonable. When Directors accepted responsibility and played it straight, he worked well with them. If they deflected or placed blame, it did not go as well. Some employees were unhappy that he held them accountable.

Mr. Stables would work for Mr. Lynk again in a minute. They had a good relationship and Mr. Stables felt very comfortable with Mr. Lynk. Whoever is considering him would do well to hire him. He is a consummate professional who delivers results. He brings personal and professional integrity to the position.

### **Words or phrases used to describe Gregg Lynk:**

- Forthright,
- Honest,
- Disciplined,
- Integrity,
- Value driven, and
- Bridge builder.

**Strengths:** Integrity, honest, upright person, always tells you what is on his mind, strays true to the core values, was never dishonest with anyone or in any situation that Mr. Stables saw.

**Weaknesses:** Impatience because items can move slowly in local government. When he can see what needs to be done, getting through the bureaucracy can be frustrating.

Reference Notes  
Gregg J. Lynk

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**Phil Weinberg – Planning and Zoning Board Chair, City of Palm Bay, FL 954-815-6212**

Mr. Weinberg has known Mr. Lynk since 2015. Mr. Weinberg has served on many boards and committees. He was the Chairman of the Local Advisory Board, Chairman of the Citizens Advisory Council, Board of Directors of the Water Control District and more. When Mr. Lynk was first hired, he was not Mr. Weinberg's first or even second choice. However, Mr. Weinberg was pleasantly surprised by Mr. Lynk.

Mr. Lynk's job performance was great. He is a very thoughtful person and truly had an open door policy. He answered any questions directed to him and was happy to explain the situation to anyone interested. His decisions were very good.

When Mr. Lynk was hired they had just started to recover from the economic downturn and Palm Bay had many serious issues. He gave them solutions to direct their growth. They needed an increase in commercial growth, which started with his management. He is definitely innovative. He never reacted adversely to stress, in all of the problems that they faced, it never showed in his face.

Mr. Lynk was very involved and happily attended any community meeting that he was asked to attend. He certainly shared his time, even with HOA's and community associations. He works very well with the public, residents were pleased with his openness and availability.

Palm Bay has 850 miles of road and 357 miles had failed. The culverts and storm water system were corrugated metal pipes with a life expectancy of 20 years, and theirs were 50 years old. They were crumbling and collapsing. The city is 100 square miles and they did not have the money to address the issues. Mr. Lynk worked with the staff on a storm water assessment which was not popular because no one likes a tax increase but it was the only way to address the critical situation. They have been able to address, repair, and replace the culverts which was desperately needed.

The reason Mr. Lynk was not Mr. Weinberg's first choice was that he had no direct government experience. Shortly after Mr. Lynk was hired, he had to go through his first budget hearing. Starting in a new organization at budget time is difficult even for experienced managers, but would have been very difficult for someone new to the process. In spite of the challenges he did a good job the first year and an even better job the second year. He has a good handle on the financial aspect of running a city.

The stormwater assessment was controversial. Tax increases bring residents to Council meetings in droves. Mr. Lynk handled it well, including his interactions with the public and how they presented the information.

When they first considered the storm water assessment, they were going to have the assessments by sections so that residents were only paying for the roads in their area but it failed to pass. Mr.

**Reference Notes  
Gregg J. Lynk**

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Lynk accepted the vote with equanimity and then worked with outside consultants to design a system that was as fair and equitable as possible. It passed the second time.

Because Mr. Lynk was not Mr. Weinberg's first choice in the beginning, he looked into Mr. Lynk's background as much as possible and found nothing of concern. Two Council members along with a newly elected Council member dismissed Mr. Lynk. They might have a different opinion but their motives were politically based and not performance based.

Mr. Weinberg would hire Mr. Lynk, he was a good manager and a good person. They had a great relationship and their interactions were enjoyable. Because of the way they started their relationship Mr. Weinberg did not expect to have a good relationship with Mr. Lynk but it pleasantly turned out that way.

**Words or phrases used to describe Gregg Lynk:**

- Hard working,
- Intelligent,
- Determined,
- Innovative,
- Calm, and
- Approachable.

**Strengths:** Absorbs a tremendous amount of energy, analyzes situations, comes up with solutions, communication is his best skill, excellent relationship with employees.

**Weaknesses:** Loyalty to his staff and employees might be considered a weakness. Also while his position is not political, he had to deal with the political side of it, which is why he left the job in the end.

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**Fred Poppe – Parks and Recreation Director, City of Palm Bay, FL 321-482-0299**

Mr. Poppe has known Mr. Lynk since 2014. Mr. Lynk hired Mr. Poppe after he became the Manager of Palm Bay. Mr. Poppe has worked for 14 Managers in 45 years and Mr. Lynk is easily in the top 2 or 3.

Mr. Lynk is a good supervisor. He does not micro manage employees, he lets them do their job. He is very supportive when they need budget or any type of assistance, which was very helpful to the Directors. He tried to make their jobs easier. He was very approachable and a good communicator.



## Reference Notes

### Gregg J. Lynk

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Palm Bay has a pretty good team. Mr. Lynk brought in skilled employees and accomplished much. One of the goals was to create \$200 million in new development and they actually doubled the goal because he was good at hiring the right people for the right job.

Mr. Lynk is a steadying influence. He assembles a good team and communicates well. He is not afraid to be a risk taker and gave Mr. Poppe the latitude to make changes that were necessary. He showed up at every community event and was very engaging with the public. He was very well liked because he was straight forward and honest. Residents respected those who do not beat around the bush and tell them the truth.

Mr. Lynk had very open lines of communication. The staff meetings were always good with an open forum for discussion. He encouraged different departments to interact. When he was hired the overall morale was not good. Within the first year you could see a visible change in the organization and it was very evident at the holiday party. Both the function and the attendance were good, and the employees were happy. He increased morale significantly.

Facilities was a division within Parks and Recreation. Mr. Poppe suggested they make it its own department because the goals of facilities had become secondary to the goals of Parks and Recreation department. Mr. Lynk considered the idea and held brain storming meetings with all affected departments. They created a proposal and it was approved. Facilities is now a separate department and it is working out very well.

The biggest asset Mr. Lynk brings from his corporate background is finance. He knows innovative ways of funding and financing projects. They needed police cars and he was able to adjust the budget so they could purchase them. He was always very prompt and when he told you he would do something, he always met that deadline. He stays calm and makes solid decisions in stressful situations.

Local government is always controversial, but Mr. Poppe cannot recall anything related to Mr. Lynk personally. Mr. Lynk's departure from Palm Bay had nothing to do with performance, it was pure politics. The Mayor and a few councilmembers were pro-developer. Mr. Lynk tried to hold a developer's feet to the fire to make them pay their fair share. He did a good job, he just had philosophical differences with the Council. The elected officials who voted him out now regret it. They realize that they jumped the gun and made a mistake.

Mr. Poppe would work with Mr. Lynk in any way, shape, or form. He is a good solid person who is enjoyable to work with. Mr. Poppe has full confidence in Mr. Lynk, he will do a good job for any organization that hires him, quality is in his DNA.

Reference Notes  
Gregg J. Lynk

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**Words or phrases used to describe Gregg Lynk:**

- Consistent,
- Fair,
- Firm,
- Communicative,
- Good people skills, and
- Integrity.

**Strengths:** Good people skills, good communicator, trusted his people, could be stern when needed, had good leadership skills.

**Weaknesses:** Sometimes your strength is also your weakness. You can be too loyal and put yourself in a tough spot. The Mayor wanted him to dismiss a department head and Mr. Lynk dug in his heels a little out of loyalty. Loyalty is good but it can hurt you in a political environment.

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**Bill Battin – Community Activist, City of Palm Bay, FL 321-725-4365**

Mr. Battin has known Mr. Lynk since just before he became the Manager in 2015. Mr. Battin describes himself as the thorn for the Council. He is actively involved and in 32 years has only missed seven Council meetings. When the Council tries to pass packets with consent, Mr. Battin forces the discussion which can then go on for hours. Mr. Lynk was always very nice to Mr. Battin. He never tried to stop Mr. Battin from utilizing his rights and suggested that Mr. Battin call him with questions. They did not always see eye to eye but they had a good relationship.

Mr. Lynk was not Mr. Battin's first pick and he expressed that when Mr. Lynk first started. Over time as Mr. Battin watched Mr. Lynk manage the City and how he handled the budget and growth, he gained more respect for him and was impressed with his management.

Mr. Lynk operates by the motto of 'Fair, Firm and Consistent'. He made budget decisions that were more than fair. He tried to maintain operations and was very transparent on the budget. He knew the priorities and his decisions were sound.

You can always count on Mr. Lynk to attend all advisory and ground breaking meetings. Residents knew who he was and he was available to them. He told Mr. Battin about meetings that might interest him, which was nice and not something he was required to do.

During Mr. Lynk's tenure they had a charter review to resolve two problems. He also worked with every department on the budget and listened to their input. He never exceeded budget limits. He could look at the budget and see where the weak spots were. He did a great job of keeping the 10% in reserves that they were required to have, and made hard choices. He ended up being more financially savvy than Mr. Battin expected.

**Reference Notes**  
**Gregg J. Lynk**

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Some Council meetings were stressful but Mr. Lynk held his cool. After a hurricane the debris pickup was enormous. He organized the process and kept it moving. It took longer than they said but they had special dump sites for yard waste and branches so that residents did not have to go all the way to the landfill. He methodically solved problems and opened streets rapidly. It cost \$2 million that was eventually reimbursed by FEMA but it took a while and he had to cover the cost until reimbursement was received. He managed the situation well.

Prior to Mr. Lynk's arrival the City was under an FBI investigation. Mr. Lynk was involved in the process which was very controversial. Another incident was when the citizens petitioned the government for the first time in the City's history to eliminate special assessments. The pipes were 60 years old and need to be repaired or replaced, which the Council funded through an assessment. The residents were not happy with the cost and petitioned.

The City made a commitment with the federal, state, and county government based on a promise from a developer to build a road and bridge for \$9 million dollars. Once the project was approved, the developer backed out. Mr. Lynk strongly voiced his displeasure and fought hard to make the developer keep his end of the bargain. In the end, the City had to come up with the money so they did not burn bridges with the federal, state, and county governments. The developer was friendly with a few Councilmembers and in the end, Mr. Battin believes that this is why Mr. Lynk was dismissed though he has no proof. Mr. Battin knows of one person who was not happy with Mr. Lynk but did not know why.

Mr. Battin would hire Mr. Lynk as his farm manager if he had the money to do so. When the Council voted to dismiss him, Mr. Battin told them they were making a big mistake. Mr. Lynk accomplished much good in their community. He was actively engaged in Palm Bay.

**Words or phrases used to describe Gregg Lynk:**

- Prompt,
- Eager,
- Determined,
- Compassionate,
- Fair, and
- Accomplished.

**Strengths:** Not afraid to state how he sees it and why he thinks it should be a certain way, he is upfront and consistent.

**Weaknesses:** Mr. Lynk understands that the Council makes decisions and they can fire him on a whim. Mr. Battin would prefer that Mr. Lynk challenge them at times, but he did not feel that was his job. He presented the pros and cons, and the Council made the decisions.

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**Reference Notes  
Gregg J. Lynk**

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**Joseph Shields – Former Executive Director, State Parole Board, NJ 973-270-7615**

Mr. Shields has known Mr. Lynk since 2006. As the senior aid to the governor, the former worked with the latter on behavioral interventions. Mr. Lynk worked with BI incorporated at the time, a large contractor for the State Parole Board. He was involved in the daily strategic growth and knew the issues, challenges, and national perspective on the work. He is always attentive and responsive in addressing issues. He is honest and straight forward. He has excellent financial acumen whether in billing, financial planning, or procurement. He excels in strategic thought and addressing challenges in a political environment. With a business development background, he lends good insight in terms of development and growing structure. He has the ability to problem solve any challenge and presents it honestly.

A good decision maker both generally and in hiring personnel, Mr. Lynk brought on highly professional individuals with strong skill sets. He found people to navigate many complex programs and initiatives well and ran a top notch system. He is innovative, a change agent, and also has the ability to maintain an organization at a high performance level. His expertise is well ahead of the curve in terms of states and municipalities and the issue of electronic health programs. He procures resources which are independent of state and local tax dollars. He is attentive to trends and has a good understanding of how the business climate is changing.

Whether working in consulting or policy work, Mr. Lynk is adept in problem solving. He faced many situations when elected officials and other interested parties did not understand the services they were providing and failed to see how they were affecting the communities in a positive way. He has the aptitude to educate decision makers in terms of the impact of important programs and why they matter. During his tenure, New Jersey was pretty deep in deficits and had a wide appetite to cut budgets, yet Mr. Lynk maintained the ability to grow programs. He is experienced in working with the public, community leaders, not for profit organizations, clergy, community organizations, and elected officials. He brings case examples and evidence based practices to light in order to help them see how they work. He works very well with the press and did so extensively in helping them understand the work they were doing. He is attentive in his customer service and exemplified on many occasions his commitment to deliver quality management and attention to those with whom he worked.

Very much a go getter and a leader, Mr. Lynk has the ability to engage people and drive processes both in the corporate environment and in government. He is passionate about his ideas while ultimately being respectful to the choices of the decision makers. He is an incredible asset for localized knowledge and national best practices.

Mr. Shields would hire Mr. Lynk without hesitation given the opportunity and believes he will be a good city manager. He is extremely multifaceted. He has business acumen, private sector knowledge, experience with governmental considerations and issues, and has managed many projects in government. He has a good understanding of how government works and will add value to growth and opportunities. His collection of skills qualify him and will benefit any organization.

Reference Notes  
Gregg J. Lynk

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**Words or phrases used to describe Gregg Lynk:**

- Intelligent,
- Committed,
- Energetic,
- Leader,
- Problem solver, and
- Innovator.

**Strengths:** Personable and likeable. Good family person. Ability to foster collaboration in challenging political, and public environments. Ability to disarm people in a respectful yet purposeful way. Ability to gain support for a common vision of achievement. Very easy to work with. Reliable.

**Weaknesses:** None identified.

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**Sharry Charest – Former Regional Human Resource Manager, BI Incorporated, CO  
303-478-3726**

Ms. Charest has known Mr. Lynk since 2000 when they both worked for BI. He worked in the criminal justice reentry program and ran three locations in New Jersey, and she was the Regional Human Resource Manager. Mr. Lynk was magnificent and always on top of everything. The Department of Corrections was a very difficult customer and he handled them extremely well. He has excellent follow through and nothing was ever dropped on his watch. He handles staff incredibly well and is respected by them. He has the ability to read people and can communicate well and connect with anybody. He was dealing with senate, assembly, and corporate parole board members successfully. He has the personality to sit back and gather all pertinent information. He is a straight shooter yet politically correct.

An innovative individual where he needs to be, Mr. Lynk also understands how to keep an organization performing to a higher standard. He has the ability to assess and move forward as needed. He makes excellent decisions both in hiring personnel and in general. He is good at getting input and navigating difficult circumstances. He has good financial skills and a good understanding of numbers and accounting principles.

A strong problem solver, Mr. Lynk confronted a situation when inappropriate reading material was found in one of the offices. His staff did not see what was wrong with it and he worked to help them understand what their work environment should and should not look like. He did sensitivity training with them and got everyone on board with it after the discussions.

Ms. Charest would absolutely hire Mr. Lynk if she could and would actually love to work with him again. She believes he will be a good city manager, especially at this point in his career,

Reference Notes  
Gregg J. Lynk

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because of his vast experience in working with different entities in the political arena. He thrives on being the medium between the board and the public and excels in it.

**Words or phrases used to describe Gregg Lynk:**

- Straight shooter,
- Politically savvy,
- Astute,
- Connects well with anyone,
- Excellent follow through, and
- Respected.

**Strengths:** Ability to read people. Communicates well with others. Ability to connect with anybody. Straight shooter. Politically correct. Very well respected by staff.

**Weaknesses:** Because of little involvement from the corporate office in the beginning of his tenure, Mr. Lynk was a little reticent when Ms. Charest began working with him. Though an initial hesitancy was apparent, he was willing to listen and get on board with the change.

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**Michelle Paccione – Former Councilmember, City of Palm Bay, FL 321-480-9295**

Ms. Paccione was on the Council when Mr. Lynk applied for the City Manager position and was hired in 2015. She did not vote for him because she was looking for more someone with more city management experience but she really liked him as a person. She did not run for a third term so he was still the City Manager when she left the Council.

Mr. Lynk did a good job. He was personable with employees, they told the Council that they really liked him. He was out in the community. Working with a Council is challenging because of the different personalities. He handles communication between staff and Council very well. He always remains calm and professional.

Most of the hiring decisions made by Mr. Lynk were good, a few Ms. Paccione was not happy with. He made good decisions, she did not see anything negative. He maintains an organization at a high performance level.

One of Mr. Lynk's strengths is working with the public. He is so incredibly personable. He attended chamber events and was always professional and happy. While there were moments where he might not have been happy, he did not show it. He was very well liked in the community and was happier and friendlier than past managers.

**Reference Notes  
Gregg J. Lynk**

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The most challenging situation for Mr. Lynk the first year was the budget but he brought them all together. He had an excellent finance team. It was his first budget process in city government and by the second budget process, he had it all down.

Mr. Lynk accomplishes tasks in a timely manner. He handles stress well, even though the Council was very contentious at the time. He can definitely handle fire and pressure. He is innovative and brought new things to the table.

A personnel matter became controversial. Mr. Lynk let the employee go but may have kept him on too long and there was controversy. Nothing in his background or conduct would concern an employer or a reasonable person. The Councilmember who let Mr. Lynk go most likely has a different opinion than Ms. Paccione does of Mr. Lynk.

Ms. Paccione would hire Mr. Lynk. She did not vote for him but he turned out to be a good Manager and she was upset when the Council let him go.

**Words or phrases used to describe Gregg Lynk:**

- Personable,
- Professional,
- Funny,
- Fair, and
- Innovative.

**Strengths:** Never becomes flustered and is very calm in difficult situations. Communication with Council and staff.

**Weaknesses:** At the time he was inexperienced in government but was experienced in business, so he might have bene at a disadvantage, but now he has experience in both. Also, he was not as prepared for the political games that happen in the Council but he handled it well as he went on.

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**Nancy Peltonen - Executive Director, Chamber of Commerce, Palm Bay, FL 321-951-9998  
321-223-9525**

Ms. Peltonen has been the Executive Director for the Chamber since November 2015. She met Mr. Lynk through her work in the Chamber.

Mr. Lynk was very caring about the City of Palm Bay and he listened to constituents. At Council meetings when residents had a concern, he directed the applicable staff member to provide the citizens with their business cards so they could follow up and address complaints and issues. Something he did well was bringing people together during disagreements.



**Reference Notes  
Gregg J. Lynk**

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A cheerleader for the area, Mr. Lynk attended monthly luncheons and was a champion of the Chamber with new businesses. He really supported businesses in joining the Chamber and was very visible in the community. He was very friendly with the public.

Ms. Peltonen was concerned about not knowing what was going on. Mr. Lynk invited her to the Director meetings that took place before Council meetings. He did not need to allow her to be a participant, but he did anyway and it was very helpful.

They exchanged cell phone numbers and used them to text or call. Mr. Lynk always responded. His mission was to clean out his inbox every day, he was quickly to respond and deal with matters. Most of the time he handled stress really well.

Palm Bay had a number of issues including an FBI case, but none were of Mr. Lynk's doing. Palm Bay cancelled Mr. Lynk's contract.

Mr. Lynk had a number of issues to deal with and tried to tackle them head on. Unfortunately employees were a bit of a problem and the situation was very complicated. The media has posted many articles about the City but not much has been said about Mr. Lynk personally.

Mr. Lynk was a very nice man and was absolutely helpful to the Chamber. He was looking to grow the City and bring it to the next level. He was enjoyable to work with.

**Words or phrases used to describe Gregg Lynk:**

- Caring,
- Listens,
- Supportive,
- Personable,
- Responsive, and
- Helpful.

**Strengths:** Very personable and tried to get along with everyone. Tried to implement the plan put in pace.

**Weaknesses:** Some of the employees at City Hall did not impress Ms. Peltonen but she is not sure how much influence he had over hiring.

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**Prepared by:** Lynelle Klein  
Colin Baenziger & Associates



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*CB&A Internet Research*

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**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

*Gregg J. Lynk*

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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[CB&A Note: We have investigated the allegations in the below article. Mr. Lynk said it was a car allowance increase for all the council members (who had not had one since 1981) and had nothing to do with trading for votes. At the time, the mayor was getting a car allowance of \$250 per month and council members were getting \$200. City department heads were getting a larger allowance (he remembers it as about \$400 per month). Mr. Lynk wanted to increase the allowance for all the elected officials to the same level as department heads. He felt that \$250 or \$200 did not cover the cost of travel to all the city events the elected officials were going to.

We also spoke to Council Member Anderson. He said, whatever his interpretation at the time was, he feels he was wrong. After he voted against paving parcels 31 and 32, he asked Mr. Lynk if he was going to get his car allowance increase and Mr. Lynk responded, “Absolutely.” He also added that the increase was to be for all the Council Members.

Further, there was no personal benefit to Mr. Lynk in getting roads paved. As an FYI, the roads in Palm Bay have been a problem for years. Many were left unpaved when the developer went bankrupt. The issue was how to get them paved. Parcels 31 and 32 cover 2 square miles. There are about 57 such parcels in the city. Ultimately, the voters approved \$150 million bond issue with 66% voting in favor to pave these and other roads in Palm Bay.]

<https://thespacecoastrocket.com/secret-recording-reveals-fired-city-manager-greg-lynk-attempted-to-bribe-brian-anderson-with-vehicle-allowance-for-votes/>

The Space Coast Rocket  
February 12, 2020

**Secret Recording Reveals Fired City Manager Greg Lynk Attempted to Bribe Brian Anderson With Vehicle Allowance for Votes**

Author: Reginald Dwight

Palm Bay City Councilman Brian Anderson agreed to wear a wire for the FBI in an attempt to capture then Palm Bay City Manager **Greg Lynk** attempting to bribe him for favorable votes. On several occasions, **Greg Lynk** offered Anderson an additional vehicle allowance of \$350/month if he would vote in favor of assessments on Units 31 and 32 in an upcoming city council meeting. Below is the investigative report from the audio recordings.

After this meeting, Anderson and Parr are heard speaking with Campaign Manager Robert Burns and apparently returning vandalized property that belonged to Burns. It is also important to note that even after these attempts at bribery, Anderson voted to retain **Lynk** as City Manager when the motion was made by Councilman Jeff Bailey for him to be fired. Newly elected Councilman Johnson seconded the motion and **Lynk** was ultimately fired in a vote of 3-2 with Anderson and Harry Santiago voting in favor of **Lynk**.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

***Gregg J. Lynk***

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Florida Today  
July 26, 2019

**FBI informant talks of his role in cracking Palm Bay corruption case**

Author: Jim Waymer

Pressured to resign under a fog of suspicion, blamed for things gone wrong with state and federal housing grants, and accused of being the subject of a criminal investigation, Stuart Buchanan, Palm Bay's former growth and development director, was cast as the first villain of south Brevard's long-brewing political scandal. Now, a few months after two high-profile arrests in Palm Bay, Buchanan has stepped forward as federal and state law enforcement's "inside man" — a key confidential informant who helped gather evidence and build cases against former Deputy City Manager Dave Isnardi and local business owner and one-time City Council candidate, Jose Aguiar. Both Isnardi and Aguiar maintain their innocence on racketeering and other allegations that they conspired to unduly influence City Hall. The two men are free on bond awaiting trial.

Buchanan's story provides the first inside look at a whirlwind undercover drama that, according to investigators, involved secret talk of bribes, blackmail, prostitutes, a bag of cash and pain pills. The investigation into alleged fraud and corruption in the county's most populous municipality is still open, law enforcement officials say. Throughout the arresting affidavits for Isnardi, husband of Brevard County Commission Chairwoman Kristine Isnardi, and Aguiar are references to a confidential source. Buchanan says he is that source. Although neither the Federal Bureau of Investigation nor the Florida Department of Law Enforcement would confirm or deny Buchanan's role in the Palm Bay probe, investigators close to the prosecution say privately that Buchanan was indeed key among several city officials who cooperated with the investigation. Buchanan says he is expected to be a key witness in the upcoming trials.

"Twenty months of hanging out with bad guys, with very, very bad people? Yes, it was ... you know, stressful," mused Buchanan, 48, who said he's stepping out of the shadows now because he wants his name cleared and his career back. "I'm sure that in the upcoming court case, even more clarity is going to be provided to the public, which should restore their confidence in the current city administration," Buchanan told FLORIDA TODAY in a recent interview. Buchanan has his own checkered past — a felony conviction from 30 years ago — but insists that his work with police agencies over the years was never done to offset his own crime. Buchanan played a similar role five years earlier in a bribery case in South Daytona that sent two men to jail.

Posing as a representative of investors interested in buying a condo complex, but actually working with law enforcement, Buchanan slipped several thousand dollars of cash from law enforcement to the South Daytona mayor and to a special magistrate in exchange for drastically lowering city code-enforcement liens on a condo complex, from \$241,000 to \$12,500, according to court records. Buchanan says he was asked by law enforcement to play a similar role in Brevard after he was hired by Palm Bay in June 2015 to be the city's growth and management director. His job, overseeing building permits, annexation, zoning, impact fees, code compliance,

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches*****Gregg J. Lynk****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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and federal and state grant programs for housing and neighborhood development, gave him a perfect vantage point that the feds and state agents were looking for, he said.

Buchanan says law enforcement approached him his first week on the job about an ongoing investigation. They needed an insider who could document and testify to any efforts at corruption, he said. "They (state and federal agents) met with me. And they said, 'you know, we've got investigations going on (for) over a year,' " Buchanan said. "And it wasn't just me. There were several key city administrators, including some members of the finance and accounting department that cooperated with law enforcement." While Buchanan won't say whether he made recordings, arrest affidavits for Isnardi and Aguiar refer to a confidential source fitted with electronic eavesdropping devices. It also mentioned video taken at Aguiar's ranch, showing a safe containing boxes of ammunition.

In April 2017, Buchanan said he felt pressured to resign by then-City Attorney Andrew Lannon, after Lannon blamed Buchanan for problems with state and federal housing grant programs, some of which predated Buchanan's tenure with the city. Lannon also suggested that Buchanan was the subject of a state and federal investigation into the city's handling of federal housing grants. Buchanan refused comment when contacted by FLORIDA TODAY at the time of his 2017 resignation. Now, he says he could not comment then because of his role in the ongoing investigation into Isnardi, Aguiar and other city officials.

Investigators allege Dave Isnardi and Aguiar planned to either blackmail or bribe two city councilmen to force them to vote for zoning changes that would bolster their future business endeavors. For one, Isnardi and Aguiar wanted to rezone vacant city-owned land on Wingham Drive Southwest, an area called "the Compound," to allow for a scrap-metal yard they planned, investigators allege. Under the alleged plan, Aguiar would buy the land, and Isnardi was to be a silent partner, according to the arrest affidavits. The arrests culminated a four-year investigation by FBI and Florida Department of Law Enforcement. Angela Starke, spokeswoman with FDLE, referred questions about Buchanan and the case to the prosecutors. The State Attorney's office wouldn't confirm or deny Buchanan's role either, citing state criminal procedure rules.

Stuart Buchanan, former Palm Bay growth management director  
His own brushes with the law

In 1989, Buchanan was himself on the wrong side of the law. As a teenager in the Army — based at Fort Benning, Georgia — Buchanan was arrested for selling stolen military equipment, including machine gun parts, radios and weapons training devices, the News-Journal reported in its 2011 coverage of his role in the South Daytona bribery scandal. Buchanan said two other soldiers stole the items and he only tried to sell them. After he was arrested, Buchanan helped with a secret sting to arrest the two soldiers who'd been stealing the military equipment. Buchanan pleaded guilty in a general court martial, was sentenced to 8 years and served 2½ years in federal prison in Leavenworth, Kansas. Of his past conviction, Buchanan said it was irrelevant to the Palm Bay case or to his working with law enforcement, and that he was only 18 at the time. He said he's made no deal to lessen his prison sentence.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

***Gregg J. Lynk***

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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By 1993, Buchanan was working as a planner for the city of Cocoa. He would move up the ranks as his career advanced through various planning positions in Deltona, Holly Hill, Daytona Beach, South Daytona, and from 2008 to 2015 for Brevard County as a senior planner. Buchanan joined Palm Bay during a mass staff turnover in City Hall four years ago. The shakeup ultimately led to the appointment of a new city manager with no city management experience, **Gregg Lynk**, the hiring of his friend Dave Isnardi as deputy city manager, and the ouster of a dozen key long-time employees.

**The takeover and the takedown**

Much of the turnover — some called it a takeover — was orchestrated by Isnardi, according to current and former city officials and employees interviewed for this story. Vicki Northrup, former president the Greater Palm Bay Chamber of Commerce, and other political insiders recall conversations with Dave Isnardi during summer 2014, in which he — months before the November 2014 election — maneuvered to place his friends and confidants in key positions at City Hall. Those conversations, Northrup says, set in motion a mass exodus of veteran employees, both resignations and terminations. "They kept their buddies," Northrup said of the takeover. "They got rid of just about every department head in there."

At the time of those summer 2014 conversations, Isnardi had been working as chief of staff for then-Brevard County Commissioner Andy Anderson. They'd met **Gregg Lynk** four years earlier when he stopped by Anderson's district office in Melbourne in 2010 seeking expansion of Florida's drug-court system. At the time, **Lynk** was working for a New Jersey private corrections company. Then, the November 2014 election ushered in new city council members Tres Holton and Jeff Bailey, who consolidated a new conservative majority along with Harry Santiago. A month after the election, then-City Manager Sue Hann resigned under political pressure. Within another few months, a dozen key officials — including the deputy city manager and police chief — left amid a widespread leadership shake-up.

Behind the scenes Isnardi successfully lobbied for his friend, **Gregg Lynk**, to be the next city manager, according to City Councilman Jeff Bailey. In late April 2015, after **Lynk** started as city manager, he appointed Isnardi as deputy city manager. A week later, Isnardi's former boss, Andy Anderson, got hired as the city's new economic development director, while still serving as a Brevard County Commissioner. Isnardi, at the time, denied he played any role in getting his former boss hired. When it was all over, critics feared politically connected cronies had taken over City Hall. But, according to their arrest affidavits, Isnardi and Aguiar wanted even more assurance City Council votes would go their way. According to the arrest affidavits, Aguiar and Isnardi were under investigation for "an ongoing pattern of specific criminal activities, including conspiracy to commit extortion, bribery and deliver controlled substances."

**Enter Buchanan**

In the months after he was hired, Buchanan befriended and worked his way into the inner circles of Isnardi and Aguiar, as well as the confidences of councilmen Tres Holton and Jeff Bailey. He drank and hung out with them. He said he went on occasional road trips with them, including one to South Florida to watch boxing matches, all the while keeping his handlers in law enforcement

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches*****Gregg J. Lynk****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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abreast of what was said and done. Buchanan said all targets of the Palm Bay investigation knew of his past as an law enforcement informant but, according to him, they saw it as a plus. “They felt that, by having somebody with prior surveillance experience, I would be able to help spot someone trying to surveil them,” Buchanan said. “They actually thought it was a bonus.” With Buchanan's help, investigators had details of clandestine meetings with Aguiar, Isnardi and others at the "Clubhouse," a property Aguiar owned on Canova Street, at City Hall, and at Aguiar's Grant-Valkaria ranch.

In front of Buchanan, the alleged conspirators, allegedly talked of buying surveillance equipment to record City Councilman Jeff Bailey and then-Councilman Tres Holton at the "Clubhouse" with prostitutes, according to the arrest affidavits. Neither Bailey nor Holton have been charged, and both have declined comment on their interactions with Aguiar and Isnardi. Kepler Funk, Isnardi's attorney, said they would not comment on Buchanan's role in the investigation until they had more information from the state about the investigation. Aguiar's attorney, Daniel Martinez, was not available for comment. Buchanan's efforts eventually ran into problems in June 2016 after he submitted and then withdrew — he says under threat of losing his job — a complaint that Isnardi was allegedly shaking down city employees and developers to contribute to his wife's then campaign for a seat on the Brevard County Commission. She went on to win the election.

Kristine Isnardi has declined comment regarding her husband's case or the allegations he was raising campaign contributions for her during work hours at City Hall. Buchanan's seeming flip-flop put him at odds with City Attorney Andrew Lannon, who was apparently growing suspicious of Buchanan. Lannon would later point to disagreements between the two over, among other things, issues regarding the city's fire fees and sign code. On April 18, 2017, almost a year after Buchanan's complaint about Isnardi, Lannon, in a "letter of no confidence," alleged Buchanan had violated the city's personnel rules and regulations by making allegations against Isnardi and the mayor without evidence. Soon after, Lannon announced that Buchanan was the target of an investigation into possible misuse of federal housing grants.

Then during the May 18, 2017, City Council meeting, Lannon accused Buchanan of "misfeasance, malfeasance, nonfeasance, gross neglect and fraudulent or intentional misrepresentation" in his duties as growth management director. A week after the "no confidence" memo, Buchanan announced his resignation April 25, 2017, effective May 12, 2017. Lannon resigned his post after health issues a year later. Lannon did not return several phone and email messages from FLORIDA TODAY.

No funds put at risk

An inquiry later released by HUD's Office of Inspector General found “no indication that any HUD funds were put at risk” by the city, and the inspector general reporting agent recommended the matter be closed. That contradicted claims made by Lannon against Buchanan. “The one complaint that they had, the one negative finding I should say, was that we didn't spend their money fast enough,” Buchanan said. Buchanan has retained an attorney to represent him regarding what he calls his forced resignation. That attorney, Kevin McCann, is a retired federal

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

***Gregg J. Lynk***

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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agent with 25 years experience running investigations. McCann says Palm Bay "scapegoated" his client by accusing him of fraud, implying that he was the subject of the investigation and forcing him to resign. "Not only was Mr. Buchanan innocent of any wrongdoing, but he was actually making great strides to eliminate corruption within the City," McCann told FLORIDA TODAY. "The city of Palm Bay denied Mr. Buchanan's claims, and discussions are currently ongoing regarding the initiation of a federal lawsuit."

Buchanan said he just wants "things to get back to normal and regrets any ill effects the Dave Isnardi group that seized control of City Hall had on other city employees not involved in the alleged corruption." "The city of Palm Bay employs hundreds of honest, hard-working employees dedicated to the residents of the city," Buchanan said. "Perhaps the most unfortunate part of this whole affair was the turmoil and upheaval these employees and their families suffered. I'm just glad it's over. And I look forward to putting it behind us."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

*Gregg J. Lynk*

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Florida Today  
May 10, 2019

**Former Palm Bay deputy manager Dave Isnardi arrested, charged with racketeering, other felonies**

Author: John McCarthy

Former Palm Bay Deputy City Manager Dave Isnardi has been arrested on charges of racketeering, conspiracy to commit extortion and conspiracy to possess controlled substances, including oxycodone. Isnardi is the husband of Brevard County Commission Chair Kristine Isnardi. Dave Isnardi is being represented at his initial appearance by Bryan Lober, an attorney who also is the County Commission vice chair. Lober said he told the Isnardi's not to comment on the case to the media, and he noted that being accused of something is not the same as being guilty.

A second man, Jose Aguiar, a former candidate for the Palm Bay City Council, also was arrested Friday morning and charged with racketeering and conspiracy to commit racketeering. In 1997 in Massachusetts, Aguiar was convicted of conspiracy to sell cocaine and was sentenced to three years and one month in federal prison. All told, Isnardi is charged with two first-degree felonies, which each carry potential penalties of 30 years in prison; and three third-degree felonies, each of which carry a potential five-year prison sentence. The two are being held without bail until they can appear before a judge, now scheduled for Saturday morning.

The arrest warrants for the two show that the FBI and Florida Department of Law Enforcement have been investigating allegations of corruption and undue influence on city officials in Palm Bay since at least 2015. The warrants draw heavily from secret recordings made by a confidential source working with investigators. The arrest warrants for the two paint a picture of a city government embroiled in scandal, as Aguiar attempted to influence Palm Bay city officials. Though not arrested or charged, the warrants allege that City Councilman Jeff Bailey had an addiction to oxycodone and that former Councilman Tres Holton regularly had sex with prostitutes and used cocaine. It also alleges that Holton had obtained prostitutes for Mayor William Capote while the men were in Tallahassee. Capote denied the allegations.

The arrest warrants allege Isnardi and Aguiar were plotting to use a hidden camera to record Holton and Bailey having sex with prostitutes at "the Clubhouse," a Canova Street home then owned by Aguiar, where Holton, Bailey and other Palm Bay officials hung out. They then planned to use those recordings to blackmail Holton and Bailey into voting the way Aguiar wanted on various issues including rezoning a property that Aguiar owned to allow him to open a scrap metal business that Isnardi would be a partner in. It isn't clear from the arrest documents whether the two ever did set up a camera or make any recordings.

"Is this a joke?" Holton said, when contacted by FLORIDA TODAY and told the allegations against him in the arrest warrants. "You're going to have to call me back," Holton said, not responding further to questions. Bailey could not be immediately reached for comment. The



**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

***Gregg J. Lynk***

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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warrants also say that Isnardi and Aguiar plotted to plant drugs in Bailey's car and arrange for a Brevard County sheriff's deputy to perform a traffic stop on Bailey and to discover the drugs. The warrants also state that former City Manager **Gregg Lynk** was aware of the plot to set up Bailey, but didn't want to know the details or participate in the effort. **Lynk** could not be reached immediately for comment. He was fired in November after the City Council voted to remove him by a 3-2 vote. Bailey introduced that measure and Capote voted in favor of the firing along with newly elected Councilman Kenny Johnson.

The warrants also indicate that Aguiar had previously supplied Bailey with drugs and that he also offered Bailey money to make a down payment on a house, which Bailey declined. During a subsequent interview with investigators, Bailey admitted that Aguiar offered him a house and that he received \$300 in cash from Aguiar, according to arrest documents. Bailey didn't report Aguiar's donation, which he held onto until turning it over to the FBI during the interview.

In a subsequent interview with the FBI, set up by Isnardi's then-attorney, John Murphy, Isnardi admitted to participating in discussions about trying to record Holton and Bailey in compromising positions, according to the arrest documents. But he denied there was an actual plot to plant drugs in Bailey's car. He did admit, though, that he contacted Brevard County Sheriff's Office Agent Jason West about the possibility that there were drugs in Bailey's car and noted that Bailey "was doing drugs anyway."

In a subsequent interview with law enforcement, West acknowledged that Isnardi had contacted him a year earlier. West said he wasn't sure but thought Isnardi provided some information about drug activity involving members of the Warlock Motorcycle Club and that he told Isnardi that he would pass it on to the BCSO drug unit. The arrest affidavit also said that Isnardi had told another Palm Bay official that Bailey was dealing drugs near a school and that the official passed the info to the Palm Bay police. Ultimately, Isnardi claimed the plot was only "guys talking s---, drinking beers and smoking cigars," according to the arrest documents.

The arrest documents show that Aguiar was angry about how Bailey was voting during council meetings and was determined to drive him from office. "I'm going to kick his ass, he ain't winning again," Aguiar was quoted as saying during one recorded conversation. "I don't know if I should just approach him and grab him by the throat and tell him how it is, or we should, or I should just avoid him...set this m-----f----- up or something?"

Capote said he was surprised to learn from FLORIDA TODAY that his name was mentioned in the arrest warrant as being connected with prostitutes. He said those allegations are untrue. "I don't know who would tell someone that," Capote said. "That's profound. This is all new to me. That accusation has no validity." Capote said he has been in Tallahassee in the past on city business, meeting with state legislators and other state officials, but he did not hang out with Holton while he was there. Capote says people may have been trying to taint him for political reasons. Capote said he was never interviewed by investigators, and that he has no reason to secure a lawyer in this matter.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

***Gregg J. Lynk***

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Lober, the county commissioner representing Isnardi, said, "Dave hasn't been convicted of anything in relation to these years-old hyper-political allegations. Given the number of individuals allegedly involved and the complexity of the allegations, this is not a case which is likely to be resolved quickly. I have no doubt that the facts will become increasingly clear in the coming months." Palm Bay City Councilman Kenny Johnson, who took office in November, said he hoped the city's growth would not be "stunted" by any fallout from the arrests or what the arrest warrants alleged about other city officials. "Being that this is prior to me getting in, I really don't have much of a statement," Johnson said. "I'll let the justice system focus on what they have to do, and I'll just focus on the city. ... All the allegations surprised me."

His fellow Councilman Brian Anderson had little to say. "At this point, I'm just waiting for all the facts to come in." Anderson declined to comment on what the potential political fallout might be in the city from the other allegations against current city officials. "It's too early for any of that."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

***Gregg J. Lynk***

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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[CB&A Note: Only the information relevant to **Gregg Lynk** is listed below.]

<https://fccma.org/2019/01/january-2019-new-members/>

Fccma.org

January 3, 2019

**January 2019 New Members**

The following membership applications have been received. If no current member comes forth with a reason why these applicants should not be approved as members, he/she will be invoiced for dues.

, **Gregg Lynk**, District III, Affiliate Member;

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

***Gregg J. Lynk***

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Florida Today  
November 21, 2018

**Palm Bay City Manager Gregg Lynk fired by 3-2 vote during special meeting**

Author: Rick Neale

Palm Bay City Manager **Gregg Lynk** was fired Wednesday night, two weeks after Election Day altered the makeup of his five-member City Council. **Lynk** started work in April 2015, and he earned \$182,507 per year. Per contract, he will receive 20 weeks of severance pay. The 3-2 vote to terminate **Lynk's** employment occurred during a Palm Bay City Council special meeting. Councilman Jeff Bailey introduced the resolution to fire **Lynk**, and Mayor William Capote and Kenny Johnson joined him in voting yes. "Politics come in seasons. And seasons change. New administrations come. And decisions are made," Capote said. Newly appointed Deputy Mayor Brian Anderson and Harry Santiago voted no. After **Lynk** gathered his belongings in his satchel, he received an ovation while he was leaving the dais. "All I have to say is, Happy Thanksgiving," **Lynk** said minutes after the vote, greeting well-wishers and shaking hands in the council chambers aisle.

Council members appointed Lisa Morrell, communications and information technology director, to serve as interim city manager. Morrell has worked for the city for 18 years, serving as CIT director since 2011, said Keely Leggett, city spokeswoman. Morrell declined comment Friday, saying she first wants the opportunity to address city employees on Monday. Palm Bay is Brevard County's largest city, with about 113,000 residents. "I believe the city has suffered from poor management for a number of years and we need to make real changes," Bailey wrote. "With a one time \$150,000,000 road bond coming we need the management and financial expertise to ensure we can get the most critical work accomplished within a reasonable time frame. I believe we are lacking the skill sets necessary to move the city forward while handling a very expensive and extensive public works project," he wrote. "I believe new management is the best way for the city to recover our relationship with the citizens we serve. We need to build a cooperative relation with all stakeholders," he wrote.

Earlier in the meeting, Bailey and Johnson took their oaths of office, garnering standing ovations from the audience. Red, white and blue flower arrangements decorated the dais at the five council seats. Bailey won a second straight term by taking 55.8 percent of the Seat 5 vote against Aaron Parr, while political newcomer Johnson won 58.4 percent of the Seat 4 vote against Thomas Gaume. Former Deputy Mayor Tres Holton, who supported **Lynk**, was eliminated in the primary election in the latter contest. Johnson effectively cast Wednesday's tie-breaking vote — the other four councilmen had made their intentions clear during pre-vote discussion. After the meeting ended, FLORIDA TODAY asked him why he voted to fire **Lynk**. "For far too long, we've had a negative cloud cast over the city of Palm Bay," Johnson said. "Mr. **Lynk's** a great gentleman, personally. But in regards to management, I want to make sure that we get the right person in there going forward. And I just want the city of Palm Bay to rest assured that we're going to do the right thing," he said.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

***Gregg J. Lynk***

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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A New York native who moved to Palm Bay in 2014, **Lynk** was hired as part of a leadership shake-up that saw at least a dozen key City Hall officials leave during 2015. He was a non-traditional candidate who lacked previous city management experience. Former Palm Bay mayor John Mazziotti — a former **Lynk** critic — supported him Wednesday from the public comment podium prior to the vote. “When **Gregg Lynk** first got hired — and I told him this — I knew nothing about him. I didn't know anything about him at all. But about a year later, maybe six months, I'm in Walmart shopping and he comes up to me and asks me if he could sit down and talk with me. He wanted to get some of the past and the history," Mazziotti said. "And I said sure. And I've spoken with him on many occasions. I would hire him today. I was wrong back then. But I would hire him today," he said.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

***Gregg J. Lynk***

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Hometown News: The Beaches (FL)

June 15, 2018

**Waterstone project moves forward, neighbors sue city**

Author: Amy Lyon

The Waterstone development in southeast Palm Bay is one step closer to its next phase of developing 283 homes after the City Council approved the final development plan at its June 7 meeting. Councilman Tres Holton voted against approval of the project, instead citing his desire to table the issue to the Sept. 6 meeting, which would give city staff time to execute an additional study. The Gardens at Waterstone is comprised of 96 acres and located within the overall Waterstone at Palm Bay development on Babcock Street and Mara Loma Boulevard. Before construction can begin, developers must receive final plat approval from the city. “We anticipate having that done in the near future,” said Tucker Byrd, the attorney representing Waterstone.

Council members also discussed a lawsuit that was recently filed by neighboring land owners to the west of Waterstone. James Sartori of Willow Brook Farms and Andrew Michata of Rolling Meadow Ranch have retained the services of Melbourne attorney Steve Knox, who recently retired as Brevard County Attorney after serving more than 20 years. Mr. Sartori and Mr. Michata are suing the city for actions related to the Jan. 18 approval of Waterstone’s preliminary development plan. The lawsuit, Mr. Knox said, is a “due process issue” related to how the city council gave notice for the Jan. 18 meeting, as well as the process for approval. “We want the city to comply with its own comprehensive plan,” Mr. Knox said. “We’re not trying to fight with you if we don’t have to.” Mr. Michata said that he and Mr. Sartori own 7,000 acres between them. “We’ve worked on this since 2005 like Waterstone,” he said. “We annexed into Palm Bay and we can annex out.” Also at issue was the neighboring land owners’ request for the city to obtain a Project Development and Environmental study before granting approval to Waterstone.

The purpose of the PD&E study would be to determine the most cost-effective alignment for the St. John’s Heritage Parkway, which is expected to be built through southeast Palm Bay to Micco. But Councilman Harry Santiago, Jr., noted that the parkway is a separate issue from Waterstone’s final development plan. “I can assure you that the most important thing for me is the parkway, because that parkway is the future of the city,” Mr. Santiago said. “And that parkway is the lifeblood of the business development that will be happening east of Babcock Street toward that interchange.” Council members gave City manager **Gregg Lynk** direction Dec. 21 to start the PD&E process; however, Mr. **Lynk** said little progress has been made due to difficulties in meeting schedules with Brevard County, the Space Coast Transportation Planning Organization and the Florida Department of Transportation. A meeting is scheduled with FDOT for June 28, Mr. **Lynk** said.

Councilman Brian Anderson noted that it could take 36 months for the completion of a PD&E study and “we can’t put Palm Bay on hold.” Councilman Tres Holton argued that the city was not following the law or its comprehensive plan by approving the Waterstone development before conducting a PD&E study. “We’re talking about a motion to table something so we can

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

***Gregg J. Lynk***

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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follow the law,” Mr. Holton said. Mr. Knox requested that the city “start all over” with the approval process for Waterstone. “If we have to go to court I think we stand a very good chance of reversing your [January] decision.” But City Attorney Patricia Denise Smith said the City Council does not have jurisdiction to reconsider the preliminary development approval that was granted to Waterstone in January. “A circuit court judge will decide that now,” Ms. Smith said. Ms. Smith warned the council against “making a decision based on incorrect application of law that deprives [Water-stone] of their right to develop their property.” Ms. Smith further advised the council against Mr. Holton’s recommendation to table the issue to a future meeting.

The Waterstone project first came before the city in 2005. Nearly 300 homes were built in the Heron Bay and The Lakes phases of development, but Waterstone representatives said a downturn in the economy put development on hold for many years. “This is the right place and the right time,” Mr. Byrd said. “Think about this development as Bayside Lakes on steroids.”

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

***Gregg J. Lynk***

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Hometown News: Palm Bay (FL)

May 11, 2018

**City to pay Lannon’s accruals, says ‘no’ to settlement offer**

Author: Amy Lyon

Palm Bay City Council members agreed on May 3 to pay former City Attorney Andrew Lannon for accrued sick, vacation and administrative leave, and also voted unanimously to respond with a “no” to his settlement offer. Mr. Lannon resigned from his position April 14 via an email to council members and City Manager **Gregg Lynk**. The city’s labor attorney, Andrew Hament, advised the city to give him full payment for sick, administrative and vacation leave, despite the fact that Mr. Lannon’s resignation was immediate.

In a related matter, council members gave a simple “no” answer to the remaining terms of Mr. Lannon’s emailed four-page “Pre-Suit, Non-Negotiable Settlement Offer,” which was received by Mr. Hament on May 3 and forwarded that day to council members. Mr. Hament called the list of demands from Mr. Lannon “quite unusual.” “It’s obvious to see Mr. Lannon is going through some very tough personal times,” said Mr. Hament. “I thought it might be healthy for the city to provide him an answer to his demand.”

Councilman Tres Holton, who was the subject of Mr. Lannon’s request that the city set up a \$7.7 million fund for the “victims of Holton’s House of Horrors”, asked whether the City Council could “legally respond” by offering to pay Mr. Lannon’s health insurance and life insurance for the next six months. Mayor William Capote said he did not think it was a good idea to “cherry-pick” from the list of more than a dozen items requested by Mr. Lannon. “Based on the four pages we have, I don’t think he is going to entertain any offer we make,” Councilman Brian Anderson said. Mr. Lannon also requested that the city deposit \$7.7 million into his personal checking account, and provide medical coverage and life insurance for the remainder of his and his family’s lives. He asked for an immediate and permanent end to the expenditures of monies collected through the city’s special assessment fee “unless and until **Gregg Lynk** is terminated,” and requested that the city advocate for the removal of State Rep. Randy Fine (R -Palm Bay) from office.

Councilman Jeff Bailey asked if the council could meet privately in executive session for discussion, but Mr. Hament said that under the Sunshine Law, discussion had to remain open to the public because a lawsuit had not been filed. City Attorney Patricia Smith, who worked with Mr. Lannon for several years, concurred, saying, “He has not filed a claim and actually he has been very specific in saying that it’s not a claim... and that he does not wish to pursue litigation against the city.” According to Brevard County court records, Mr. Lannon voluntarily entered the Circles of Care Harbor Pines facility on April 20 and was required to stay in the facility under the Baker Act, also known as the Florida Mental Health Act of 1971. He was discharged on April 23.



**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

***Gregg J. Lynk***

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Hometown News: Melbourne, West Melbourne (FL)

April 20, 2018

**City manager highlights health of Palm Bay**

Author: Amy Lyon

City Manager **Gregg Lynk** painted a rosy picture for Palm Bay Chamber of Commerce members recently when he whisked through an overview of the city’s recent successes. “Palm Bay is thriving and has a very bright future,” Mr. **Lynk** said. “When I first got here, I don’t know if I could say that.” Some of the challenges Mr. **Lynk** faced three years ago when he left the private sector to work for Palm Bay included a residential community with little to no growth, lack of a commercial base and neglected infrastructure. One of his “marching orders” from the City Council was to make the city a business-friendly environment. Speaking predominantly to business community members during the April 4 Chamber of Commerce meeting, Mr. **Lynk** referred to the city as a business. “Palm Bay as a corporation is worth \$3.7 billion,” he said. “We have to take care of it and grow it.”

In 2015, **Lynk** and city staff members set a three-year goal of \$320 million in new development with 20 percent of that coming from commercial growth. “We met that goal and surpassed it,” he said. As of March 2018, \$541 million had gone through the city’s growth management department with 20 percent of that being commercial. The city also refinanced \$35 million of its debt, which resulted in a first-year savings of \$800,000. The money was used to purchase new police cars. “Over the life of the debt, the city will save \$8 million,” Mr. **Lynk** said. Additionally, the city is looking at an annual savings of more than \$1.2 million after the strategic reorganization of the city attorney’s office in which several outsourced programs such as risk management and worker’s compensation were brought in-house. He addressed the change last year to the city’s stormwater funding program, which was “plagued by collection problems” with millions of dollars outstanding. “Now it’s on the tax bill and we have 100 percent collection,” he said.

A sign of the stormwater program’s success, Mr. **Lynk** said, is that Garvey Road north of Jupiter Boulevard will open soon. The city will then move on to the much-needed stormwater system repairs on Nevada Drive in northeast Palm Bay. The city has earmarked \$55 million to expand water and sewer services in the city to accommodate new development. Mr. **Lynk** breezed through a list of planned developments in all quadrants of the city including a 340-unit apartment complex on RJ Conlan Boulevard, as well as a residential and commercial development near the recently opened St. John’s Heritage Parkway in northwest Palm Bay. “We want people to live, work and play in Palm Bay,” Mr. **Lynk** said. To speed up the permitting process for developers, the city is investing in e-permitting, which is expected to bring quicker approval and would allow developers to schedule inspections through a simple text message. Developers pay an impact fee to the city because of the impact their developments have on roads, infrastructure and parks, and Mr. **Lynk** said the impact fees alone for a project in southeast Palm Bay called Emerald Lakes are expected to be \$82 million. “That’s how a city gets healthy,” he said.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

***Gregg J. Lynk***

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Florida Today  
September 1, 2017

**Palm Bay wonders what's next after series of political intrigue  
City should be shining but faces uncertainty after Isnardi resignation**

Authors: Wayne T. Price and Dave Berman

Its streets are crumbling. Property owners are suing the city over a recently passed stormwater assessment. The mayor and city manager rarely speak to one another, and one of the deputy city managers just resigned under the cloud of an FBI and Florida Department of Law Enforcement investigation. All of this has many residents in Palm Bay, Brevard County's most populous city, wondering what could come next. "I'm heartbroken about this," said Lynn Whepley, an area Realtor who moved to Palm Bay with her family nearly two decades ago from the Fort Lauderdale area. "Palm Bay has always been the butt of many jokes in Brevard County, and I would always stop them and say: 'Hey, you're talking about the place where I live.' I've stopped saying that. I can't defend it any more, and it's very sad to me."

Harsh words, for sure. But talk to some city residents, business operators and property owners, and they largely agree with Whepley's assessment. Even more stinging is that this should be Palm Bay's time to shine. Harris Corp. has continued to invest tens of millions of dollars in its Palm Bay facilities, most recently the ultra-sleek Harris Technology Center, where the Fortune 500 company conducts cutting-edge research. Northrop Grumman Corp., just a few miles to the north at the Orlando Melbourne International Airport, is bursting with growth and is hiring hundreds of engineers who should be buying houses in the southern part of the Space Coast.

The opening of the St. Johns Heritage Parkway has been delayed for months due to problems with the storm water system. "Road closed" signs and orange barrels block off the intersection on 192 west of I-95. And while there have been delays, work is well underway on the St. Johns Heritage Parkway, a strip of road that eventually will link with Interstate 95 via future interchanges on Ellis Road in Melbourne and Micco Road near Grant-Valkaria.

**City manager optimistic**

Palm Bay City Manager **Gregg Lynk** disputes contentions that there are issues within the city that are negatively affecting its economy. "Palm Bay is seeing growth and development that we haven't experienced in over 10 years," **Lynk** said in a written statement to FLORIDA TODAY. "We have projects in all stages of development across the city, and have some exciting announcements coming in the next few months." "I certainly don't think that Palm Bay has a poor image in the community. Are there issues that the community would like to see change? Absolutely," **Lynk** said. "You'll find that anywhere. But the fact of the matter is more Brevard residents choose to call Palm Bay home than any other city in this county, and I think that says something."

Prosperity, not politics

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches*****Gregg J. Lynk****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Greater Palm Bay Chamber of Commerce Chairman Puneet "PK" Kapur, said the city's "leadership needs to focus more on prosperity and growth, rather than politics." Kapur, who also is general manager of the Holiday Inn Express and Suites in Palm Bay and vice chairman of the Brevard County Tourist Development Council, said that's crucial for the city to attract more jobs, more home construction and a larger tax base. One immediate concern, Kapur said, is how potential political instability in Palm Bay could affect a pending decision by Defense Department officials for locating the Air Force's consolidated Battlefield Airman Training Center. Patrick Air Force Base is one of eight bases on a "short list" for that operation, which could bring 400 to 1,200 more airmen to the Space Coast if Patrick is chosen. Two facilities in Palm Bay would be major components of the project if Patrick is selected: the Air Force's underutilized Malabar Annex facility and the city's gun range police training complex.

**The Isnardi resignation**

This past week, Palm Bay political intrigue once more became front-page news. It was announced Tuesday that Deputy Palm Bay City Manager David Isnardi, a local Republican power broker was resigning from his position, effective Sept. 7. Isnardi said he wanted to move on, and remove any taint from an FBI and FDLE investigation into activities at Palm Bay that could jeopardize his wife's political career. Kristine Isnardi was elected as a Brevard County commissioner in 2016. David Isnardi is a former chief of staff to then-Brevard County Commission Andy Anderson. Isnardi became deputy Palm Bay city manager in May 2015.

Anderson was Kristine Isnardi's predecessor as District 5 county commissioner. Anderson, who could not run again as county commissioner in 2016 because of term limits, is Palm Bay's economic development and external affairs director. Prior to being hired as deputy city manager, Isnardi openly encouraged the hiring of current City Manager **Gregg Lynk**, whom Isnardi called a good friend. In defending the city and its economic position, **Lynk** cites such things as declining unemployment and increasing home values. "To say that Palm Bay is stifled is not accurate," **Lynk** said. "We will always strive to better our city. But we also need to acknowledge the improvements that have been made under this administration."

**Stormwater concerns**

David Moallem, who owns about 4,000 property parcels in Palm Bay, says he isn't happy with what has transpired with Palm Bay's city management. Isnardi and **Lynk** are nice enough individuals, Moallem said. But they are not suited to overseeing a city like Palm Bay. "You can't just run a city without experience," said Moallem, who is suing the city for its recent implementation of a new stormwater assessment. "If your A/C breaks down, you don't want a nice guy to come fix it. You want someone with experience to fix it." Responding to criticism about the experience of Palm Bay city leaders, **Lynk** said: "I can't speak to the opinions of others, but the fact is that Palm Bay is a city with an incredible amount of experience among our top officials. It is an honor to lead an organization that touts this level of excellence, and anyone who doubts the caliber of the professionals that work at the city of Palm Bay is simply misinformed."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

***Gregg J. Lynk***

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The stormwater fee could be the final straw for Moallem. “I am thinking how I’m going to exit this place,” he said. In response, **Lynk** said: "The residents of Palm Bay voted in special assessments last November, and it is with the will of the people of this city that council elected to assess additional stormwater fees to make much-needed improvements to the city’s infrastructure. While residents will see increased fees, non-resident landowners will, by virtue of their business structure, shoulder a greater share of the fees." **Lynk** said he could not address Moallem's specific issues with the stormwater fees, "due to potential litigation." Bill Mick said he believes Palm Bay City Manager **Gregg Lynk** is just what the city needed — someone with business management experience, rather than a politician.

Less 'grandstanding' needed

Bill Mick, who is host of WMMB's political-focused morning radio show "Bill Mick Live" and is a longtime observer of the local political scene, has a different view of the city government administration than the critics of **Lynk** and other administrators. Mick said he believes **Lynk** is just what the city needed — someone with business management experience, rather than a politician. Mick said he believes things can get back in order on Palm Bay if there is a change in focus away from "petty, small-town politics on the City Council." "It's been going on for too long," said Mick, who also program director at WMMB-AM (1240 and 1350).

Mick, who notes that he is a friend and supporter of **Lynk** and Isnardi, said members of the City Council need to "realize what their job is — to work for the betterment of the city, instead of being on the dais, bloviating" and "grandstanding." "It's either lead, follow or get out of the way," Mick said. Mick also blames "the political factions from the left," seeking to stir things up and create rifts in Palm Bay. Mick said he doesn't expect the turmoil in Palm Bay spilling over into county government, where Kristine Isnardi is one of five county commissioners. "Kristine Isnardi has always done a good job separating her home life from her political life," Mick said.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

***Gregg J. Lynk***

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Hometown News

August 17, 2017

**HERO Homes**

**Paratroopers association parts ways with Homes for Warriors**

Author: Christine Edwards

In early May, news broke that the City of Palm Bay's Housing and Urban Development funds were not exhausted in time. On the heels of those reports came allegations that the Homes for Warriors program, which uses State Housing Initiative (SHIP) funds to provide disabled veterans with homes, was over budget and lacking sufficient records. The Homes for Warriors program provides homes for service-disabled veterans and their families by taking blighted houses and renovating or reconstructing them. Seven homes already have been provided to families in Palm Bay and four more are slated for completion.

The overspending allegations leveled at the Homes for Warriors program revolve around a state audit for the years 2013-14 which indicates that the program spent \$688,000 on four homes, with \$454,000 spent on a single residence. The cap for spending at the time was \$52,425 per home. City Manager **Gregg Lynk** said that this was an accounting error and they are working to correct it with the help of a SHIP support team and a technical adviser from Tallahassee. In addition, the city has started reconciling records from 2011 to 2013, which is further back than the audit required, and hired a technical adviser to oversee its SHIP Community Development Block Grant funding. The Homes for Warriors program primarily utilized SHIP funding but did receive minimal Neighborhood Stabilization Program funds, Mr. **Lynk** said. "It's poor internal bookkeeping," Mr. **Lynk** said. "We need to clean up the previous administration's poor record keeping, but there's no fiscal abuse."

Investigations and audits appear to be underway to determine whether the allegations are true. A member of the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) Communications team stated that they are conducting an investigation into allegations referencing the City of Palm Bay, but cannot disclose the nature of the allegations. The FBI could not confirm whether they were conducting an investigation, nor could Palm Bay officials, but FDLE and FBI officials did question one individual. The city also is negotiating with firms to conduct an audit. The City Attorney's Office did not respond to requests for comment and the Mayor's office said they could not comment at this time.

There is the potential for forced repayment if discoveries are made during the audit or funding could be withheld from future years. Mr. **Lynk** said he expects additional information within the next month. "We are going to do things the right way and when things are brought to our attention we are going to address it," Mr. **Lynk** said. On the heels of those allegations came more regarding the Space Coast Paratroopers Association's internal recordkeeping and accounting. The nonprofit had partnered with Palm Bay to aid with the Homes for Warriors program. Mr. **Lynk** said funding and records issues internal to the nonprofit didn't spill over to the city. "There's never been any kind of fiscal give or take with that nonprofit," he said.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

***Gregg J. Lynk***

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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On May 4, the Space Coast Paratroopers Association posted a Facebook message announcing that Palm Bay had terminated their public/private partnership following completion of its last project and would be running the program independently. The message stated that the nonprofit was restructuring and identifying a new mission to serve local military and veteran populations and had changed its name to the Space Coast Veterans Alliance. The organization later announced that it would begin the dissolution process.

Don Overton, executive director of the Space Coast Veterans Alliance, said the things that transpired within the organization will be resolved and whatever transpired with the city is outside of their scope of understanding because the nonprofit wasn't tasked with those responsibilities and did not commingle funds with the city. The nonprofit allowed program applicants to submit prequalification applications on its website, collected in-kind donations, provided property and organized volunteers for the program. During Mr. Overton's tenure, data collected via the online application consisted of generic eligibility questions outlined by the city and was paired with DD-214 discharge documents and turned over to the city, where the records were maintained, Mr. Overton said.

When Mr. Overton began volunteering with the nonprofit a few years ago, he realized it did not have good record keeping, policies or procedures in place. He began a comprehensive process of internal forensic audits to recreate what had transpired prior to his involvement. A bookkeeper and certified public accountants were contracted to bring transparency to the operation, Mr. Overton said. While they put the pieces together, outside sources approached Mr. Overton about alleged unaccounted for monetary and property contributions. He questioned individuals that were involved, but believed he wasn't getting all of the details. Moreover, expenditures uncovered in the internal audits didn't make sense. Mr. Overton stated that he felt a duty to elevate the matter to city leaders because the individuals involved worked for the city.

Mr. **Lynk** recalled the meeting during which Mr. Overton raised concerns about the nonprofit's bookkeeping. He stated that he asked Mr. Overton to keep him updated and did not hear back from him. After coming forward, a city employee in a leadership role told Mr. Overton not to bring issues to Mayor Capote again. He drafted a letter regarding his findings to create a record. Mr. Overton said that reports that he is a whistleblower are inaccurate because allegations about the nonprofit were brought forward by individuals within the city prior to him elevating them. He also holds a position with the City of Palm Bay that has no involvement with the Homes for Warriors program and only provided comments regarding his role at the nonprofit.

Palm Bay later dissolved its partnership with the nonprofit and the allegations became public. At this point, the right thing to do was start the dissolution process because the organization had lost the public's trust, Mr. Overton said. "It's going to take time," he said. "It's going to take at least a year to fully liquidate the program, to get a clean accounting of everything we've been working on." Once the organization has been dissolved, it will transfer its resources to a scholarship, Mr. Overton said. The Space Coast Paratroopers Association had a minimal role in the Homes for Warriors program, mainly prescreening applicants and organizing volunteers. Applicant data was then put through a qualifications process with the city to determine eligibility, Mr. **Lynk** said.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

***Gregg J. Lynk***

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Palm Bay Community Information Coordinator Karyn Barber stated that the communications tools are in place to organize efforts without the nonprofit. Palm Bay City Councilman Brian Anderson said that the remaining four homes are under construction in northwest Palm Bay. The goal is to complete them by year's end. "They're currently under construction," he said. "They have permits. The addresses are set." Mr. **Lynk** said the four homes currently under construction do not have a confirmed completion date but that the exteriors are done and only interior work remains. The seven completed homes will not be affected by recent events. The future of the Homes for Warriors program remains to be seen. It was not designed to be an everlasting program and with foreclosure rates down and construction costs up, rebuilding homes is not as affordable as it was when the program was launched.

Councilman Anderson said he doesn't believe the city should be involved in the real estate market and would like to see the program taken over by a nonprofit, with the city providing information on city-owned properties. He said he supports veterans wholeheartedly, but feels that the city's job is to provide services to the residents and that the program is not sustainable for the city. Future program oversight will also need to be considered; however, Councilman Anderson wants to see the audit results before instituting policy. "We need to identify what happened, why it happened and make sure it never happens again," he said. "The City Council right now needs to regain the trust of the people and let them know that we are doing the right thing."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches*****Gregg J. Lynk****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Clickorlando.com

August 8, 2017

**FBI probe focuses on vet's loan for 'Warriors' home****More questions raised about Homes for Warriors properties in Palm Bay**

Author: Wayne T. Price

New questions are being raised about a controversial housing program aimed at providing homes for disabled veterans. One is why one recipient of a property through the now-defunct Homes for Warriors program in Palm Bay suddenly had a \$5,000 Housing and Urban Development loan forgiven after taking possession of the house in 2014, News 6 partner Florida Today reported. The recipient, Army veteran Stephen Hamrick, who lost a leg in Iraq and is 100 percent disabled, was a business partner in 2001 of now-Palm Bay deputy city manager David Isnardi.

Hamrick moved into his mortgage-free property in October 2014. He conceded he had been derelict in repaying a federal Housing and Urban Development small-business development loan — part of a now-defunct small-business initiative administered by the city — and was surprised when Isnardi showed up at his house in his truck one afternoon in August 2015, handed him a manila envelope and drove away. A couple who received a new house under the Homes for Warriors program in 2016 is now trying to sell the home for \$200,000. They will only have to pay the city \$50,000. "He said, 'I have something for you,' and then he left," Hamrick told Florida Today.

Inside the envelope was a document, signed by Palm Bay city manager **Gregg Lynk**, indicating his loan, plus interest, had been forgiven. "I wasn't complaining," Hamrick said. "I just don't know what spawned it." Hamrick had taken out the loan with Isnardi years before, but had failed to repay his share of the loan. Not long after moving into his house, Hamrick said Bob Williams, a Palm Bay building department official who helped with the Homes for Warriors program, visited him and urged him to repay the HUD loan. The optics, Williams told Hamrick, weren't great because he was getting a free home, yet he had an unpaid HUD loan on the city's books. "I knew I needed to start repaying it," Hamrick said. "I had let it go all of those years because of some personal problems and health issues."

Hamrick said he sent a \$200 check to the city sometime after meeting with Williams in care of Palm Bay's city attorney emeritus, Nick Tsamoutales, to start paying off the loan. The check wasn't cashed. And then, in early August 2015, he received a phone call from Isnardi asking if he could stop by Hamrick's house. That's when Isnardi gave him the envelope before driving off without saying what was inside, Hamrick said. The Homes for Warriors program is under scrutiny as the FBI and the Florida Department of Law Enforcement are investigating activities in Palm Bay City Hall. Isnardi left the business soon after joining up with the Hamricks and the couple sold Hoppers a few years later.

Exclusive: Explosive allegations leveled by Palm Bay veterans chief Isnardi became Palm Bay's deputy city manager in May 2015. Isnardi repaid his share of the loan in 2008. Hamrick didn't



**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

***Gregg J. Lynk***

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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and he said he had always remained leery of Isnardi when they would run into each other at various veterans' events. Hamrick told Florida Today earlier this year that Isnardi called him "out of the blue" —in 2013 about the Homes for Warriors program in Palm Bay, and asked if he would be interested. Isnardi, according to Hamrick, told him: "I'm going to put you into a free house." Isnardi denied promising Hamrick a house, saying that he only encouraged him to apply. Isnardi added that the city of Palm Bay was responsible for approving all applicants. Isnardi could not be reached for comment for this story.

**Lynk** told Florida Today that the city forgave the loan, based on the advice of current Palm Bay City Attorney Andrew Lannon. "The financial documents provided by Mr. Hamrick to the Housing and Neighborhood Development Services Department demonstrated that normal collection methods under Florida law, such as garnishment, would be unsuccessful," **Lynk** said in a statement. "Based on these records, it was apparent that Hamrick had made every effort to repay the loan and, as a wounded warrior who survives solely on VA disability benefits and Social Security, that he did not have the means to pay off the remainder of the loan. Per the advice of the city attorney, it was determined that his circumstances warranted forgiveness of the loan."

Last March, Isnardi asked Hamrick to re-sign some loan papers for the Homes for Warrior house and he reluctantly agreed. The re-signed documents were needed to protect the city's financial interests as it pertained to the properties. "It irks me the way that was presented to me," Hamrick said. "I recognized in hindsight that maybe I shouldn't have signed the new documents." Hamrick said he has met with the FBI and FDLE to discuss the loan and his association with Isnardi.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

***Gregg J. Lynk***

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Florida Today

June 29, 2017

**Palm Bay leaders may triple residential stormwater fees**

Authors: Rick Neale and Wayne T. Price

Stormwater fees could more than triple — from \$53.64 to \$177.13 per year — for the typical Palm Bay homeowner. City leaders say current fees cannot cover costs to maintain Palm Bay's sprawling stormwater system of roughly 12,000 aging pipes and culverts, 1,600 miles of swales and 100 miles of canals. What's more, over the years, Palm Bay has racked up an unfunded stormwater construction project backlog topping \$40 million, said Greg Stone, stormwater utility manager. He said these projects are loosely prioritized, but "the next failed road will shuffle the deck" based on impacts to traffic, school bus routes and emergency response times. "You put metal in the ground, we know what's going to happen to the metal. And I also know that people talk about the roads. But you can drive on a bumpy road. You can't drive on a failed culvert," City Manager **Gregg Lynk** said.

Greg Stone, Stormwater Utility Manager for the City of Palm Bay, stands near one of the failed pipes in the city that needs replacing. The city is considering raising rates considerably to fund replacement of pipes throughout the city. "So we need to start proactively repairing our stormwater infrastructure," **Lynk** said. However, stormwater fees have proven historically unpopular in Palm Bay. David Moallem owns about 4,000 lots, making him one of the city's largest property owners — and in a Thursday email to city leaders, he warned that the increases would be "political suicide for those who engineer and support it."

On June 15, city officials mailed about 77,000 notices to affected landowners warning of possible fee hikes. The Palm Bay City Council will discuss the proposed stormwater fee hike at 7 p.m. July 6, and officials expect dozens of concerned residents to attend and voice their opinion. Work crews are replacing stormwater pipes on Lamplighter Drive near Giaralda Circle in northwest Palm Bay. City officials may considerably raise stormwater fees to tackle a \$40 million-plus project backlog. The city stormwater utility fee was created in 2010. Palm Bay charges most single-family homeowners \$4.47 per monthly utility bill, or \$53.64 annually. This program generates about \$3.5 million per year. Duplexes, triplexes, condominiums and mobile homes are charged at lower rates.

Council members will decide whether to replace these fees with special assessments that would be billed each November by the Brevard County Tax Collector's Office. Seventy-six percent of Palm Bay homeowners would pay \$177.13 annually, or a monthly rate of \$14.76. That rate applies to houses measuring 1,501 to 2,700 square feet. Assessments would clock in at \$123.99 for small houses (100-1,500 square feet) and \$247.98 for large houses (2,701-4,600 square feet). Rates for larger houses, condominiums, commercial land and other properties would be calculated using different formulas. Stormwater assessment collections cannot be spent on unrelated uses or projects, Stone said. Palm Bay officials say stormwater upgrades will improve the health of the Indian River Lagoon.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches*****Gregg J. Lynk****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Critics of the fee increase include Russell Dejaiffe, a retired transportation engineer who lives on Almansa Street Northeast, and Carol Wilcox, a Palm Bay Realtor who lives in the city and owns two rental properties there. Both were somewhat shocked after receiving their letters from the city. It was the annual percentage increase that initially jumped at out Wilcox. "It's a huge increase and you don't really know what's going on," Wilcox said, adding she's unsure if the fee hike will be passed along to her tenants in her rental properties. "I have no idea how they came up with this amount," Wilcox said. "It's the reason I want to go the meeting on July 6, to see what they have to say."

The City of Palm Bay is considering raising rates considerably to fund replacement of stormwater drainage pipes throughout the city, many of which are in bad shape. Dejaiffe, who worked on road projects in Michigan and Florida, said of the increase "I'm just sick about it." He wants to make sure the payments are equitable applied. For example, Dejaiffe said, larger homes with pools, larger garages, should pay more than property owners with less of an "impervious footprint." "There are no specifics on where they got the numbers for a 'typical' house," Dejaiffe said.

On June 19, a telephone hotline (321-952-3437, option 5) debuted to field questions and concerns from the public. As of Tuesday, the stormwater hotline had fielded 359 phone calls, said Karyn Barber, city spokeswoman. She said the hotline was deactivated Wednesday because the volume of calls did not warrant the staffing. Palm Bay enacted its first stormwater utility fee back in 1991, but city council members dumped the fee by year's end amid fierce backlash from residents. During a Monday appearance on WMMB-AM radio host Bill Mick's show, Stone said some residents told him they haven't seen city employees working on swales and ditches in front of their homes in five or six years. "We know. There's no money to do anything. So we're going to be very careful to be very visible with these projects, and spend this money wisely," Stone said. "They're going to see us get to work. We're ready to get to work," he said.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

***Gregg J. Lynk***

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Florida Today  
February 14, 2017

**Palm Bay City Manager Gregg Lynk may get \$50,000 raise**

Author: Rick Neale

Palm Bay City Manager **Gregg Lynk** may get a pay raise totaling about \$50,000 during his 22nd month on the job. **Lynk** was hired in April 2015 as part of a City Hall leadership shake-up, which was initiated by a newly elected City Council conservative majority. He had no previous city management experience. **Lynk** earns an annual salary of \$140,876, a \$250 monthly expense allowance, the use of a 2015 Ford Explorer, and other benefits. He also receives roughly \$9,000 per year in deferred pension benefits, said Ron Clare, deputy city manager. Thursday night, council members were expected to discuss boosting **Lynk's** salary to \$175,000 and his annual deferred pension benefits to \$24,000. However, on Tuesday, Deputy Mayor Harry Santiago — who proposed the contractual changes — postponed the council discussion until further notice to work on details. He and **Lynk** have discussed the topic during the past month.

Palm Bay is Brevard County's largest city with 107,888 residents, U.S. Census statistics show. During Palm Bay's 2015 city manager search, Santiago said consultants told council members that Palm Bay's salary range was small, considering its demographics and geographic size. According to backing materials for Thursday's presentation, city managers earn \$199,928 in Pompano Beach (population 105,000), \$196,757 in Clearwater (population 112,387), and \$189,342 in Lakeland (population 100,000).

In other General Development Corp.-founded cities, city managers earn \$169,949 in North Port (population 62,345) and \$190,000 in Port St. Lucie (population 179,413), the presentation shows. Nationwide, the average salary for managers of cities with more than 100,000 residents is \$217,893, the International City/County Management Association reports. "It is about a \$50,000 jump. However, it is — at least in my opinion — somewhat of a correction as to what the salary should be for a city of our size," Santiago said. "We brought **Gregg** in lower because we understand that he didn't have that experience working with cities, but he did have a lot of experience in the private sector. He's done very well, I believe, in carrying out the vision of the council with regards to smart growth and commercial development here in the city of Palm Bay," he said.

On the other hand, Councilman Jeff Bailey opposes the proposed pay raise. "I don't think it's normal for city managers who have less than two years of experience to come in and start approaching what the average salary is of other people with decades more experience," Bailey said. "I really do think it's going to take more time to evaluate the success of getting somebody who came from the private sector and seeing how they fit in this role. It's not something that should be evaluated in two years," he said. "Management's job is to keep the best talent for the least cost to the taxpayers here. It doesn't seem like much of a negotiation. If we tell him we're going to give him a \$10,000 raise, is he going to say no, he wants \$50,000?" he said.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

***Gregg J. Lynk***

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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**Lynk** declined comment for this story. Previous Palm Bay city manager Sue Hann was hired in June 2011 for \$149,256, and she earned \$157,577 when she resigned in December 2014. Lee Feldman's salary ranged from \$121,000 to \$167,000 during his tenure, which lasted from October 2002 to June 2011.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

***Gregg J. Lynk***

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Hometown News: Palm Bay (FL)

June 3, 2016

**Palm Bay City Manager’s One-year report**

Author: newsML@hometownnewsol.com

Since **Gregg Lynk** stepped into the role of City Manager last year, Palm Bay has seen a great deal of positive growth and change. In April 2015, the Palm Bay City Council directed Mr. **Lynk** to address issues of public safety, move major projects forward and pursue avenues for economic growth. The one-year progress reports submitted by the city’s departments highlight a number of successes and provide a glimpse into the good things to come for Palm Bay’s continued advancement.

In 2015, a number of public safety needs were addressed, including upgrades to equipment and the purchase of 19 new police cars and two new fire trucks. The police training facility, also known as “The Range,” completed a \$1 million improvement project funded by the Florida Legislature, and improvements at the facility continue after being awarded an additional \$800,000 in state funding.

Meeting some of the critical public safety needs has allowed Palm Bay Fire-Rescue crews to respond to nearly 14,000 calls for service, with more than \$30 million in property saved as a result. Additionally, in the past year, the Palm Bay Police Department has reported a 9-percent drop in the city’s crime rate, attributing the decrease, in part, to the dedication of the officers and civilians connecting with the community and making public safety education a priority. Under the direction of Mr. **Lynk**, the city has seen progress in many important projects and programs in the last year.

In August, Council approved a budget for the roads program that has now reached \$4.4 million. Based on recommendations from the City’s Road Advisory Board, the program began work in February 2016. The program, to date, has completed the rejuvenation and full-depth reclamation portions of the project and has the first full reconstruction project (St. Audre) fully funded.

The Palm Bay Parks and Recreation Department grew with the acquisition of three significant parcels of property from Brevard County, which included Palm Bay Regional Park, The Greater Palm Bay Senior Center and the Palm Bay Aquatic Center. This acquisition included more than \$20 million in infrastructure, \$500,000 in equipment and substantial financial contributions through the year 2020. The strengthening real-estate market in Palm Bay has resulted in a residential and commercial development upswing.

New and future development projects include the Southern I-95 Interchange Development, multiple new subdivisions, and more than \$30 million in new commercial development along the Bayfront. The Growth Management Department saw a significant increase in service demands from the development community with building permits issued valued at more than \$124 million dollars. The Economic Development and External Affairs Department (EDEA) was created in

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

***Gregg J. Lynk***

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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October 2015 to capitalize on Palm Bay’s strengths and opportunities, while mitigating weaknesses and threats in a competitive economic development environment. The newly formed department brought in nearly \$900,000 in revenue to the city through real estate sales, special events revenues, grant funding and an inter-local agreement for vet services.

Mr. **Lynk** attributes the successes of year one to the support and trust he has received from council, city employees and the residents of Palm Bay. “We are only moving forward from here,” Mr. **Lynk** said. “I am grateful to the team of dedicated employees that has worked alongside me to execute the vision of council. The growth and success we have seen this year has truly been a team effort. I hope everyone is ready, because year two is going to bring even more to Palm Bay, and I can’t wait for everyone to experience it with me.” The City Manager One Year Report, outlining accomplishments from each department, can be found at [www.palmbayflorida.org](http://www.palmbayflorida.org).

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

***Gregg J. Lynk***

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Florida Today  
December 29, 2015

**Palm Bay City Hall turnover claims 12 officials in 2015**

Author: Rick Neale

As 2015 draws to a close, a dozen key Palm Bay City Hall officials boasting nearly 233 years of combined experience have left their posts this year as a new management team settles in. The mass departure of key administrators occurred after the pivotal November 2014 election, when Tres Holton and Jeff Bailey narrowly won City Council seats and forged a new conservative majority with Harry Santiago.

The Palm Bay City Hall complex.

The latest to leave City Hall was Suzanne Sherman, acting deputy city manager/assistant to the city manager. After nearly a decade of service in Palm Bay, she resigned Nov. 20 and started work Dec. 3 as Satellite Beach's assistant city manager. Palm Bay City Manager **Gregg Lynk**, who started work in late April, said the majority of the dozen departees left of their own free will. "No matter what, you're not going to please everyone. Here's how I judge things: I sleep very well at night. So that tells me I'm doing the right things," **Lynk** said.

Leadership exodus strikes Palm Bay City Hall

He said he is implementing City Council's vision focusing on public safety, roads and economic development. "The employee morale is great. Staff is motivated. A lot of things are getting done. People are being heard. I don't have the answers to everything. I want people's input — and that speaks volumes about the administration," he said. "You're always going to have naysayers. And here's what I say to the naysayers: Just judge us by our results," he said. Other Space Coast governments have hired some of Palm Bay's departed administrators. Former city manager Sue Hann — who resigned in April, days before a City Council discussion on her employment contract — is director of planning and project management for Brevard Public Schools.

Chad Shoultz (deputy city manager) now works at West Melbourne City Hall as deputy city manager/engineering director. Edyie McCall (business development administrator) is now the city of Titusville's economic development director, and Tim Ford (Bayfront Community Redevelopment Agency administrator) is Titusville's redevelopment planner. Yvonne Martinez (community information coordinator) now works as the Cocoa Police Department's public information officer. Palm Bay City Manager **Gregg Lynk** will be the subject of a special Palm Bay City Council meeting, after Mayor William Capote wrote a letter, seeking his resignation. Elia Twigg, public works director, was placed on paid administrative leave in May and offered a separation agreement, which she declined. She was fired in late August. The following month, she was hired as senior project engineer/local agency manager with Target Engineering Group, a Coral Gables-based firm specializing in road and bridge construction projects.

Mary Greene expressed alarm over the City Hall exodus. "It kind of scares me, and it's not even necessarily as the Brevard Democratic Party chair. This kind of scares me as a citizen. They



**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches*****Gregg J. Lynk****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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definitely said they were going to take the city in a different direction while they were running for office — and they did. Whether that will end up being a good thing or a bad thing remains to be seen," Greene said. Greene's husband, Ken, served on City Council from 2002-05 and 2010-14. He lost his Seat 5 race against Bailey, who won 50.2 percent of the vote. Mary Greene said Palm Bay city workers still talk to Ken, and they are afraid to speak out publicly for fear of losing their jobs. However, Ron Clare, human resources director, offered a different view. Doug Muldoon, police chief, resigned effective Jan. 23 (employed with the city for 38 years, five months). "I think that the general mood of the city is better. Naturally, some folks would like to have bigger raises faster because they feel that they've given stuff up for years, and things are better so we should make everything right. Well, obviously you can't. But this administration is doing everything it can to bring all of the infrastructure-type items up to speed, including police cars, fire engines, all of those kinds of things," Clare said. "It's awfully tough for a city to recover (from) the economic downfall that we've had," he said.

**Lynk** said he does not dwell on the past. As recent accomplishments, he cited a series of right-of-way agreements and impact-fee credits negotiated with developers to help set the stage for construction of the St. Johns Heritage Parkway near the future Interstate 95 interchange near Micco Road. Interchange construction is scheduled to start in summer, and Palm Bay leaders hope the new roadway will lead to development of thousands of acres as the long-discussed Emerald City community. In Palm Bay, **Lynk** noted that the unemployment rate going down, household income is increasing, the crime rate is dropping, and residential and commercial building permits are on the rise. "These are all tremendous things that should be shared," **Lynk** said. He predicted that "2016 is going to be an exciting year for Palm Bay."

**City Hall shake-up**

A dozen key Palm Bay officials have left their posts this year. In chronological order:

- Doug Muldoon, police chief, resigned effective Jan. 23 (employed with the city for 38 years, five months)
- Edyie McCall, business development administrator, resigned effective Feb. 27 (employed for four years, four months)
- Alice Passmore, city clerk, terminated by City Council on April 14 (employed for 42 years, two months)
- Sue Hann, city manager, resigned effective April 15 (employed for 17 years, four months)
- Tim Ford, Bayfront Community Redevelopment Agency administrator, resigned effective June 1 (employed for 32 years, nine months)
  
- Chad Shoultz, deputy city manager, resigned effective June 12 (employed for 16 years, five months)
- Heidi Lapin, parks and recreation director, resigned effective June 12 (employed for three years, 11 months)
- Bill Pehaim, housing and neighborhood development services specialist, resigned effective June 27 (employed for 16 years, nine months)
- Dave Watkins, growth management director, retired effective Aug. 7 (employed for 30 years, two months)

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

***Gregg J. Lynk***

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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- Elia Twigg, public works director, terminated on Aug. 28 (employed for 10 years, one month)
- Yvonne Martinez, community information coordinator, resigned effective Sept. 16 (employed for 10 years, seven months)
- Suzanne Sherman, acting deputy city manager/assistant to the city manager, resigned effective Nov. 20 (employed for nine years, 10 months)

Source: Palm Bay Human Resources

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

***Gregg J. Lynk***

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Hometown News: Palm Bay (FL)

August 14, 2015

**City, county discuss possible park changes**

Author: Tony Judnich

In the new budget year, the city might take over management of Palm Bay Regional Park and other recreation facilities that are currently run or co-managed by Brevard County. Details on the possible changes, including their effect on park personnel, are far from being solidified however, City Manager **Gregg Lynk** said Aug. 7. “The county is asking us to help do some things,” he said. “There are a lot of negotiations going on, but it would be a disservice to say now what will happen. We’re having preliminary discussions, but nothing has been worked out yet.”

The 2016 budget year starts Oct. 1. In a letter attached to Palm Bay’s proposed fiscal 2016 budget and addressed to the City Council, Mr. **Lynk** wrote that the city is “anticipating the addition of Palm Bay Regional Park and other recreational amenities to be transferred from the county to the city. (Operational) funding from the county is required to fund the new additions prior to the actual transition.” Mr. **Lynk** also wrote that the changes are not proposed in the new budget, but “will be forthcoming in fiscal year 2016 as the specifics of the transitions are worked out with county officials. We are and will continue to assess the current organizational staffing to improve efficiencies within the city.”

‘We’d love to have them’

The 200-acre Palm Bay Regional Park, 1951 Malabar Road N.W., includes the 18,000-square-foot Ted Whitlock Community Center, fishing lakes, various athletic fields, basketball and volleyball courts and a dog park. Besides running the regional park, the county helps manage the Palm Bay Aquatic Center, 420 Community College Parkway S.E. The center, which is on the Palm Bay campus of Eastern Florida State College, is managed via a partnership involving the city, the county and the college. In addition, the building that houses the Greater Palm Bay Senior Center, 1275 Culver Drive N.E., is leased from the county, according to information from the center. It costs roughly \$1 million a year to operate the Palm Bay Regional Park and the aquatic and senior centers, Venetta Valdengo, an assistant county manager who oversees the county Parks and Recreation Department, said Aug. 7.

When asked whether the aquatic and senior centers are among the facilities that are part of the city/county talks, Mr. **Lynk** said, “If they’re in Palm Bay, we’d love to have them” under city management. “We have a great parks-and-rec guy (in city Parks and Recreation Department Director Fred Poppe) and a good facilities department,” he said. “We’re hoping these (possible changes) will be mutually beneficial” to the city and county. Ms. Valdengo said county and Palm Bay officials have already discussed the possible park changes several times. The negotiations have included discussions about the city’s potential use of county voter-approved park referendum money to support the transitions, she said. “One of our greatest challenges is having sufficient funding to maintain the parks that we have,” Ms. Valdengo said about the county.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

***Gregg J. Lynk***

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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“One of the ways to accomplish that would be to decrease the number of parks we have under our control.”

Palm Bay, in turn, would benefit by having control over the parks in question, such as issues regarding their potential expansion, she said. In the past, the County Commission has approved similar management transitions for recreational areas and facilities in other cities, such as Satellite Beach and Melbourne, Ms. Valdengo said. Now, in addition to Palm Bay officials, the county has been talking with Cape Canaveral, Cocoa Beach and Indian River officials about transferring the management of county-run parks in those municipalities, she said.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

***Gregg J. Lynk***

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Hometown News: Palm Bay (FL)

August 7, 2015

**Council focuses on budget, roadwork**

Author: Tony Judnich

City residents have plenty of opportunities to give their input on Palm Bay’s proposed \$60.7 million fiscal 2016 budget. Fiscal 2016 starts Oct. 1. The proposed budget includes \$4.5 million that might be set aside for road improvements, which have been requested by many Palm Bay residents for years. The \$4.5 million figure represents an almost 600 percent year-over-year increase for road funding, City Manager **Gregg Lynk** said in a July 24 public announcement. Mr. **Lynk**, whose first day on the job was in late April, has noted that Palm Bay has more than 500 miles of roads that need rebuilding.

The city’s Road Advisory Board was scheduled to give its latest roadwork recommendations to the City Council on Aug. 6. The council plans to review the overall, proposed fiscal 2016 budget at workshops scheduled for 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Aug. 11 and Thursday, Aug. 27. Then, the council plans to vote on whether to give initial approval to the budget during its first budget hearing at 6:30 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 10. The second and final budget hearing, when the council will vote on whether to adopt the proposed budget — as well as a possible lower millage rate — is scheduled for 6:30 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 24.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

***Gregg J. Lynk***

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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[CB&A Note: Only the information relevant to **Gregg Lynk** is listed below.]

Hometown News: Palm Bay (FL)

May 1, 2015

**Council approves contract with new city manager**

Author: Tony Judnich

New City Manager **Gregg Lynk** will earn a starting annual salary of \$136,073.

In a 4-1 vote, the City Council approved that salary figure while finalizing an employment contract with Mr. **Lynk** at a special meeting on April 21. He was named city manager on April 14. Councilwoman Michele Paccione, who earlier was the only council member to not choose Mr. **Lynk** as one of her top two manager picks, cast the lone “nay” vote April 21 on his contract.

Mrs. Paccione told Mr. **Lynk**, who was sitting in the audience in the Council Chambers, that she meant “no disrespect” for not voting for him as city manager. She said she and other Palm Bay residents had wanted someone with government experience. Councilman Tres Holton, who earlier had made Mr. **Lynk** his second choice as manager, said at the April 21 meeting that both Abraham Lincoln and Ronald Reagan started out with no government experience but became great leaders. “It’s time to think outside the box,” Mr. Holton said. “I’m excited about the future, and I say, ‘Let’s get started.’”

Mr. **Lynk’s** contract includes a severance clause provision that requires the city to pay him 10 weeks of compensation if he is terminated without cause, or because of general dissatisfaction with his job performance. The clause is prohibited if he is fired because of misconduct. While Mr. **Lynk** had sought 20 weeks of compensation as part of the clause, Councilman Jeff Bailey made a motion to make it 10 weeks, with the possibility of increasing it to 20 after Mr. **Lynk’s** initial 12-month review. Mayor William Capote, Deputy Mayor Harry Santiago Jr. and Mr. Holton agreed with Mr. Bailey on this arrangement.

As city manager, Mr. **Lynk** also will be provided with a 2015 Ford Explorer, which he can use for city business and private purposes. The vehicle is valued at a little more than \$26,000. Mrs. Paccione wondered if the city had a slightly older automobile in its vehicle fleet for Mr. **Lynk**, who lives in Palm Bay. But other council members said he should be behind the wheel of the 2015 model while representing the city both locally and in other parts of the state. This mid-size utility vehicle also is the right choice, Mr. Holton said, because, “It’s no secret that we have a lot of potholes in the city.”

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

***Gregg J. Lynk***

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Hometown News: Palm Bay (FL)

April 24, 2015

**New city manager prepares to roll up his sleeves**

Author: Tony Judnich

**Gregg Lynk** seems to relish the full plate of city business before him. Planning for the new city budget, examining pension and infrastructure issues, and filling key employee positions are some of the tasks the City Council wants him to tackle in the upcoming months. Mr. **Lynk**, whose professional resume dates back to 1985, mostly in the private sector, was named Palm Bay's new city manager on April 14. That's when the council held a special meeting to cast ballots for its top managerial choices among seven finalists for the job. A total of 79 applicants had sought the position.

Mr. **Lynk**, 53, received the most votes for the position. He was the first choice of Mayor William Capote and the second choice of Deputy Mayor Harry Santiago Jr., Councilman Jeff Bailey and Councilman Tres Holton. "I see he has a lot of potential," Mr. Capote said after Mr. **Lynk** was chosen. Mr. **Lynk** received hearty congratulations from the council and various city employees and residents. "This is an exciting time," Palm Bay resident Tom Roberts, who often attends council meetings, told him. "There's a lot to be done here," Mr. **Lynk** replied. As Mr. **Lynk** comes aboard, Interim City Manager Chad Shoultz will return to his former role as deputy city manager, Mr. Capote said.

The Daytona Beach Shores-based consulting firm of Colin Baenziger & Associates led the manager search. After Mr. **Lynk** was chosen, Dave Collier, the firm's senior vice president, said he would meet soon with Mr. **Lynk** and city staff to negotiate a proposed salary arrangement. That would later go before the council for its approval.

Mr. **Lynk** and the other six finalists had met informally with council members and city residents on April 12 at the Holiday Inn Express on Malabar Road. The finalists were then interviewed by the council at a special public meeting April 13 at City Hall. At the latter session, Mr. **Lynk** told the council, "I have high expectations for (city departments') management, and for myself."

During that meeting, Mr. Capote asked him about his economic-development vision for Palm Bay. "We need to stop the bleeding," Mr. **Lynk** said. "Why are businesses leaving? Why do we have vacant strip malls?" Among other suggestions, he said the city should look at drawing both local and international businesses, and addressing zoning issues to make Palm Bay more attractive to businesses.

**Background**

Mr. **Lynk** said he moved to Palm Bay from New Jersey last December, and that he had wanted to live in Palm Bay ever since he visited it while on a business trip in 2010. According to his resume, his most recent position was as the director of business development for Correctional Healthcare Companies of Greenwood Village, Colorado, from 2012-14. According to his

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

***Gregg J. Lynk***

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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resume, he was recruited by this “\$300 million firm to enhance public image and name recognition with the business community through new business development (counseling/drug treatment centers and medical services for prison inmates), community outreach and aggressive networking.”

From 2010-11, Mr. **Lynk** served as operations manager for the Atlantic City Rescue Mission in Atlantic City, New Jersey. The mission had a \$16 million annual budget, and Mr. **Lynk** evaluated “ongoing service deliverables and identified areas for improvement for operations and budget,” he said in his resume.

His employment history also includes having served as the East Coast director of operations and development for BI Inc., a \$500 million company in Elizabeth, New Jersey, from 1998-2009. There, his duties included creating an annual budget of \$30 million, designing business development strategies and overseeing lobbying efforts, according to his resume.

**Local flavor**

Mr. **Lynk** was one of several local candidate finalists for the Palm Bay job who did “not fit the traditional mold,” as requested by some members of the council, according to a March 30 memo from Baenziger & Associates. The other local candidate finalists were Vicki Northrup, president and CEO of the Greater Palm Bay Chamber of Commerce, and Armando Martinez, a Palm Bay resident and former city manager and director of public safety of Bunnell. Mr. Martinez was the second choice of Mr. Capote and Councilwoman Michele Paccione.

After Mr. **Lynk** was chosen, Mr. Capote talked more about his top choice. “Some people say some of these other “job applicants” have qualifications through the roof,” the mayor said. “But I’m looking for a game-changer,” without spending a fortune on the manager’s salary. “You want (someone as powerful as four-time Super Bowl-winning New England Patriots Coach Bill) Belichick, but we’ll take a risk on (Mr. **Lynk**) and see what we can do,” Mr. Capote said.

City resident Bill Battin, a regular attendee of the council meetings, said he will hold off on making judgments of the new city manager “until I see how things work out within the city.”

**Other shoes to fill**

The already tall order of challenges that face Mr. **Lynk** as city manager grew even higher at the council’s April 14 regular meeting that followed his selection. At the regular session, the council voted 3-2 to fire longtime City Clerk Alice Passmore without cause. She began working for the city on Jan. 15, 1973, according to the city Human Resources Department.

After he talked at length about recent emailed exchanges between her and City Attorney Andrew Lannon regarding the two charter officers’ differing views on the state’s Sunshine Law, in relation to city advisory boards, Mr. Bailey made a motion of no-confidence against Ms. Passmore. Mr. Lannon, who usually sits next to Ms. Passmore at the council meetings, did not attend the April 14 session. He began working for the city on Nov. 3, 2008. Mr. Santiago seconded the motion, and Mr. Holton also voted for it. Mr. Capote and Mrs. Paccione voted



**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

***Gregg J. Lynk***

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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“nay.” “She’s been our clerk for a long time. She’s only giving an opinion on a city issue,” Mrs. Paccione said. “To degrade Alice . . . I’m shocked and ashamed at the way you’re treating Alice. Her opinion matters as much to me as our attorney’s.” Mr. Capote said, “In my opinion, there is a professional way of doing things and an unprofessional way of doing things. You’re given a leadership position (such as being elected to the council), you embrace it. This is coming full circle, and I’m not very happy right now.” Ms. Passmore should have been given the opportunity to address the issue privately, Mr. Capote added.

Mr. Santiago said although Ms. Passmore has served the city for many years, her “years of service are not in question.” Rather, the constant stepping on one charter officer’s toes by another is the issue, he said. “This head-butting has to stop,” he said of Ms. Passmore’s and Mr. Lannon’s differences. Deputy City Clerk Terese Jones will serve as interim clerk, council members said.

Last December, former City Manager Sue Hann resigned from her position after she learned that most of the council members no longer supported her. On Dec. 4, the council voted 4-0 to approve contract settlement terms with Ms. Hann. Mrs. Paccione did not attend that meeting. Ms. Hann now serves as the director of planning and project management at Brevard Public Schools. Former Palm Bay Police Chief Doug Muldoon retired from his post on Jan. 23. Former Deputy Chief Mark Renkens is serving as interim chief. Other recent city personnel changes include the resignation of Parks and Recreation Director Heidi Lapin.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

*Gregg J. Lynk*

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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<http://www.njaca.org/documents/NJACAnewsletterSummer-Fall07.pdf>

The Corrections Journal for NJ-ACA  
Summer/Fall 2007

**BI and New Jersey: Retain Common Goal of Enhanced Public Safety Through Innovative Offender Supervision**

Stephen Owens, 35, says his addiction to drugs consumed his life and became the underlying reason for his criminal convictions, which landed him in several New Jersey prisons—from Rahway to Riverfront to Yardville—earlier in his life. After spending nine years behind bars for robbery, Mr. Owens was referred by the New Jersey State Parole Board to the Elizabeth Day Reporting Center (DRC), an innovative program opened in 1998 and operated by BI Incorporated, a company that works with more than 1,000 correctional agencies nationwide and many in New Jersey, including the New Jersey Judiciary, Juvenile Justice Commission, Probation Services and the Parole Board.

Mr. Owens says he went into the program with his eyes closed and his mind already made up. Yet, after immersion into the program, he dropped his guard, opened up and started to learn about himself. Mr. Owens spent 120 days going to the BI Elizabeth DRC before graduating from the program in 2005. He has stayed busy since, earned his Commercial Drivers' License and maintained a job driving trucks for an occupational center. BI staff was instrumental in helping Mr. Owens make the connection with the state Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services to get this driving instruction. He has stayed free and clean from drugs since his release—a top goal of New Jersey public safety officials.

As New Jersey continues to move toward a public safety and correctional system that demands accountability from offenders but also keeps an eye toward successfully transitioning them back into communities, it sometimes works closely with community-based providers such as BI Incorporated to achieve its goals. BI Incorporated has worked with probation, pretrial, and parole agencies at the federal, state, and local level since 1985. Few states have integrated the alternatives to detention that BI provides—from electronic monitoring equipment and program support to intensive reentry programs for juvenile and adult offenders transitioning back to community life—better than New Jersey. Realizing its prisons and local jails were overcrowded, New Jersey officials made it a goal to reduce recidivism so that former prisoners, such as Mr. Owens, could become contributors to their local communities versus individuals who commit repeat offenses, generate new victims, and further stretch a tight state budget.

Mr. Peter Barnes, recently appointed chairman of the State Parole Board, vowed to continue to target recidivism rates when he took office in March for retired Judge John D'Amico, a strong proponent of the DRC system. "Our goal is the successful reentry of ex-offenders back into society. Under my Chairmanship, the Parole Board will focus on the main obstacles that lead ex-offenders to turn to crime: Lack of employment opportunities; lack of education and job skills; lack of strong family connections; drug addiction; and mental illness," said Mr. Barnes.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches*****Gregg J. Lynk****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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**Electronic Supervision Drives Compliance to Supervision Orders**

BI supports correctional agencies in New Jersey with a variety of products and services. First, BI provides electronic supervision technologies to monitor about 1,000 adult and juvenile offenders daily in New Jersey communities with many technologies, including systems that use Global Positioning System (GPS) tracking technology, traditional Electronic Monitoring systems, in-home systems that monitor for offender sobriety, and more. BI's technology helps closely monitor offenders in the community for adherence to court- and agency-ordered schedules, curfews, and patterns of behavior. In particular, these systems ensure offenders are where they are supposed to be at certain times or additional sanctions can be applied.

**Day Reporting Expanded in NJ**

Secondly, BI offers Day Reporting programs. BI helped the state open the Elizabeth DRC—the one that Mr. Owens attended—for high-risk parolees who were likely to fail conditions of parole and return to prison at high expense to Garden State taxpayers. Since opening in 1998, more than 3,500 offenders have worked their way through Elizabeth's intensive treatment and training program. In fact, the Elizabeth DRC was so well received that it prompted New Jersey to partner with BI to open three additional Day Reporting Centers in Plainfield, Atlantic City, and Perth Amboy in recent years. Each of these BI DRCs provides supervision, treatment and training programs for adults and juveniles. The Centers are typically in close proximity to the state's parole offices (in Elizabeth the DRC is in the same building as Parole), allowing for close collaboration and coordination of services.

The community-based DRCs have been successful in stabilizing parolees released to community supervision, helping them deal with addictions and obtaining and maintaining employment. Today, more than 200 individuals go to a BI operated DRC daily in New Jersey. "Our DRCs deliver a balanced program that stresses intensive supervision, accountable treatment, and a strong emphasis on connecting parolees with long-term resources in the community, including employers and educational institutions, so that these individuals live crime-free lives," says John Thurston, BI's VP of Reentry and Field Services.

**Changing Behavior, Developing Skills**

While highly structured, each BI DRC tailors its community integration efforts to match local needs. For example, in Atlantic City BI teamed up with Local 54, a powerful 17,000-member service worker union, to develop an intensive chef training program—right in the Atlantic City DRC office. Parolees who completed the culinary training are finding employment in some of Atlantic City's best restaurants and casinos. In Elizabeth, the Day Reporting Center developed a close relationship with Ford Motor Co. for an automotive certification program, and more recently the office is working with a local community college to begin a Next Step college curriculum for ex-offenders.

The cooking program, connection with the automotive program, and collaboration with the local community college are only one component of the DRC programming for the adult parolees and juvenile offenders. Specifically, each BI DRC follows a three-phase approach to working with clients: supervision is most intense in the first several weeks; treatment and training is

### Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

*Gregg J. Lynk*

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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maximized during the central portion of the program; and then the client is prepared for more independent status as they prepare for transition to traditional parole status. Clients participate in the program from several months up to a year, with progress performance based. Many clients return after they complete the DRC programming to consult with counselors or offer words of encouragement to new participants. “When you’re doing negative things, you can’t really see the light on the other side of the tunnel. Today, I’m like a shining light,” says Mr. Owens proudly. Each BI DRC demands daily check-ins and uses sophisticated electronic compliance technologies (as needed), advanced drug testing techniques, computerized data collection and intensive case management. The DRCs in New Jersey are open six days a week and participants attend classes such as:

- Substance abuse education and treatment
- Adult basic education and GED preparation
- Life Skills classes
- Cognitive skill training
- Parenting and family classes
- Anger management
- Employment skills building and career development counseling
- Aftercare

BI’s offender classes and approach follows research that finds cognitive behavioral programs get the best results. BI’s DRC model is based on evidence-based practices to target client risks and needs. For example, the cognitive skill training, a core component of the DRC program, includes Moral Reconciliation Therapy, developed by Dr. Gregory Little and Dr. Ken Robinson. MRT targets observable characteristics related to criminal offending and aims to alter how offenders think, how they make judgments and decisions about right and wrong, and to promote actions and behaviors focused on changing negative relationships. Many of the graduates of the DRC remark this cognitive skills training has had a strong impact on their lives. Through the BI DRC classes, the goals of the program include:

- ⇒ Reducing recidivism
- ⇒ Targeting 100 percent employment or full-time school enrollment upon program completion
- ⇒ Generating significant savings for taxpayers through lower incarceration costs
- ⇒ Altering the parolees’ attitudes and behavior through treatment and training

“BI’s goal is to support busy probation and parole offices with programs for parolees who need extra attention. We want participants to remain crime-free, find and keep jobs, stay sober and avoid drug use. These outcomes produce big benefits to the community and the individual,” said BI’s **Gregg Lynk**, BI’s New Jersey State Director.

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nj.gov

January 5, 2006

**Culinary Program Holds Graduation**

The fourth class of culinary students graduated today from a collaborative vocational program between the New Jersey Juvenile Justice Commission (JJC), the New Jersey State Parole Board, Respond, Inc., and Union Local 54. The graduates were joined by community members; Howard L. Beyer, Executive Director, JJC; Robert McDevitt, President, Local 54; Wilbert Mitchell, Executive Director, Respond Inc., and **Gregg Lynk**, State Director, Behavioral Interventions, to celebrate the milestone. The Respond Culinary Program is an innovative culinary course for residents of the JJC's Camden and Campus Residential Community Homes located in the City of Camden and Blackwood respectively, and juvenile and adult parolees at a day reporting center in Atlantic City, which is operated by Behavioral Interventions, Inc. The program provides a myriad of culinary-based vocational skills to prepare participants for jobs in the restaurant industry.

"The JJC is dedicated to realizing the individual potential of young people and working to change their futures," said Howard L. Beyer, Executive Director, Juvenile Justice Commission. "The JJC is stepping up its efforts to help juveniles transition successfully back into their communities. By providing them with career skills, we can help them overcome the challenges they face once they leave the structure of the JJC. The Respond Culinary Program not only provides excellent career opportunities, but also helps young people establish relationships in their communities. This inter-agency and public/private collaboration is yet another example of combining all available resources to help enact positive change in the lives of New Jersey's troubled youth and its communities."

The culinary program is a realistic, work-based learning experience. The intense 16-week course allows the participants to experience everyday situations such as punching a time clock, and the inspection of their uniforms by a Chef Instructor, in addition to sanitary practices and food preparation. "The partnership between the New Jersey Juvenile Justice Commission, the State Parole Board, Local 54 and Respond, Inc. has brought creativity in programming and a local neighborhood-based capacity to the training of selected students. Respond is looking forward to the expansion of the program at the present site and at a larger facility that is currently under renovations. For more than 38 years, Respond has worked with local communities to determine needs and to provide exceptional services to children, youth, adults and families. This partnership highlights what Respond is about," said Wilbert Mitchell, Executive Director of Respond, Inc.

Local 54 provides the curriculum and funding for this innovative program, which is managed by a JJC Youth Transition Coordinator, who was an executive in the food industry prior to joining the JJC. In addition to classroom and hands-on kitchen exercises, the curriculum includes field trips to the Taj Mahal's main kitchen and Borgata's Pastry Shop located in Atlantic City, the Hilton Hotel's banquet hall in Cherry Hill, and the Sysco Food Show in Philadelphia, allowing

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

***Gregg J. Lynk***

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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students to observe the food industry first hand. Local 54 was awarded a New Jersey Department of Labor Youth Transition to Work (YTTW) grant in 2003. One prerequisite of this grant project was to develop partnership with schools, post-secondary institutions, community-based organizations, and employers to provide apprenticeship opportunities to New Jersey's youth.

"This project is a perfect example of partnership at work. Aside from the conventional training, this program gives the participants confidence in themselves and instills a work ethic, which many have never experienced. This program works together to provide a comprehensive background in the hospitality industry as well as life skills," said Robert McDevitt, President, Local 54. "This marriage is one of mutual respect and admiration which includes a sense of urgency to see these young adults succeed and thrive. Local 54, the JJC, the Parole Board, and Respond, Inc., an admirable resource and source of support to the City of Camden, could not provide these opportunities without one another. This relationship should be an example to other organizations that partnerships do work," continued McDevitt.

The students have worked very hard to achieve the skill level necessary to complete the program. The JJC, with the help of its partners in the community, will assist JJC youth who complete this program locate employment in the food services industry.

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Research Compiled by:      Cara Slade and Tammie Browder  
   Colin Baenziger & Associates

COLIN BAENZIGER  ASSOCIATES

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EXECUTIVE RECRUITING

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*Section 11*

*David “Dave” J. Niemeyer*

*Lake Worth Beach City Manager  
Candidate Report*

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*Cover Letter and Resume*

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June 18, 2021

Colin Baenziger  
Rick Thomas  
Colin Baenziger and Associates

Dear Mr. Baenziger and Thomas:

I was excited to hear of the opening in Lake Worth Beach for the position of City Manager. If you are interested in a seasoned, energetic, collaborative, and results oriented administrator, you have found him in me.

Enclosed please find my resume. I visit the area every year and I have long envisioned moving there. Lake Worth's diversity and small town character make this an appealing destination for me. Here are some of my career accomplishments from my resume that make me a solid candidate for the position:

- Significant success managing tight budgets and reducing expenses, including reducing the personnel budget by 15% in Oak Brook while maintaining services through reorganization and reprioritization and reorganizing several village departments in Tinley Park to deal with the negative revenue effects from COVID-19.
- Successfully implemented results orientated strategic plans that changed the way the organizations I managed operated.
- Significant experience in economic development, including turning a city owned vacant industrial park into one that was nearly full, overseeing creation of a new downtown, and successfully negotiating a number of development agreements with new retailers, hotels, office and industrial users through complex incentive agreements.
- Successfully negotiated several collective bargaining agreements for police, fire and public safety.
- Significant experience in disaster management, including managing a major flood event in Des Plaines.
- Developed several public-private partnerships including an economic development partnership in Oak Brook with the Chamber of Commerce, and outsourcing municipal services such as a banquet facility, ambulance services, convention center management and landscape services.
- Significant experience in succession planning, including creating a training academy for mid level managers, developing cross functional teams using future leaders to work on interdepartmental problems, and developing a mentorship program.
- Developed high performance employee teams that improved accountability and customer service.
- Successfully applied for over \$5 million in grants over my career, including water improvements, flooding reductions, parking improvements, streetscape improvements, and recycling programs.
- Created customer service training programs and resident surveys and comment cards to measure customer satisfaction.

## **Section 11**

- Improved resident communication through development of new social media channels, resident weekly reports, cable shows and email newsletters.
- Partnered with other local governments including sharing of jobs, bidding of projects, electric aggregation, community marketing, grant applications, and lobbying.
- Actively involved in communities I have managed, included being involved with local service clubs such as Rotary and the Jaycees. Actively involved with local Chambers and received business advocate award from Oak Brook Chamber.

I would be honored to join the Lake Worth organization, and I believe I can add significant value to the city. Please let me know if you need any further information. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

David Niemeyer

# **David J. Niemeyer**

7759 Bristol Park Drive  
Tinley Park, IL 60477  
224-260-1979  
[djniem@yahoo.com](mailto:djniem@yahoo.com)

## **EXPERIENCE Village Manager, Village of Tinley Park**

### **June 2014 to present**

- Oversee day to day operations of leading community of 57,000 in southwest suburbs.
- Developed plan to reduce village spending by more than \$7 million in operating expenditures due to COVID, including some permanent cuts with little effect on day to day services.
- Reorganized community development and engineering services saving several thousand dollars annually.
- Oversaw efforts to develop new citizen communication outreach program that included development of an annual report, a triennial citizen survey, and new social media tools.
- Created new pay plan/evaluation system with increased focus on merit.
- Negotiated agreement with village owned convention center developer that brought in a developer who was able to add more convention shows up until COVID.
- Overhauled village's hiring system that increased the number of qualified candidates and hiring turnaround time by eliminating unnecessary processes, removing restrictions that discouraged candidates from applying, and changing the hiring authority for certain positions.
- Oversaw development of three new TIFs in the village that helped revitalize the downtown, redevelop an aging shopping center, and provide new infrastructure to service the downtown.
- Led efforts to create a branding plan for the village focusing on music and development of a downtown plaza with the goal of attracting more business and residential development.
- Working with state of Illinois and various village officials to plan redevelopment of 280 acre former mental health center site.

### **Village Manager, Village of Oak Brook, IL**

#### **July 2007-June 2014**

- Oversaw 150 FTE's and \$45 million budget in one of Chicago's most prestigious suburbs with 7800 residents and a large daytime population who work, shop or stay in the community.
- In response to 2008 Great Recession, completed major reorganization of staff that reduced the work force by 15%, make some full time positions part-time, and eliminated three department head positions without significant changes to front line services. Also outsourced use of Bath and Tennis Club restaurant to private caterers and joined a centralized emergency dispatch agency which saved the village significant costs.
- Negotiated complex agreement for a new traffic signal that kept Costco in the community and involved several meetings with IDOT officials including the Secretary of Transportation.
- Worked with other village officials to create village's first "Taste of Oak Brook" festival that now attracts about 25,000 people per year and hired operator to bring back the village's famous polo leagues.
- Established new partnerships with the Oak Brook Park District and school district that included equipment sharing, personnel sharing, joint purchasing, discounts at the park district

## **Section 11**

fitness center for new businesses, and joint discounts to residents who are members of the park district facility and village's bath and tennis club.

- Led village's efforts in developing one of the Chicago areas first electric aggregation program for its residents and businesses, saving them about \$2 million per year.
- Worked with a committee on implementation of a 20 year Commercial Revitalization Plan that included an update of the village's sign ordinance and streamlining of development processes.
- Helped bring several grants to the village including commercial beautification grants.
- Partnered with Chamber on proactive economic development program to attract and retain new businesses that brought several new large office users to the community, and received their "Business Advocate of the Year Award".
- Negotiated lease agreement with local historical society for their first facility in the former home of the village's library.
- Implemented revisions in management performance evaluation system.
- Developed comprehensive new ethics ordinance.
- Created improved resident communication program, including enhanced outreach to Homeowners Association Presidents, improved newsletter and website, and regular outreach to residents by automated phone calls on important village events.

### **City Manager, City of Des Plaines, IL**

#### **July 2003-May 2007**

- Managed diverse, vibrant, redeveloping community of 58,000 adjoining O'Hare Airport with 450 FTE's and \$125 million annual budget.
- Development and planning accomplishments:
  - Supervised \$56 million downtown redevelopment project that included village acquisition of 22 parcels and construction of 150,000 square feet of office, retail and condos.
  - Oversaw establishment of 70 acre TIF.
  - Negotiated a number of complex agreements for hotel developments, sale of an old library to a residential developer, and transfer of land to the City of Chicago for airport expansion.
  - Instituted community's first strategic planning process and update of its comprehensive plan.
  - Oversaw plan to develop new public safety facilities.
- Increased confidence in manager's office through improved communication that was partially responsible for a successful referendum changing the government to a council/manager form.
- Improved accountability through reorganization of manager's office and community development department.
- Restored financial stability of the community and increased some city services without major property tax increases.
- Oversaw efforts of major flood event in community in spring 2004.
- Helped acquire over \$1 million in grants to reduce flooding in community.

### **Village Manager, Village of Homewood, IL**

#### **March 1998-July 2003**

- Managed prestigious, mature community of 20,000 with 180 FTE's and \$30 million annual budget.
- Oversaw \$2 million reconstruction of village hall, including space needs study.
- Created employee teams for health insurance, technology, and safety that implemented ideas that improved efficiency and reduced costs.
- Recruited five major businesses to village owned industrial park as well as several "big-box" retail stores through TIF and other incentives.
- Organized an external and internal government marketing program involving funding and coordination with neighboring community and local school and park districts that retained and attracted new residents.
- Developed five year strategic plan.

## **Section 11**

- Created unique employee appreciation program recognizing employee's accomplishments in areas such as teamwork, project management, as well as "on the spot" awards.
- Negotiated several union contracts and worked with unions to significantly reduce health insurance premium increases.

### **Village Manager, Village of Richton Park, IL**

**April 1993-March 1998**

- Managed diverse, growth village of 13,000 in Chicago south suburbs with 100 FTE's and \$14 million annual budget.
- Significantly improved fund balances through reorganization and privatization of some services and no significant tax increases.
- Oversaw successful referendum to increase police staffing and salaries.
- Negotiated contract with public works union that included a merit pay component.
- Oversaw merger of public works and water departments and community development and planning departments that reduced costs and improved customer service.
- Instituted the organization's first employee awards and recognition program.
- Developed programs to receive more feedback from residents, including surveys, comment cards, and neighborhood meetings.
- Developed several marketing and development tools that increased economic development activity, including new industrial and retail businesses.

### **Village Administrator, Village of Orland Hills, IL**

**August 1988-April 1993**

- First administrator for rapid growth village of 7,000 with 40 FTE's and \$6 million annual budget.
- Implemented village's first TIF and negotiated retail redevelopment agreements that created \$1 million in new tax revenue for village.
- Reduced village liability insurance premiums by 75%.
- Negotiated free land for and oversaw planning of a \$1.5 million village hall.
- Developed village's first budget and reporting system.
- Made significant changes and upgrades to village newsletter.

### **City Administrator/Assistant to the Mayor, City of Harvard, IL**

**March 1986-August 1988**

- First administrator for rural community of 5,000 with 40 FTE's and \$4 million annual budget. Promoted after short tenure as assistant to the mayor.
- Acquired over \$800,000 from four grant programs that brought two businesses to town, improved the city's water system, and built a commuter lot.
- Attracted new businesses to a previously stagnant community that created 300 new jobs and brought \$200,000 in annual tax revenue to the village.
- Created centralized purchasing system.

### **Part-time Analyst- Cook County Board of Tax Appeals**

**May 1985-March 1986**

- Developed analysis of Cook County business tax incentive plan.
- Reviewed tax appeals.
- Worked on special projects.

### **Internship-Village of Buffalo Grove Public Works Department**

**September 1983-May 1985**

- Developed job costing system.
- Reviewed public works budgets.
- Developed quality circles to review various public works activities.

## **Section 11**

**EDUCATION:** Master's in Public Administration, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL 1985  
Bachelor of Science in Political Science, Northern Illinois University, 1983  
Minors: International Relations, Journalism  
ICMA Credentialed Manager and member of ICMA International Committee

**ACTIVITIES:** Professional: Member of ICMA, ILCMA, Metro Managers(past president)  
Personal: Enjoying biking, traveling.

**Section 11**



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*Candidate Introduction*

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**DAVID NIEMEYER**

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**EDUCATION**

Master's in Public Administration, Northern Illinois University  
Bachelor of Science, Political Science, Northern Illinois University

**EXPERIENCE**

Village Manager, Village of Tinley Park, IL	2014-Present
Village Manager, Village of Oak Brook, IL	2007-2014
City Manager, City of Des Plaines, IL	2003-2007
Village Manager, Village of Homewood, IL	1998-2003
Village Manager, Village of Richton Park, IL	1993-1998
Village Administrator, Village of Orland Hills, IL	1988-1993
City Administrator, City of Harvard, IL	1986-1988

**BACKGROUND**

Tinley Park has a population of 57,000 residents. It is located 25 miles southwest of Chicago and many of our residents commute to Chicago by train. We have a diverse economy with a larger retail center and several light industrial parks in the Will County portion of our town, and several retail centers in the Cook County portion of Tinley Park. In addition, tourism is a major part of our economy, as Tinley Park is home to the largest outdoor music facility in Chicago, a regional convention center, and several hotels that support the music theater and convention center. The village is recognized as a leading community in the southwest suburbs and many communities seek our input when they are looking for innovative services and programs.

We employ 450 employees, and I directly supervise five department heads, and assistant village manager, and assistant to the village manager and an executive secretary. The general fund budget is \$60 million and the total budget is \$150 million. This year we have a large number of capital projects that has increased the budget substantially.

The three most important issues facing Tinley Park are the following:

- Redevelopment of a 280 acre state mental health facility in the heart of the town.
- Enhancing our new music brand to attract tourists and revitalize our downtown.
- Revitalizing other retail centers in the community that have been hurt by their location in Cook County and the trend towards online shopping.

**DAVID NIEMEYER**

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**GENERAL MANAGEMENT STYLE AND EXPERIENCE**

I am interested in Lake Worth Beach as I believe my experiences can bring a lot of value to the community. I have long wanted to relocate to Florida and a community like Lake Worth Beach with its diversity and great amenities perfectly fits my lifestyle. It fits into my current career path as I have successful experiences with many of the challenges Lake Worth Beach faces, including redevelopment/TIF issues, financial challenges, reassessing how it does business, improving customer service, and flooding are all issues I have dealt with throughout my career.

My management style is collaborative. I seek out both elected official and staff's opinions on critical issues and seek to hire staff that are not "yes" people. I am a broad delegator but I hold staff accountable through specific performance measures that are the result of strategic plan objectives developed by the elected officials. I consider myself a coach as well as a supervisor. I try to help my staff think through options on solving a complex problem but I don't try to solve problems for them. I encourage my staff to take calculated risks and try new things, not just do things the way they have always been done.

My staff would say that I can be a taskmaster but I am fair. They would say I am a good listener and am open to new ideas. They would say that they appreciate that I stand up for them if they are inappropriately criticized by elected officials or residents. Finally, they would say I am a good team builder by the ways that I am bring staff together to work on complex issues.

In my time at Tinley Park, I have had 4 mayors and about 15 trustees. Therefore, I have had to adapt to many different personalities and styles and I think the trustees would say I have am very adaptive. My elected officials would also say I am an ethical, creative leader who has great knowledge of all aspects of municipal government. They would say that I always give them wise counsel and follow through on their concerns and requests. They would say that I am excellent at staff development and have developed a solid senior management team that is responsive to the residents and the elected officials. They would also say that they appreciate that my staff and I are willing to try new things to move the organization forward. Finally, they would also say on a personal level that I am professional, polite, respectful, and an excellent listener.

My strengths include the fact that I am good at keeping my eye on the long term vision for my community while still addressing the day to day challenges of the community. I also particularly strong in conflict resolution, economic development, and strategic planning. I am also strong in developing creative financial solutions to save my communities money through reorganization, developing intergovernmental partnerships, outsourcing and value engineering projects.

My weaknesses include trying to do much at times and not putting the quality needed into one or 2 projects. I have improved this by setting certain benchmarks for myself and staff before new projects are taken on. There have also been times when I have recognized that there are employees who are not meeting my organization's standards, but I have been slow in getting

### **DAVID NIEMEYER**

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them on performance improvement plans or deciding whether they have a future in the organization. I have improved this by working with human resources on developing a system for troubled employees that forces supervisors to take certain action steps to improve the employee's performance or ask them to leave the organization.

Performance measurement is critical to knowing how well your organization is doing. A good performance measurement system starts with a strong strategic plan developed by the elected officials in conjunction with input from the community. Each strategic plan objective should be assigned to a specific staff person to lead with a timetable for completion and performance measurement that indicates when we know this objective will be completed. Each department should also develop performance measurements such as public safety response times, water main repairs, etc, that can be compared to like communities. The International City Management Association has a good performance measurement system that allows a municipality to use comparative performance measures with like communities.

My biggest achievement was developing a reorganization plan in the Village of Oak Brook that cut Oak Brook's personnel budget 15% but improved the organization in the long run. When I started in Oak Brook, the Great Recession was significantly affecting revenues and particularly so in Oak Brook which had no municipal property tax but relied primarily on sales tax. I combined several senior management positions, offered early retirement programs to reduce the head count, changed some positions from full time to part time positions, and outsourced some positions where the private sector could do more cost effectively. While there were some morale challenges especially when these changes were first implemented, elected officials and senior management agreed that the organization functioned better in the long run after these changes were made.

My biggest disappointment was in Tinley Park in 2016 and a proposed affordable housing development. This was an extremely controversial development which brought hundreds of residents to our meetings and the village was sued by the US Department of Justice and spent millions of dollars in legal fees to litigate the case. The staff recommended the project based on the developer meeting all of the building and zoning standards of our code. However, we did not do the necessary public relations to explain the staff's support of the project and I also later learned my community development director had worked behind the scenes with the developer to change a code section that was benefiting the project. The director left the organization as she was about to be terminated but the damage was done.

In addition, several staff members left the organization due to the heat that was focused on the village staff and the community developed a negative reputation in the Chicago media due to the perceived racial prejudice in the community towards the project. I learned that me and my staff needs to be better prepared to explain controversial projects and I need to be more actively involved to make sure my staff is properly managing controversial projects.

### **DAVID NIEMEYER**

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I have had to fire several employees. It is not something I have ever enjoyed doing but I have always handled them fairly and directly. Unless it is something like employee theft or dishonesty, my terminations have normally been preceded by poor evaluations or a performance improvement plan so the employee is not surprised by the action. In those situations it is important that the employee be treated with dignity and respect and I offer them support if they desire it.

The challenges the person facing this job will include:

- Focusing on redevelopment/TIF issues.
- Addressing the financial challenges of the community.
- Dealing with absentee ownership in the community.
- Reassessing how the organization does business.
- Addressing other issues like homelessness, opioid use and flooding.

As a manager that will be new to Florida, I will need to learn the culture and regulations of Lake Worth Beach. However, as an outsider, I believe I can bring new and fresh ideas to Lake Worth Beach. In my career I have had to develop many creative solutions to challenging organizational and redevelopment problems that I hope I can bring to Lake Worth Beach.

My first six months in Lake Worth Beach will be focused on learning about the community and the organization and developing a plan to implement the major objectives set forth by the City Council. I would set up regular meetings with the elected officials and staff. I would want to hear the aspirations of each of the elected officials and what they see as the priorities of the city manager. I would want to meet staff at their facilities and talk to them about their jobs and how the organization can help them do their job better. Also, I would want to meet key community, business and other government leaders and become active in community events and organizations. I would review Lake Worth Beach's staff and determine where strengths and weaknesses are and develop a plan to improve staff where appropriate.

In my first few months I would also reach out to the local media to try to develop a positive relationship. I have always tried to develop a fair and honest relationship with the media and tell them what I can about an issue. I also get them information about interesting things going on in the community that they can report on. There is nothing in my background that would embarrass Bradenton if it became public.

I use social media to communicate with residents about critical things happening in the community. In Tinley Park I encouraged development of our first Facebook page, and we have recently added an Instagram and Tik Tok as social media tools to inform residents of all ages. We use social media to give regular updates by elected officials and me, community events, development updates, city council meetings, and public safety updates.

There is only person in Tinley Park who may contact you with "dirt" on me. Steve Eberhardt is a resident and attorney who has sued the village over twenty times, and has named me in several

**DAVID NIEMEYER**

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lawsuits. Most recently, he tried to get a job through political connections as our 911 director which he was clearly unqualified for and he is suing me for preventing him from getting that job.

In my leisure time I like to bicycle, watch theater, dine out, travel.

**SIX ADJECTIVES THAT YOU WOULD USE TO DESCRIBE YOURSELF:**

DRIVEN  
EMPATHETIC  
CREATIVE  
FAIR  
GOOD LISTENER  
ANALYTICAL

**REASON FOR WANTING TO LEAVE CURRENT JOB**

I am looking to leave Tinley Park as I have long desired to work in the Florida area and I am very familiar with the Bradenton area. A new Mayor was recently elected in Tinley Park and we both agreed it would be a good time for me to move on. I have been able to accomplish many of the goals that were set forth for me in Tinley Park and we have also developed a good succession plan that will allow a smooth transition in the manager's office.

**CURRENT/MOST RECENT OR RELEVANT SALARY**

My current salary is \$194,200.

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*CB&A Background Checks*

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**Background Check Summary for  
DAVID J. NIEMEYER**

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**Criminal Records Checks:**

Nationwide Criminal Records Search	No Records Found
County	
Cook County, IL	No Records Found
DuPage County, IL	No Records Found
State	
Illinois	No Records Found

**Civil Records Checks:**

County	
Cook County, IL	<p><b>May 2021</b> – Personal Injury Lawsuit filed by Eberhardt against Mr. Niemeyer in his capacity as Village Manager. <b>Disposition: Case is still open.</b></p> <p><b>November 2017</b> – All other extra-ordinary Remedies complaint filed by Eberhardt against Mr. Niemeyer in his capacity as Village Manager. <b>Disposition: Case has been appealed.</b></p> <p><b>March 2015</b> – Lawsuit filed by Eberhardt against Mr. Niemeyer in his capacity as Village Manager. <b>Disposition: May 2017, Dismissed</b></p> <p><b>September 2018</b> – Lawsuit filed by Eberhardt against Mr. Niemeyer in his capacity as Village Manager. <b>Disposition: May 2017, Dismissed</b></p> <p><b>July 2015</b> – Lawsuit filed by Mr. Niemeyer against Orlan Brook Condo Owners. <b>Disposition: Case is still open.</b></p> <p><i>* See explanation for records found on personal disclosure and next page.</i></p>
DuPage County, IL	No Records Found



**Background Check Summary for  
DAVID J. NIEMEYER**

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**Civil Records Checks:**

Federal  
Illinois

**March 1996** – Hemisphere Bldg Co vs Richton Park including Mr. Niemeyer in his official capacity as Village Planner and individually.

**Disposition: Terminated, February 1998**

**January 2019** – Johnson vs Tinley Park including Mr. Niemeyer in his official capacity as Village Manager.

**Disposition: Terminated, May 2019**

**February 2020** – Eberhardt vs Tinley Park including Mr. Niemeyer in his official capacity as Village Manager.

**Disposition: Motion to dismiss filed, however the case is still open.**

**June 2020** – Eberhardt vs Tinley Park including Mr. Niemeyer in his official capacity as Village Manager

**Disposition: Terminated, November 2020**

*\* See explanation for records found on personal disclosure and next page.*

**Motor Vehicle**

Illinois

No Records Found

**Credit**

Excellent

**Personal Bankruptcy**

No Records Found

**Sex Offender Registry**

Not Listed

**Education**

Confirmed

**Employment**

Confirmed

**Social Media**

Nothing of Concern Found

**Background Check Summary for  
DAVID J. NIEMEYER**

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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.

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**From:** David Niemeyer <djniem@yahoo.com>  
**To:** Lynelle Klein <lynelle@cb-asso.com>  
**Subject:** Fw: Background Check Records that Require an Explanation

The 1996 Hemisphere suit was a proposed handicap residential building that the Village of Richton Park denied a rezoning request. The developer sued claiming this was discrimination.

Two of the suits relate to Bonnie Johnson who is an employee that was terminated for poor performance. She sued saying she was not terminated fairly. Steve Eberhardt represented her.

All of the rest of suits relate to Steve Eberhardt. As I mentioned he has sued the village over 20 times. One of the suits claim that I and other staff members thwarted his hiring for a department head position. There have been numerous other suits related to the village allegedly purchasing items we weren't allowed to purchase, withholding money due residents from their garbage bills, FOIA requests, etc. The village has also filed suit against him asking to have his law license revoked due to abuse of the legal system. He has never won a case against the village and we have directed our attorneys to not settle his cases.

**Background Check Summary for  
DAVID J. NIEMEYER  
Personal Disclosure**

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**Personal Disclosure Questionnaire**

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Name of Applicant: David Niemyer

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?  
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, 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: David Niemyer  
Signature of Applicant

Please email this form via PDF DOCUMENT to [Lynelle@cb-asso.com](mailto:Lynelle@cb-asso.com) or via fax to (561) 621-5965 **no later than 5:00 PM PST 06/28/2021.**  
(Note: Please be sure to sign the form with your actual signature if you are sending Fax or PDF Document)

## **Section 11**

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*CB&A Reference Notes*

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**Reference Notes  
David Niemeyer**

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**Paul O’Grady – External Village Attorney, Tinley Park, IL 708-805-3510**

Mr. O’Grady represents four or five municipalities in the areas and as such, he has known Mr. Niemeyer since around 2010 but they really began to work together in 2014 when Mr. Niemeyer was hired in Tinley Park.

Mr. Niemeyer is very diligent. He meets deadlines and has strong ethics. He listens to everyone’s opinions and keeps the elected officials apprised of his decisions. Employees in Tinley Park are very professional which indicates that Mr. Niemeyer makes great hiring decisions. When you compare Tinley Park to the surrounding communities, their success is reflective of the decisions Mr. Niemeyer has made and is attributable to his leadership.

In Tinley Park Mr. Niemeyer had the foresight to change the theme of the town. He helped them find their identity as a musical capital. He understands infrastructure and as the town grew, he ensured that it grew in a responsible way for taxpayers without overdevelopment. His success is even more significant considering that Tinley Park is in four townships and in two counties and requires quite the balancing act.

With the public Mr. Niemeyer has an excellent approach. His zealousness to be transparent has rewarded him with the trust of residents and taxpayers. Frequently when the public asks a question at Board meetings, he answers the question and then shows that the information can be found on the Village website. His effort to be transparent has built a bond and trust between the government and community.

During the pandemic Mr. Niemeyer has made a significant effort to keep their vendor bills down. Mr. O’Grady does not have as many office hours as he did before, but they have a weekly call which is very efficient and gives them an opportunity to go over anything they need to discuss. He has done a great job keeping everything on track with his communications and helping the community move forward. He also challenged the staff to look for answers themselves and draft a response to run by Mr. O’Grady, rather than paying him to do the research. The staff responded well and stepped up to the challenge and they are proud of what they have been able to research and accomplish on their own. He made cuts early in the pandemic to address the situation rather than waiting for fiscal collapse.

A seasoned manager, Mr. Niemeyer never becomes angry. He understands the dynamics of dealing with the public, the staff, and the elected officials. He does not become too excited or stressed, and he never makes knee jerk decisions. He is thoughtful and never raises his voice. He never picks a side, particularly with elected officials, and keeps the government running.

Tinley Park has had the typical controversy. A housing project became very controversial in town, enough so that a discrimination case was brought by the Department of Justice. Mr. Niemeyer was involved because the Board pushed back and refused to allow the development. The community was so outraged that they had to hold Board meetings in the gymnasium to

**Reference Notes  
David Niemeyer**

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accommodate the attendance. They were able to bring the matter to a successful conclusion. The settlement was good because they compromised and it was fair, there was not a clear winner.

Mr. Niemeyer is ethical and transparent. While some developers believe that he is too tough, he is just following the code. Everyone wants TIF or tax money. He is not afraid to stand up to them and will not give away the store.

Mr. O'Grady would hire Mr. Niemeyer. He excels in managing mid-sized home rule communities. He understands economic development, is a great communicator and he does not overburden the taxpayer. He is a mentor who helps others.

**Words or phrases used to describe Dave Niemeyer:**

- Great communicator,
- Fiscally conservative,
- Recognizes the importance of economic development,
- Mentor,
- Transparent, and
- Calm and level headed.

**Strengths:** Dedicated, communication, economic development, understand of finance and the impact of decisions on the community and taxpayer.

**Weaknesses:** He is very cautious and thorough which is a strength to some but others view as a weakness.

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**Bill Brady – Trustee, Village of Tinley Park, IL 708-295-1318 708-710-8741**

Mr. Brady has known Mr. Niemeyer since 2016. Coming on Board as a new Trustee, Mr. Niemeyer has been very helpful in bringing him up to speed from the past administration. Mr. Niemeyer calls before each Board meeting to see if Mr. Brady has questions. Mr. Niemeyer always wants the Board to have answers to their questions. Mr. Brady is always well informed.

Some of the projects Mr. Niemeyer led are the purchase of a closed mental health center, the construction of a new firehouse, and resurfacing roads. He prepares the information of each project for approval and then leads the process.

Because Mr. Niemeyer is a good manager the staff is happy, and they have little turnover. When people leave, it is generally for promotional opportunities. He has made good hiring decisions, and those he has hired have fit right in, but he has also made good decisions to promote internally particularly in the HR and IT departments. His decisions in general are good.

**Reference Notes  
David Niemeyer**

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Mr. Niemeyer attends various civic functions including groundbreakings and festivals. He attends parades and the Caribbean style block party in downtown Tinley Park. He meets consistently with the staff to keep them up to date and they work through the issues. Communication is very important and he does well. He solves more problems than he creates.

While the Village's Treasurer has been in place for over two decades, Mr. Niemeyer is very aware of their budget and resources. For the most part he completes tasks in a timely manner, and he prioritizes very well. He has only missed a deadline when something larger or more important took precedence. He does very well when tensions are high and never appears stressed. Considering his job and responsibilities, he does very well.

The EDGE method is a good course for working with others. EDGE stands for Explain Demonstrate Guide Enable. Mr. Niemeyer uses this method when working with the staff and the elected officials. He enables them to do their job because of the information that he provides.

The Village has had some controversy but nothing occurred involving Mr. Niemeyer personally. Nothing in his background would concern a reasonable person. Everyone has detractors but Mr. Brady cannot recall anyone who would disagree with the statements in this reference.

Mr. Brady would hire Mr. Niemeyer to manage his own business. Mr. Brady trusts Mr. Niemeyer. He does what he says he will do. He is a great manager.

**Words or phrases used to describe Dave Niemeyer:**

- Tall,
- Organized,
- Good family man,
- Intelligent,
- Knowledgeable, and
- Communication.

**Strengths:** Organizational skills. Communicates well with everyone from the janitor to the Mayor.

**Weaknesses:** None identified.

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**Forest Reeder – Fire Chief, Village of Tinley Park, IL 708-878-6881**

Mr. Reeder has reported to Mr. Niemeyer since 2017. Mr. Niemeyer is a great supervisor, a skilled listener, and his experience in other communities has helped Tinley Park. Working with him has been a really great experience.



## Reference Notes David Niemeyer

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Everything is approved through Mr. Niemeyer's office, including hiring decisions. He asks good questions and outlines specific qualities that he looks for in the leadership team. He does a good job both selecting staff and when making decisions in general.

Tinley Park is a very active community, and it is rare to not see Mr. Niemeyer at an event. He attends community, church, and school events. He is very responsive and has an open door policy. He listens to the needs of the community. He filters out the good and bad, and then brings the department heads up to speed on what the community wants or needs.

When Mr. Niemeyer learns of an issue by a citizen or elected official, it is always discussed in staff meetings and communicated through emails. The leadership team is always informed. Budget is his highest priority and he does a good job managing it. He meets deadlines and is very even keeled in high tension situations. He has been a very calming presence for the staff.

During the pandemic Mr. Niemeyer led the management team to develop policies and strategies. He was very supportive of the department heads and let them determine the necessary changes in their department. He also led best practices and the strategic plan. In 2019 he allowed the department heads to really strategize on direction and then he presented the plan to the Board for approval. This process was the first strategic plan the community has had in a number of years.

While Mr. Niemeyer has not been involved in any personal controversy, he has also been good about staying ahead of Village controversy. He has responded to negative press about projects that were never finalized and other items beyond his control. He did a nice job managing the organization through these challenges.

Mr. Reeder would hire Mr. Niemeyer. It would be a shame for Tinley Park to lose him. He will improve any organization that he leads.

### **Words or phrases used to describe Dave Niemeyer:**

- Calm,
- Thoughtful,
- Compassionate, and
- Good communicator.

**Strengths:** He brings balance to what an individual department head needs and the bigger vision of the elected officials.

**Weaknesses:** While work is done on time, there is always someone in line ahead which makes it hard to start or finish meetings on time. He has incredible demands on his time but does an overall good job of balancing them.

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**Reference Notes  
David Niemeyer**

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**Patrick Carr – Assistant Village Manager, Village of Tinley Park, IL 708-935-1289**

Mr. Carr has known Mr. Niemeyer since 2014. When Mr. Niemeyer was hired, Mr. Carr was the Emergency Services Director. In 2017, Mr. Carr was promoted to Assistant City Manager and continues to work with Mr. Niemeyer in this capacity.

Mr. Niemeyer is a great supervisor. He provides opportunities for the staff to grow. He is open minded and very collaborative. When an employee is not performing it can take Mr. Niemeyer a little bit to take action, but he does address the issues. He has made good decision during his entire tenure but has done particularly well during the pandemic. Everyone really saw his leadership through this significant challenge. While it was a team effort, he led the staff and brought them through the difficulties. He is innovative and he maintains the operation at a high level. He keeps the staff well informed.

Mr. Niemeyer is often out in the community. He works very well with the public. He is involved in meetings with the Chamber, their sister city, and commissions. He attends the farmer's market, concerts in the park, and various other Village events. He is very visible.

When the pandemic started Mr. Niemeyer was constantly receiving briefs. He brought the Directors together to create a plan to work in a reduced personnel capacity with an expected budget reduction of 20 to 30%. He asked each Director to look at how they would manage their department with this reduction, and then put all the information together for the Board. They implemented the plan by March of 2020, and while they did lose quite a bit of revenue, they came through the pandemic much better than they thought they would. The Village is in a great position currently and are rehiring staff and restarting programs. His foresight in reducing their expenses saved the Village.

Mr. Niemeyer has good financial skills and he completes work in a timely manner. He is very good and calm in stressful situations. He gave employees the confidence to their jobs during the pandemic. He is a great leader who the staff want to follow.

The Village has had its share of controversy, but nothing has happened that relates to Mr. Niemeyer personally. Every manager has detractors but Mr. Carr does not know anyone who would disagree with this assessment of Mr. Niemeyer.

Mr. Carr would hire Mr. Niemeyer. He is a wonderful manager.

**Words or phrases used to describe Dave Niemeyer:**

- Collaborative,
- Informative,
- Innovative,
- Empathetic, and
- Dynamic.

**Reference Notes  
David Niemeyer**

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**Strengths:** Mentors employees, very open minded, very collaborative.

**Weaknesses:** None identified.

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**Asif Yusuf – Trustee, Village of Oak Brook, IL 630-258-4999**

Mr. Yusuf first met Mr. Niemeyer in 2007 when he came to the Village. However, he did not work with him until he was re-elected as a Trustee in 2011. They have had some occasional contact over the years since Mr. Niemeyer left the Village in 2014.

Mr. Niemeyer's job performance in Oak Brook was most excellent. He is hard working, sincere, and a straight shooter. He is confident and knowledgeable about various areas of municipal government. He works extremely well with his department heads and was an all-around good person.

Mr. Niemeyer's communication was fantastic. He laid out the issues in a very easy to follow manner and never let his ego and personality get into the mix of things. He did well to stay out of the political side of government which helped him to be a fine manager of the Village. Furthermore, Mr. Yusuf cannot recall any bad decisions made by Mr. Niemeyer and he never exceeded his scope of authority.

Not very many people were hired during Mr. Niemeyer's tenure at the Village, but when the occasion arose he always made good recommendations to the Board. He weighed in when they were hiring a new Police and Fire Chief and was extremely involved in that process, but knew that the final decision was the Board Members' responsibility. He laid out the pros and cons of each candidate and let them make the best decision possible based on the facts and his insight.

Being a Village Manager comes with having to deal with the public and one cannot be in that type of position without having good people skills. Mr. Niemeyer was no exception. He definitely has experience and is good at dealing with members of the community. He also had the backbone to tell people no when they made ridiculous requests. However, he would not just merely say no, he would always back up his answer with facts and reason.

Mr. Yusuf would characterize Mr. Niemeyer as someone who is innovative and someone who maintains his organization at a high performance level. He was not out there trying to reinvent the wheel, but he kept up with his professional contacts to stay current in his field. When ideas came his way that he thought would work for their community he put together a presentation for the Board that made it easy for them to make an informed decision.

Mr. Niemeyer is knowledgeable in terms of municipal finance. He was realistic when it came to the budget and laid everything out for the Board to easily understand and follow. Mr. Yusuf never presented a finance question to Mr. Niemeyer that he could not answer.

**Reference Notes  
David Niemeyer**

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The only controversial situation that Mr. Yusuf could recall was a situation with a department head who was accused of harassment. Mr. Niemeyer addressed the situation and dealt with it appropriately. Mr. Yusuf is not privy to any information about Mr. Niemeyer's background that would be thought of as unflattering by any future employer. Only one person on the Board might have something different to say about him, but he is a chronic complainer who often times complained about the entire staff. Mr. Yusuf would rehire Mr. Niemeyer in a heartbeat if a vacancy occurred as he was very sorry to see Mr. Niemeyer leave.

**Words or phrases used to describe David Niemeyer:**

- Sincere,
- Hard working,
- Skilled,
- Great interpersonal skills, and
- Diplomatic.

**Strengths:** Extremely knowledgeable individual who works hard, supports his elected officials, and stays above the political fray.

**Weaknesses:** Worked too hard and should have taken more time for himself.

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**Myra Eder – Community Activist, Village of Tinley Park, IL 708-421-3613**

Ms. Eder first met Mr. Niemeyer in 1988. She has been a news writer for several years and was assigned to cover municipal news for the Village of Orland Hills, IL where Mr. Niemeyer was the Administrator. They have continued to have contact over the years in their various roles around the area and she is a resident of Tinley Park and stays active in the community.

Mr. Niemeyer was a huge help to Ms. Eder when she was covering the municipal news in Orland Hills. She knew nothing of municipal government, and he spent hours explaining the processes to her. When she found out he had become the Village Manager in Tinley Park she was ecstatic. She knew that whatever would be in his purview would be done right.

Mr. Niemeyer knows how to work with people. He holds things together with his quiet, but strong demeanor. Some stressful political situations have happened in the Village and he is cool, calm, and collected in every situation. He keeps the Village running smoothly in spite of issues that the people on the Board are having. He is patient and stays above the political fray.

Ms. Eder would say that Mr. Niemeyer maintains the Village at a high performance level. His role as an administrator is to ensure that the municipality is running smoothly which he does quite well. He is sought out by many villages around the area to join their staff.

**Reference Notes  
David Niemeyer**

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Mr. Niemeyer certainly responds to calls by the public and explains the issues that he is at liberty to share. If he is quoted in the media it is always in terms of explanation and not in terms of his opinion. As a Village resident Ms. Eder has never seen him do anything to indicate he is not doing his job.

Ms. Eder is not aware of anything the Mr. Niemeyer has been involved with that would be considered controversial nor does he have anything negative in his background that would surface if the press were to investigate. She has never heard a negative comment about him in all the years that she has known him. He is well liked in the area. If she were a Mayor and needed someone to run the town she would seek him out for that job.

**Words or phrases used to describe David Niemeyer:**

- Soft spoken,
- Exceptionally trustworthy,
- Well informed,
- Politically savvy,
- Honest, and
- Commands respect in a quiet manner.

**Strengths:** Knowledgeable and experienced individual who is very effective at his job, and very strong in terms of ethics.

**Weaknesses:** None identified.

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**Greg Hannon – Former Trustee, Village of Tinley Park, IL 312-617-2108**

Mr. Hannon first met Mr. Niemeyer in 2014 when he came on board at Tinley Park. Mr. Hannon had been in public service for about 28 years and knew about him but did not get to know him until he came to the Village. He worked with him for about one year until he retired in 2015. They continue to have some occasional contact.

Mr. Niemeyer has done an excellent job as the manager in Tinley Park. Mr. Hannon had a good rapport with him. Mr. Niemeyer was always open with communication and he kept the elected officials and the Board apprised of what was happening in the Village. They had a very good circle of communication.

Mr. Niemeyer has a strong management style. He listens first before speaking. He did well dealing with eight bosses and keeping up with the daily operations of the Village. He did a phenomenal job of weaving the fine web of working with the staff, the elected officials, and the community in sync.

**Reference Notes  
David Niemeyer**

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Making good decisions came naturally to Mr. Niemeyer. He understands that the Board sets the policies and his decisions are based upon those policies. He definitely keeps the organization running at a high performance level. However, if a situation for improvement presents itself, he takes the organization to the next level.

Mr. Niemeyer has a plethora of experience dealing with the public. He practices with an open door policy with the residents and business owners. When issues arose he always handled them extremely professionally.

Mr. Hannon is not aware of any controversial issues where Mr. Niemeyer was involved. Mr. Hannon has no knowledge of anything in Mr. Niemeyer's background that would be found to be unflattering if the press were to research his past history. Mr. Niemeyer would do well in any municipality that hires him.

**Words or phrases used to describe David Niemeyer:**

- Professional,
- Communicative,
- Leader, and
- Aware of the politics, but stays above the fray.

**Strengths:** Strong manager who communicates well with everyone in the organization and is highly respected amongst his staff.

**Weaknesses:** None identified.

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**Ed Zabrocki – Former Mayor, Village of Tinley Park, IL 708-906-2679**

Mr. Niemeyer and Mr. Zabrocki have known each other, both professionally and personally, since approximately 1997. However, they only had the chance to work with each other in the same municipality for about one year.

Mr. Zabrocki was very happy with Mr. Niemeyer's job performance. He has been very positive in spite of inheriting the issues with the housing development that has dogged the community. He has a village type of personality that is easy going and he listens to people. He is patient and willing to talk things out. He does not get flustered even when he is in a roomful of upset people.

The first thing that Mr. Niemeyer did in Tinley Park was to become acquainted with each of the staff members, the elected officials, and the business community. He walked around town and made his presence known in the community.

**Reference Notes  
David Niemeyer**

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Mr. Niemeyer is a combination of someone who is innovative, a change agent, and someone who maintains the organization at a high performance level. However, he was not looking for a reorganization of how things are operating nor has he made a huge amount of changes. He has mainly focused on maintaining the high level of service that was already in existence when he arrived. He has made some quality suggestions such as updating the Village's 5 year plan. He saw that they were deficient in that area and jumped in to take care of that situation immediately.

When decisions have to be made Mr. Niemeyer is methodical and thinks things through. He bases all of his decisions on facts. Mr. Zabrocki has never had an issue with any of the decisions that he has made.

Mr. Zabrocki is only aware of one controversial situation that happened when Mr. Niemeyer was in Des Plaines. It was a crazy, hot bed of elected officials and they had some type of issue with the gambling casino. Mr. Zabrocki is not sure of the details, but knows that the elected officials were fighting amongst themselves and somehow Mr. Niemeyer became the scapegoat.

Mr. Zabrocki is not aware of any item in Mr. Niemeyer's past history that would be construed as embarrassing if the press were to go digging. He has served the community of Tinley Park very well.

**Words or phrases used to describe David Niemeyer:**

- Energetic,
- Good communicator,
- Listener,
- Hardworking, and
- Willing to accept new ideas from others.

**Strengths:** Dedicated and hardworking professional who is an excellent communicator and is very calm in all situations.

**Weaknesses:** None identified.

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**Ivan Baker – Former President, North Central Illinois Economic Development Corporation, Tinley Park, IL 815-663-7483**

Mr. Baker has known Mr. Niemeyer for quite some time, but did not have any major interaction with him until 2014 when he came to Tinley Park. Mr. Baker is the former Economic Development Director and they worked in that capacity at the Village until Mr. Baker left in 2016. They continue to have some interaction as Mr. Baker is a resident of the Village.

## Reference Notes David Niemeyer

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Everyone on the staff at Tinley Park loves working with Mr. Niemeyer. He has a calming presence and is determined and goal oriented. He encourages good communication and teamwork. He likes to have input from all of the department heads when it comes to resolving concerns. He is definitely communicative and inclusive with his department heads and staff.

Mr. Niemeyer is fully aware of all the issues, differences, and details in each department. He likes to know the details of the issues to help resolve problems, but ensures to let his executive staff members take care of the final outcome. He is the even keeled, calming force in a room especially in challenging situations.

In terms of problem solving Mr. Niemeyer looks at all of the options before deciding on a solution. He is the first Village Manager in 30 years to agree about the importance of putting together a strategic plan. He inherited a major contract replacing some faulty water meters. In the news it was a huge financial debacle. Fortunately, it was a manufacturing issue that could be dealt with and he was level headed and calm during the entire situation. He prepared the Board to deal with the citizens and helped to diffuse any anger around the issue.

Mr. Niemeyer is a change agent, but not on his terms. He wants to ensure that improvement is always occurring, but he will not force it on everyone. He is inclusive in the improvement process and understands that any successful changes depend upon the buy in of his staff.

In terms of finances, Mr. Niemeyer is lean with expenditures. If something can be afforded and would be beneficial to the customers he will be the first one to investigate it. He looks at ways to utilize existing funds or find creative ways to fund those ideas. He is also very team oriented in that area as well and encourages his staff members to give their input.

Tinley Park had one extremely controversial issue. It was a subsidized housing project that a small percentage of those apartments had been set aside for low income people. The developer went through all of the proper channels to get the permits and tax credits, but some zoning changes were applied that would benefit this project as well as some others in the community. Some in the public took that as the Board encouraging lower income housing to come to the Village. A very vocal portion of those residents put their discriminatory comments on social media and accused the Board of being racists. The Board decided to stop the project because of the outcry from the public, but unfortunately the developer did not like that and decided to take his concerns to the Department of Justice. The Village, the developer, and the Department were able to resolve it out of court. Unfortunately, Mr. Niemeyer had to deal with that situation, but thankfully he did an extremely professional job.

Mr. Baker is not aware of anything in Mr. Niemeyer's background that would be considered embarrassing if the press were to go digging. Mr. Baker would absolutely hire Mr. Niemeyer if given the opportunity.



Reference Notes  
David Niemeyer

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**Words or phrases used to describe David Niemeyer:**

- Team builder,
- Aggressive,
- Leader,
- Positive thinker,
- Caring, and
- Friendly.

**Strengths:** Intelligent, easy to work with, honest, an individual who believes in the benefit of the government for the citizens.

**Weaknesses:** At times keeping things calm can act as a double edge as he might have trouble identifying underlying issues that are already in existence of which he may not be aware.

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**Blaine Wing – City Manager, Rochester, MI 312-543-1175**

Mr. Wing has known Mr. Niemeyer since approximately 2000 when Mr. Niemeyer was in Homewood, IL. Mr. Wing was in a neighboring community and they worked several joint community efforts. Additionally, Mr. Wing was Mr. Niemeyer's assistant in the Village of Oak Brook from 2008-2014. They continue to stay in contact and Mr. Wing considers to be a fantastic mentor.

Mr. Niemeyer always interacted well with the elected officials, the staff, and the residents. He is personable and soft spoken, but highly experienced. He is a gentle giant with a quiet, commanding presence. Furthermore, he is comfortable and easy to talk and work with and has excellent presentation skills.

Mr. Niemeyer has a logical mindset and decision making process. He follows through on every decision he makes. He gathers input from others before moving forward on anything. When it came to Council decisions he ensured to give the Trustees several options to help them make well informed and correct decisions for the Village.

In terms of finances, Mr. Niemeyer has a financially wired brain. He is astute and detail oriented and can crunch numbers like no other. When the economy went south in 2008 he looked at several different options to help alleviate the budget issues. Unfortunately, he had to proceed with some layoffs. However, he was instrumental ensuring that everyone had a fair severance package and transitioned them as best as he could in such a situation.

Mr. Niemeyer is one who will keep the organization running at a high performance level. He does allow others to bring forward innovation, but he will not necessarily be the one to bring forth those ideas.

**Reference Notes  
David Niemeyer**

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One controversy occurred in Tinley Park between Mr. Niemeyer and the Public Works Director. The Director falsified some documents and he had to address that situation. He eventually had to let the Director go. Mr. Wing is not aware of anything in Mr. Niemeyer's background that would be found to be embarrassing. Mr. Niemeyer is a stand up person with much integrity. Mr. Wing would hire Mr. Niemeyer or work with him again if the opportunity ever arose.

**Words or phrases used to describe David Niemeyer:**

- Hard working,
- Integrity,
- Trustworthy,
- Communicative,
- Dedicated, and
- Fiscally responsible.

**Strengths:** Experienced professional who is logical in his thought process and who puts the needs of his community first.

**Weaknesses:** None identified.

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**Prepared by:** Lynelle Klein  
Colin Baenziger & Associates

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*CB&A Internet Research*

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**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**David J. Niemeyer**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Times, The (Munster, IN)  
June 14, 2021

**WATCH NOW: Tinley Park amps up pressure on Illinois to sell it derelict mental health center site**

Author: Mark Loehrke

Imagine you just fixed up your house with fresh paint and new landscaping to make it one of the nicest on the block. Passersby stop to admire it, neighbors are envious of it, but there's just one problem — it sits beside an overgrown lot that doesn't belong to you. The rogue parcel is sizable and owned by an out-of-towner who has not been inclined to negotiate a sale. This is the situation Tinley Park finds itself in with respect to a nearly 300-acre site that was once home to the Tinley Park Mental Health Center. Abandoned for nearly a decade, the massive lot sits in the center of the village — an odd pocket of stagnancy and decay amid the wave of development and improvement that has unfolded all around it the last several years.

The problem, says Village Manager **Dave Niemeyer**, is not a lack of will or good ideas, but rather an intransigent owner with whom village officials have been trying to negotiate for years — the State of Illinois. "We've been trying to acquire the property for more than seven years," **Niemeyer** explains. "We've had various discussions with the state, and there have been several offers made, but we just really haven't been able to reach a deal. In the last year or so, we thought they were going to sit down with us and get this done, but it hasn't happened yet. It's actually pretty frustrating."

The ongoing inability to get a deal done with the state is not only inhibiting potential development of the site, it is also preventing the village from simply trying to clean up the lot, which has devolved into a public health hazard. **Niemeyer** says environmental issues at the site include mold and asbestos, as well as rusting equipment and old gas lines. Trash and vandalism concerns also have increased in recent years. Estimates for the cleanup have run as high as \$15 million, an investment the village is willing to work with the state to make if it could get its hands on the property to get started. "Our major goal at this point is to acquire the site so that we can get it cleaned up," **Niemeyer** says. "That's the initial goal."

While the village has considered what could be done with a rehabilitated site at 183rd Street and Harlem Avenue, everyone understands that nothing can happen until that initial goal is met. **Niemeyer** says a number of developers have expressed interest, pitching everything from residential projects to commercial ventures, drawn by the site's central location and easy access to major roadways and the convention center. "We're not ready to say exactly what would go there, but we know whatever it is will be a big improvement over what's there now," he says. "I think it would be a boon that would certainly spur other development in the community."

While the lack of progress has been discouraging, **Niemeyer** says working with the state to acquire the property remains a top priority. The village's latest attempt to get things moving was a press conference last month designed to highlight the many issues facing the property and to

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**David J. Niemeyer**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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put some public pressure on the state to come to the table. And it won't be the last effort to put a big piece of Tinley Park's evolution into place. "Because of its location and size, I think this site is critical to the future of the village," **Niemeyer** says. "But it all hinges on the state deciding to move forward. It's time for the inaction to end."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**David J. Niemeyer**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Daily Southtown (Chicago, IL)

May 27, 2021

**From racino to industrial business park - 114-acre parcel of land that's adjacent to Tinley Park to be developed, annexed**

Author: Mike Nolan

Property adjacent to Tinley Park that at one time was considered as a site for a combination harness racing track and casino will instead become an industrial business park, according to the village. The 114-acre parcel, northeast of Harlem Avenue and Vollmer Road, is now in unincorporated Cook County and would be annexed to Tinley Park, according to village manager **Dave Niemeyer**.

The site is directly north of an Amazon fulfillment center under construction in Matteson, and Indianapolis-based Scannell Properties is proposing a phased development of up to 1.3 million square feet of industrial space for warehousing and distribution. Scannell is not seeking financial incentives directly from the village, such as creation of a tax increment financing district, but the village will likely be asked to support a resolution seeking a property tax break through Cook County, according to Kimberly Clarke, the village's community development director. Scannell is expected to close on the purchase of the property in July, and the company's plans got an initial review from the village's Plan Commission earlier this month.

Initially, a building of 195,000 square feet would be built on the north side of the property, and Scannell's concept plan proposes three buildings, although a second building of a bit more than 1 million square feet could be developed, according to Clarke. Tinley Park and Scannell are working on an agreement to annex the site to the village, she said Wednesday. Tinley Park officials had, up until last year, been in talks to buy the property and at one point were offering then-owner Rick Heidner a hefty gain on his initial investment. Those discussions came to an abrupt end late last September, after the Chicago Tribune began raising questions about the proposed deal.

An appraisal by the village set the land's value at between \$5.25 million and \$5.75 million and Heidner had paid \$5 million for the property although Tinley Park was prepared to pay \$7.5 million, **Niemeyer** told the Tribune. Heidner sent a short email to Tinley Park officials saying the land was no longer for sale, with the message coming a day after the Tribune began inquiring about Heidner's ownership of the property.

**Niemeyer** said Wednesday the village was willing to pay a premium for the property in order to maintain control over the development. "We could basically control (development) through our ordinances, our codes," he said. "This was part of our planning area and we felt it was important we have control."

After a sale to Tinley Park fell through, Heidner agreed to a sale to Scannell "at a significantly higher cost" than what the village was willing to pay, according to **Niemeyer**, although he said

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**David J. Niemeyer**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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he did not know what the sale price was and Heidner, through a spokeswoman, declined to say. The spokeswoman confirmed Wednesday that the sale to Scannell is pending, and the two sides agreed to a deal shortly after talks about a sale to Tinley Park ended. "I am very pleased this sale will allow the village of Tinley Park to annex the property which was always my hope and intent. I wish residents there the very best," Heidner said in a statement.

In 2019, village officials were supporting a proposal by Heidner to convert the shuttered Tinley Park Mental Health Center into a racino following legislation expanding gambling options statewide. The legislation allowed the combo horse track-casino for a Southland location as well as a separate free-standing casino elsewhere. Four proposals were submitted to state gaming officials for the stand-alone casino, with a review of the applications still ongoing. In the fall of 2019, however, the state blocked any plans that had been discussed to sell the property to Tinley Park, which had intended to transfer it to Heidner. The Vollmer-Harlem site was also considered by Heidner as a location for the racino, but "he looked at it as more of a backup site" to the 280-acre mental health center property, northwest of Harlem and 183rd Street, **Niemeyer** said.

Through a company he and his wife operate, Gold Rush Amusements, Heidner is Illinois' third-largest operator of video gambling terminals. Heidner had proposed a plan for the property at Vollmer and Harlem that involved a warehouse-distribution use, but the village was not keen on the proposal, Clarke said. "We did not want to carte blanche a warehouse use," she said. But at that time, Clarke said, "we had no knowledge of Amazon's plans" to build a 3.8-million-square foot fulfillment center across the street, with that project obviously making the Heidner site more ideal for a light industrial use.

The property Scannell is developing would be adjacent to the upscale Odyssey Country Club subdivision, but the developer is proposing a landscaped berm to help screen the industrial property, Clarke said. Portions of the Scannell site are either in a flood plain or flood way, so not all of the land can be developed, she said.

The village, although not being asked for any direct financial incentives, would likely seek a tax break through Cook County that reduces, for property tax purposes, the assessed value of the land on a temporary basis, she said.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**David J. Niemeyer**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Daily Southtown: Web Edition Articles (Chicago, IL)

May 20, 2021

**Tinley Park mayor criticizes state officials, suggests possible legal action over safety issues at former mental health hospital site**

Author: Mike Nolan

Tinley Park Mayor Michael Glotz said Thursday his village would consider a lawsuit if state officials don't move quickly to address environmental and public safety issues at a former state-run mental health hospital. During a news conference near the perimeter of the 280-acre state, village officials said tainted soil, underground storage tanks, asbestos and black mold are among issues at the former Tinley Park Mental Health Center they want to see addressed.

The facility closed in 2012 and the village wants to buy the property from the state, clean it up and offer it for development. The property is northwest of the intersection of Harlem Avenue and 183rd Street. "If they don't take action we are going to be forced to take action ourselves," Glotz said. Paul O'Grady, the village's attorney, said a lawsuit would be considered "only as a last resort" if negotiations don't produce results.

The mayor, sworn in earlier this month after serving a term as village trustee, said the village has been stonewalled in trying to get the site maintained properly. "We have attempted over and over again to get someone, anyone, at the state to talk to us," he said. "We want the state to either bring it up to code or sell the property to be cleaned up."

The village last month issued citations for building code violations, accumulated litter and overgrown grass and weeds on the property, which is patrolled by private security. Buildings are covered in graffiti and valuable metals such as copper pipes have been stripped from buildings, Glotz said. In a response to the violations last month, the Illinois Department of Central Management Services, which manages the property, said it is exempt from such municipal property or building codes. A message left seeking comment was not immediately returned Thursday.

An estimate made several years ago put the cost at remediating the site's environmental issues and razing dozens of buildings on the property at \$12.4 million. Glotz said Thursday he believed it would cost \$15 million to "make that site development ready."

Tinley Park's budget for the fiscal year that began May 1 includes \$7.5 million set aside to buy and remediate the property for potential redevelopment. The state's Rebuild Illinois capital program has also designated \$15 million toward cleanup. "No one can tell use if and when these funds will become available," said village manager **Dave Niemeyer**.

In 2015, Tinley Park planned to pay the state what was then an asking price of \$4.16 million for the property, but backed away from the purchase. In May 2019, the state offered to sell it to the village for \$4.5 million, and the village indicated it was agreeable to that but no further



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**David J. Niemeyer**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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discussions have been held, **Niemeyer** said. "It is an eyesore and an embarrassment to the state," he said. He said the village was going into any negotiations on a land purchase without truly knowing the site's value. He said the state had two appraisals of the property but has refused to turn them over to the village, and denied a request for the records under the state's Freedom of Information Act, although the village did not appeal the denial.

Village officials earlier this month learned that a water main serving the property was leaking, and, through a water meter that is linked to the site, estimated the spill at more than 2 million gallons. The water has since been shut off and a contractor has been hired by CMS to determine the source of the leak, **Niemeyer** said. The line is not looped into the village's municipal water system.

Last month, newly elected state Rep. Tim Ozinga, R-Mokena, introduced legislation that would force a sale of the property. The bill has been referred to committee. The property is not in Ozinga's 37th District.

Glutz had harsh words for state Sen. Michael Hastings, D-Frankfort, who he said had initially worked to assist the village by introducing a resolution to push the sale through. The mayor said he had sent 13 emails to the legislator in recent weeks regarding the property but has not received a response. "What has he done, or what will he do?" Glutz said. Hastings' office said the senator met with village officials and the village's lobbyist in February and April to talk about the state property.

In a statement in response to the news conference, Hastings said he has "worked tirelessly" during his eight years in the Senate "to do what's best for the village of Tinley Park, and for the future of the former Tinley Park Mental Health Center site." "We have now had four different mayors in Tinley Park during those eight years, and it's disappointing that the new mayor has only been on the job a few days and now immediately goes on the attack," Hastings was quoted in the statement.

Hastings said he secured the \$15 million in the state capital bill for the site cleanup. "I have presented several pieces of legislation and urged the Governor's office to sell the center property, and I call on them to release the funds for the site cleanup," the senator said in the statement.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**David J. Niemeyer**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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[CB&A Note: Mr Eberhardt filed his case (known in article below as Eberhardt 1) and it was dismissed. He filed again with changes (Eberhardt 11) and it was dismissed again because the court called the second case duplicative of the first. Both cases are in the article text. Click the link below to read the full text of the case.]

<https://www.leagle.com/decision/infdco20201110d96>

**EBERHARDT v. VILLAGE OF TINLEY PARK**

No. 20 C 3269.

STEPHEN E. EBERHARDT, Plaintiff, v. VILLAGE OF TINLEY PARK, a Municipal Corporation, JACOB C. VANDENBERG, Mayor/Village President, MICHAEL W. GLOTZ, Trustee/Mayor Pro-Tem, **DAVID J. NIEMEYER**, Village Manager, PAUL O'GRADY, Village Attorney, PATRICK CONNELLY, Village Attorney, and DOUGLAS S. SPALE, former Village Attorney, Defendants.

United States District Court, N.D. Illinois, Eastern Division.

November 9, 2020.

MEMORANDUM OPINION AND ORDER

GARY FEINERMAN, District Judge.

A review of the two suits reveals that the correct course is to dismiss this suit as duplicative of Eberhardt I. As outlined above, the two suits share significant overlap as to (1) the named defendants, (2) the alleged facts, (3) the asserted legal rights, and (4) the requested relief. See Serlin, 3 F.3d at 223-24. There are no "special factors counseling for . . . exercise of jurisdiction" over this suit. *Id.* at 224. Allowing this suit to proceed, accordingly, would not advance "wise judicial administration." *Id.* at 223. Given the factual and legal overlap between the two suits, any events that have occurred since Eberhardt initiated Eberhardt I are proper fodder for an amended complaint there, not any complaint in this materially identical suit.

This suit is dismissed. The dismissal of course is without prejudice to Eberhardt pressing his claims in Eberhardt I.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**David J. Niemeyer**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Tinley Park (IL)  
July 16, 2020

**For the Record**

Author: **David Niemeyer**

There's no denying that the COVID-19 pandemic has affected nearly every aspect of day-to-day life for all of us these past several months. While it seems like it's been forever since we've been able to shop for groceries without a face covering or see our favorite bands perform live in concert, I'm confident that those days will eventually return. Until then, the Village is doing everything we can to make sure we're being fiscally responsible in these very lean financial times.

When the Village adopted the 2021 budget in April, we also began working on a new spending plan to offset forecasted losses in revenue due to the pandemic. We made an immediate decision to reduce all discretionary spending and focus resources to the core services that Tinley Park residents and businesses needed. Unfortunately, as the pandemic continued to grow, so did the forecasted revenue loss. Village staff worked together on a new spending plan to limit, defer and eliminate expenditures from the approved budget to offset these additional revenue losses.

Currently, we project total revenue loss at more than \$14 million. The majority of this comes from the General Fund, about \$11 million (20 percent). The General Fund supports core services such as administration, public safety and public works. We created a new spending plan that reduced expenditures by eliminating, deferring or resizing projects, nonessential services, additional staffing needs and other non-critical Village operations. Other funds are experiencing significant revenue reductions as a result of COVID-19.

Specifically, most new hiring has been deferred, except for some critical public safety and management positions. Village staff has also deferred many capital expenditures, eliminated most training, reduced overtime significantly, and reorganized staffing. Also, my department heads and senior staff are being asked to take five intermittent, unpaid furlough days this fiscal year. I'm taking seven, and many employees are working reduced hours, all in an effort to decrease budgeted costs. The new spending plan provides the Village an opportunity to offset the impacts of COVID-19 early, which will hopefully mean we won't have to make more drastic and critical cuts later in the fiscal year.

We'll continue to update the Village Board on the actual COVID-19 revenue impacts as those amounts become known and make additional adjustments as warranted. The new spending plan gives us the ability to make additional reductions or re-institute expenditures as needed.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**David J. Niemeyer**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Tinley Park (IL)  
June 19, 2020

**For the Record**

Author: **David Niemeyer**

It's been a rocky year so far for sure, but the Village is doing everything we can to help Tinley Park recover and move forward into better days.

One such plan is already in the works. At its June 9 meeting, the Village Board passed an ordinance that will begin the process of creating a new Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District for the 159th Street and Harlem Avenue corridor. The TIF will help us fill commercial vacancies in that area, spur development and give our local economy a much-needed shot in the arm.

If you're wondering just what exactly TIFs are, it's pretty simple – communities can use them to develop areas in need of a bit of help. Property tax revenues for taxing bodies within the TIF district are frozen at whatever rate they were at when the TIF was created, and increases in that revenue over the course of 23 years (the standard life of a TIF) are used for public improvements or to incentivize potential developers. It's self-funding and helps affected areas become financially viable once again.

The proposed 159th Street and Harlem Avenue TIF District covers an area that is of particular importance, as it contains scores of businesses that together comprise a commercial “front door” to our community. Vacancies in this area have increased dramatically, which translates into less traffic and less sales tax. Every vacancy increases the number of visibly empty storefronts, which in turn compromises the aesthetics of the entire area. Through time, the location becomes less and less of a prime destination for customers, and since the area is the first thing many people see as they enter our town, this creates a ripple effect that negatively impacts the rest of the businesses in Tinley Park.

The proposed TIF District would enable us to make the significant reinvestment needed to attract the type of commercial anchors that would better meet the needs of the Tinley Park community, transform this property into a premier local destination, and revitalize the local economy through job creation. It's also a chance to reimagine what business in Tinley Park can look like moving forward. Everyone is well aware of the fact that more people are shopping online instead of going to brick-and-mortar stores, resulting in retail being down across the board. That is unlikely to change anytime soon, so we'll have to get creative, and the 159th Street and Harlem Avenue corridor gives us such an opportunity.

Ultimately, the proposed TIF is a preventative measure to ensure this decline doesn't continue. Something needs to be done to stem the bleeding, and TIFs are one of the few tools municipalities have in their medicine cabinet to do the job. To be blunt, this is what it takes to attract development when you have the extraordinary costs that come with doing business in south suburban Cook County. Quality developers aren't going to come without assistance, and

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**David J. Niemeyer**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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this TIF will provide just that and offer a unique opportunity to bring first-class developments to our community. The next steps will include a Joint Review Board meeting at 1:30 p.m. Tuesday, July 14 in which taxing bodies can provide input and review the plan in greater detail. After that, the TIF will move to a public hearing at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Aug. 4. There, residents will be able to weigh in on the plan and get more information. The Eligibility Report and Redevelopment Plan and Project documents for the proposed TIF are available for review on the Village website. I'll keep you updated on the process as it moves along. Until we talk again, I wish you and yours a great summer.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**David J. Niemeyer**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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MSN.com (IL)

June 18, 2020

**Talk of Secretary of State Opening in Tinley Park Begins**

Author: Tim Moran

Officials in Tinley Park are looking into the possibility of an express Illinois Secretary of State facility opening in town. The area has been without one since the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic as the express facility that was open inside Orland Park Village Hall has closed permanently. Tinley Park Village Manager **Dave Niemeyer** said Thursday the village has been looking at possible places to house the Secretary of State office over the past couple of weeks. Trustee Michael Glotz, in a Wednesday email to **Niemeyer** and other village officials, listed three possible landing spots for the Secretary of State in Tinley Park.

Currently, the nearest Secretary of State facility for Tinley residents is in Midlothian. The facility in Chicago Heights remains closed after a fire broke out as a result of civil unrest in the wake of the death of George Floyd last month. Others in the south suburbs are in Lockport and Bridgeview. Glotz asked **Niemeyer** to look into the possibility of the facility opening at the former site of the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency's vehicle emission testing center on Duvan Drive, which has been left vacant since the Illinois EPA closed the site in 2016.

The trustee also asked if the village could "assist" the state in finding a spot in a vacant Tinley Park storefront or, as a "last resort," see if they could open in a portion of the Kallsen Conference Center at Tinley Park Village Hall. "We have not specifically looked at the emission facility and Kallsen Center but will look at those too," **Niemeyer** told Patch. Dave Druker, a spokesman for the Secretary of State office, said the state is "definitely looking for something in the area" to continue to serve the residents of Orland Park and Tinley Park earlier this month when the Orland Park closure was announced. He was not immediately available Thursday to discuss the possibilities mentioned by the officials in Tinley Park.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**David J. Niemeyer**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Daily Southtown: Web Edition Articles (Chicago, IL)  
March 13, 2019

**Tinley Park looks to overhaul pay for firefighters**

Author: Mike Nolan

In a bid to stay competitive in hiring and retaining firefighters, Tinley Park officials plan to overhaul how most fire department personnel are paid. For the largely part-time force, a 10-step pay structure would be implemented with the start of the next village fiscal year on May 1. The pay plan would offer 2 percent pay hikes for each step. The Village Board is scheduled to vote on the plan next month after a Village Board committee Tuesday voted to recommend approval by the full board.

Currently, according to the village, firefighters have limited opportunities for pay hikes, which the new plan is intended to correct. Right now, personnel see pay increases once they complete their one-year probationary period or upon promotion, or through Village Board action in approving annual market wage adjustments, according to the village.

The new pay plan will "improve our competitiveness in the market" as far as retaining and attracting personnel to the department, **David Niemeyer**, village manager, told trustees.

Over four years, the revised pay structure is expected to cost the village a bit more than \$513,000. Currently, the base hourly rate for firefighters who've completed their one-year probationary period is \$19.04, and that would rise to \$19.52, according to the village. The base rate for engineers, now \$20.77 per hour, would increase to \$21.29.

Assistant chief and deputy chief positions would also see an initial bump. The base rate for assistant chief, now at \$25.96 per hour, would be boosted to \$28.16, while the base hourly rate for deputy chief, now at \$38.37, would go up to \$42.47, according to the village. Both are part-time positions. After that, assistant and deputy chief positions wouldn't be on the step increase schedule, but would be eligible for annual merit-based increases that would need Village Board approval.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**David J. Niemeyer**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Tinley Park (IL)  
October 26, 2018

**For the Record**

Author: **David Niemeyer**

I wanted to take a few moments to discuss an exciting proposed project that will be a cornerstone to revitalizing Downtown Tinley.

The Boulevard at Central Station is a four-story, mixed-use development project that will sit on the three acres of vacant land south of the Oak Park Avenue train station. This project has been talked about by various village boards for more than a decade. Once complete, the Boulevard will consist of 165 residential units and nearly 30,000 leasable square feet of commercial space and will bring the density required to create a vibrant, successful downtown.

The development will be constructed in two phases. Phase One will include 66 residential units, with about 15,000 square feet of leasable commercial space and upscale amenities for the residents. Part of the commercial space will be dedicated to a white-tablecloth, full-service restaurant to complement all of the other great businesses in Downtown Tinley and make the area a prime destination. Phase Two will include 99 residential units, about 15,000 square feet of leasable commercial space, a 181-space parking garage and a swimming pool for the residents.

This project would not be possible without the New Bremen TIF District, which the Village created earlier this year to replace the aging Main Street South TIF. Projects like the Boulevard are why we created the New Bremen TIF and the Main Street North TIF in the first place – to attract high-quality developments and bring commercial development to Downtown Tinley. It's important to note that each of the local affected taxing bodies supports this new TIF. These types of projects, along with the new plaza that will begin construction next year, promises to breathe new life into Downtown Tinley.

The development team, which consists of Hansen Development and Joe Rizza Auto Group, is requesting \$2.2 million in upfront funds to assist with the estimated \$3.3 million in public infrastructure improvements the location needs such as sidewalks, burying utility poles and water mains. These funds will be reimbursed to the Village as increment is generated by the project. Many of these improvements would have to be made by the Village regardless of this particular project due to aging infrastructure.

The developer has agreed to pay for all public improvements greater than the \$2.2 million incentive, no matter the costs. Having the developer perform these improvements is beneficial to us as a Village because it's more efficient for them to do the improvements now with the new development improvements, than to do them on our own. The developer can better coordinate the work of the various contractors and avoid conflicts that can result in construction delays. The estimated costs of the infrastructure improvements are detailed on pages 91 to 93 in the packet linked near the end of this article.



**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**David J. Niemeyer**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The developer is also requesting \$4.8 million in tax increment development to assist with TIF-eligible expenses in the estimated \$32.7 million private development. A major objective of this incentive is to help finance the commercial development portion of this project, which the Village believes is important to the growth and revitalization of the downtown area and the Village economy. It is also important to note that the TIF funds supporting this incentive will be generated by the success of the development and will not include any Village funds. Furthermore, there are timetables in terms of construction that incent the developer to construct the project in a timely manner.

The Village will share as much as 50% of the yearly TIF increment with the developer until the Village receives all of its \$2.2 million in public infrastructure incentives back, after which the developer will receive up to the maximum \$4.8 million based on documented TIF costs.

The other parts of the incentive include a permit fee cap of \$100,000 and a land swap. The full details of the incentive package were included in the Village agenda packet for the Oct. 9, 2018 Committee of the Whole meeting, but I have included a direct link to this 114-page document for your convenience. The estimated value of the incentives is about \$7.5 million.

Incentives for development projects like this are thoroughly reviewed by staff and the Village Board. They are the result of extensive meetings and negotiations.

I invite all of you to read more about this project on the Village's Current Projects page. This project will be up for approval at the Nov. 6 Village Board meeting. Until next time, have a great Halloween and be sure to visit us at the annual Boo Bash, happening from noon to 3 p.m. this Sunday in Zabrocki Plaza.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**David J. Niemeyer**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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qa.wbez.org (IL)  
September 21, 2018

**Tinley Park’s Affordable Housing Fight is Over. Will the Village Now Diversify?**

Author: Miles Bryan

Delores Franks lives in far southwest suburban Joliet, but she likes to shop in Tinley Park, a village about 20 miles away. But Franks, who is black, said she doesn’t like to linger there for too long. “You can see it in certain stores. You can feel it in certain restaurants,” she said. “It’s like you’re not wanted here, even though you are spending your money.” For decades, southwest suburban Tinley Park, located about 30 miles from Chicago, has remained overwhelmingly white, even as many nearby suburbs grew increasingly diverse. This week marked what is likely the final chapter in a two-and-a-half year saga that at times put that racial disparity under a spotlight.

Tinley Park appointed a “Fair Housing Officer” Tuesday. It also adopted a fair housing policy, and will soon put village employees through fair housing training. The changes were required as part of a recent settlement with the U.S. Department of Justice, which sued the village in 2016 for blocking an affordable housing complex that would have likely attracted mostly black residents, according to the DOJ. The federal complaint alleged that village officials capitulated to “racially motivated community opposition” to the housing plan.

Village Manager **David Niemeyer** said Tinley Park plans to keep its fair housing officer on longer than the three years required by the settlement, and the village is committed to welcoming people regardless of race. “The village and its residents are friendly to all people and welcome with open arms African-Americans and anyone who wants to be a positive part of our community,” **Niemeyer** said in a written statement to WBEZ. But some fair-housing advocates and black people who visit the village are skeptical that much will change.

“Tinley Park got off very easy,” said John Petruszak, the executive director of the nonprofit advocacy group South Suburban Housing Center. “I think we are going to be monitoring what’s going on there for quite some time to try and make it a place where African-Americans perceive they can move to.” The Ohio-based nonprofit Buckeye Community Hope Foundation first proposed building 47 units of affordable housing in Tinley Park in 2015. In February 2016, hundreds of people attended a village board meeting to protest the housing plan, citing fears of falling property values, bigger classroom sizes in schools, and skepticism about the developer.

Although the plan was considered to be in “precise conformance” with village code, it was sent back to the Tinley Park Planning Department for further review, “stalling the project indefinitely,” the DOJ said. In November 2016, the DOJ sued Tinley Park, arguing that much of the resistance to the affordable housing development was motivated by racism. It cited comments left on Facebook groups formed around the issue as evidence, including: “I’ll bet my life savings that this place is overrun by garbage within a year or two,” and “the future of Tinley is looking more and more like Harvey.” That village, also in the south suburbs, is about 70 percent black,

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****David J. Niemeyer***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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according to 2016 U.S. Census Bureau data. Petruszak, who has worked on fair housing issues in the south suburbs for more than 30 years, said Tinley Park and other southwest suburbs have remained overwhelmingly white even as many black Chicagoans began moving south of the city in the 1980s and 1990s. “You saw white families then moving west and east,” Petruszak said. “East into Indiana, and west into communities like Tinley Park that are west of I-57.” According to census records, Tinley Park’s black population has grown from 1.6 percent in 1990 to 3.8 percent in 2016. By contrast, nearby Homewood has gone from 6.4 percent black to 37 percent in that same time, while Country Club Hills has gone from 58 percent black to 87 percent. The percentage of Tinley Park’s residents who are black is significantly lower than the percentage of those who work there: About 14 percent of people working in Tinley Park are black, according to federal jobs data. Delores Franks said that she plans to continue shopping in Tinley Park, but she could never see herself moving there. “I don’t think I would be comfortable,” she said. “I don’t want to be anywhere where I feel unwanted.”

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**David J. Niemeyer**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Daily Southtown (Chicago, IL)  
June 12, 2018

**Date is set for settlement talks - Conference ordered by federal court in 2016 fair housing lawsuit against Tinley Park to begin in June - Tinley Park**

Author: Mike Nolan

Talks aimed at reaching a settlement of the Justice Department's lawsuit against Tinley Park regarding its handling of a controversial apartment development will start later this month, according to the village and a court filing. A June 25 conference will involve attorneys for the government and Tinley Park as well as retired U.S. District Court Judge David Coar, according to last Thursday's filing. The settlement discussion was ordered by the judge overseeing the case, but no agreement has been reached on resolving the matter out of court, **Dave Niemeyer**, village manager, said in an email Monday.

Just before Thanksgiving in 2016, the Justice Department sued Tinley Park, alleging officials violated the federal Fair Housing Act when they refused to approve plans for The Reserve, an apartment project slated for the northeast corner of 183rd Street and Oak Park Avenue that would have targeted low-income renters.

Coar served 16 years as a U.S. district court judge in Chicago and serves as a mediator and arbitrator for Judicial Arbitration and Mediation Services, which describes itself as the world's largest private alternative dispute resolution provider. JAMS declined to confirm its involvement in any discussions aimed at a settlement of the Tinley Park/Justice Department matter. Coar was a judge from 1994 until 2010 and prior to that served as a bankruptcy court judge for eight years in the Northern District. Coar joined JAMS in 2011.

Tinley Park last year settled a lawsuit filed against it by The Reserve's developer, and the village sued its former planning director, Amy Connolly, accusing her of breaching her fiduciary duties as a village employee and blaming her for the village being ensnared in costly litigation related to the apartment development, plans for which have since been dropped.

The reference to the settlement conference was made in the village's request for additional time to comply with an order by U.S. District Court Judge Sara Ellis to provide transcripts of closed-session talks among village officials during which The Reserve was discussed. Ellis had told the village to provide the transcripts for her to review by June 7, but attorneys said more time is needed because the conversations were recorded on audiotapes, which must be transcribed, and the people who were involved in the discussions are not clearly identified by name on the recordings, which involves a separate step of identifying who was talking, according to the extension request.

The Justice Department has sought the recordings or transcripts from the executive session meetings held in February and March of 2016, with some of the discussions taking place around the time the village's Plan Commission tabled a vote that could have potentially given the green

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**David J. Niemeyer**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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light to the apartment development. The village's attorneys have maintained that because the lawyer who was village attorney at the time was present during the closed-door talks, anything discussed is protected by attorney-client privilege. Ellis is hearing the Justice Department complaint and presiding over the Connolly matter and has scheduled status hearings on both for June 20.

Tinley Park has paid approximately \$2.3 million in legal bills related to The Reserve, including the Justice Department litigation, the lawsuit against Connolly and the complaint brought by developer Buckeye Community Hope Foundation. Legal bills don't include the April 2017 settlement with Buckeye. Per the terms of the settlement, according to the village, Tinley Park paid \$75,392 from the village's general fund, with another \$684,608 coming from a legal settlement fund held on the village's behalf by its insurer, the Intergovernmental Risk Management Association. IRMA also paid an additional \$1.69 million toward the total settlement of \$2.45 million.

Buckeye sued the village in April 2016 following a decision in early February of that year by the village's Plan Commission to table a vote on The Reserve. In seeking to keep the details of the closed-session discussions under wraps, the village notes that Buckeye had threatened a lawsuit as of late January of that year and that potential litigation involving the developer was "the dominant topic of conversation" during a Feb. 2, 2016, executive session.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**David J. Niemeyer**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Daily Southtown (IL)  
April 22, 2018

**Tinley Seeks to Control Costs of Ethics Complaints**  
**Village Has Spent Nearly \$50K in Legal Fees This Fiscal Year**  
Author: Mike Nolan

As they seek to control legal costs associated with investigating ethics complaints filed against village elected officials and employees, Tinley Park trustees want to test a two-step process. Trustees had, in February, approved a 90-day stay on investigating new ethics complaints, although the village has continued to accept such complaints. The village, in order to maintain an arms-length approach toward investigating the complaints, relies on outside law firms to handle investigations, but "the expense of investigating (the complaints) is significant," Trustee Michael Pannitto said at a Village Board committee meeting Tuesday where the matter was discussed. During the current fiscal year, which ends at the end of the month, the village has spent more than \$48,700 on legal fees associated with examining ethics complaints, according to village records.

Pannitto and other trustees said they favored a "threshold test" to decide whether a complaint is valid and requires further investigation by an outside lawyer, but they initially couldn't agree on who would make such a determination. A suggestion was that an appointed committee do a preliminary evaluation of ethics complaints to determine what Pannitto, an attorney, described as "probable cause," but trustees couldn't agree on who would sit on such a panel and who would appoint them. It was also agreed that any such committee would also need an attorney advising it. Trustee Michael Glotz said he agreed that the legal expenses had become an issue but that he was "not comfortable with a hand-picked committee that is going to be the judge and jury" deciding whether a complaint against an employee or elected official has merit.

Eventually discarding the idea of a review committee, trustees, at the suggestion of Village Manager **Dave Niemeyer**, agreed to continue using outside lawyers but to have them make an initial decision on whether to move ahead with a full investigation of an ethics complaint. Patrick Connelly, the village's attorney, said he would come up with some basic criteria that a complaint would have to meet before being considered for a more thorough evaluation. Trustees hope to firm up the new process before the 90-day stay lapses later next month, but Connelly said that "getting this right is much more important" than a moratorium, which could be extended another week or so if needed. Pannitto said whatever process that trustees decide on doesn't have to be "perfect right now" and that if it turns out the two-step review "still costs a ton of money, we can revisit it."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**David J. Niemeyer**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Chicago Tribune (IL)  
December 13, 2017

**Lawsuit: Tinley Park Officials Blocked Job Opportunities**

Author: Mike Nolan

A Tinley Park attorney is accusing some village officials of "purposefully and maliciously" blocking attempts by the village's mayor to hire him. The lawsuit in Cook County Circuit Court by Steve Eberhardt comes just weeks after the Village Board thwarted an appointment by Mayor Jacob Vandenberg to have Eberhardt take over the duties of overseeing the village's emergency services and 911 communications. In his complaint, which seeks damages in excess of \$1 million, Eberhardt also alleges that some village officials stymied a plan several months ago by Vandenberg to name Eberhardt to a newly created job of chief information officer/special assistant to the mayor.

Defendants in the lawsuit include Village Manager **Dave Niemeyer** and Pat Carr, assistant village manager and director of Tinley Park's emergency services operations. They are being sued as individuals and not in any official capacity as village employees, according to the lawsuit, filed Nov. 20. Eberhardt contends their actions were based on their "own personal and political self-interests, motivations and animus" toward him. An attorney with a law firm representing the five defendants in the complaint did not respond to a message left seeking comment. **Niemeyer**, Carr and the other defendants are scheduled to file their responses to the lawsuit later this month.

Carr had been serving as emergency management and 911 communications director as well as interim assistant village manager until Oct. 17, when the Village Board approved him as assistant manager. Vandenberg, in an Oct. 19 memo, said he was naming Eberhardt to replace Carr in that Carr's promotion to village manager had created a vacancy in the job of emergency services coordinator. Although the village's personnel code prohibits one person from holding two jobs, trustees at the Nov. 21 Village Board meeting approved an exception, recommended by **Niemeyer**, to allow Carr to hold both jobs. He is not being paid two salaries, however, and the village plans to evaluate the dual roles in a year.

In his lawsuit, Eberhardt said the new mayor had intended to tap Eberhardt for a job, starting on or around June 1, that would "foster government transparency" and include " 'watchdog' type duties in an official capacity to help protect the interests of the residents, taxpayers and businesses" of the village. In May, after being sworn in as mayor, Vandenberg gave **Niemeyer** and Carr a job description for a new position that Eberhardt was to fill as chief information officer, reporting directly to the mayor. Duties included identifying inefficiencies, waste and potential for misconduct in village government; conducting periodic audits of village departments, boards and activities to spot evidence of fraud, abuse or illegal acts; and to receive and register complaints and information concerning inefficiency, waste and misconduct within village government, according to the lawsuit. The job description doesn't say what the salary would be.

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**David J. Niemeyer**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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**Niemeyer** and Carr didn't carry out the mayor's direction to implement the new position in part because of their desire to "thwart government transparency they knew would result" as well as a "fear they would have no control over (Eberhardt's) duties" because he would report directly to Vandenberg, Eberhardt alleges. He said that **Niemeyer** and Carr instead crafted a position for the job of Transparency, Compliance and Purchasing Officer that would have some of the same duties as the CEO position proposed but with the job holder reporting to the assistant village manager. The position proposed a salary, depending on qualifications, of \$90,000 a year. They drafted the position "specifically with terms which they believed plaintiff would not accept," Eberhardt said in the lawsuit. **Niemeyer**, Carr "and others known and unknown conspired and took actions to prevent the employment" of Eberhardt, he alleges, noting that he withdrew from many legal cases based on the promises that he would be taking a full-time job with the village.



**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**David J. Niemeyer**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Daily Southtown (IL)  
September 21, 2017

**Project Helps Make Walk on Mild Side  
Sidewalk to Address Student Safety Concerns  
Tinley Park**

Author: Ted Slowik

Teenagers tend to do what they want. Ask any parent or educator, and chances are they'll tell you it can be difficult at times to control the behavior of a teen. I've been concerned for some time about the safety of teens who walk along the road as traffic whizzes by along 175th Street between Ridgeland Avenue and Tinley Park High School. I'm not the first or only one concerned. When Tinley Park High School Principal Theresa Nolan learned that work on a sewer project would block access to the sidewalk along the north side of the road, she made a shuttle bus available to transport students who are within walking distance of the school. However, hardly any students are taking advantage of the service since it became available when the school year began a month ago, Nolan told me.

"The participation has been few to none," she said. "Students continue to walk, as they have for decades now, on the south side of the street along the shoulder. There has been little impact to walkers since they are continuing the pattern of behavior that has gone on for years." At long last, something is being done that might finally change the behavior of students who flirt with danger by walking close to traffic. Work is scheduled to begin this week on a project to build a sidewalk where none previously existed in front of homes along the south side of 175th Street, Tinley Park Village Manager **David Niemeyer** told me. "The project should take several weeks to complete," **Niemeyer** said. "This will improve the safety of students who walk on the shoulder."

The Tinley Park Village Board on July 18 awarded a \$143,984 contract for the work to Monee-based Davis Concrete, which submitted the lowest of four bids. "There is currently an uninterrupted sidewalk on the north side of the street, but this sidewalk lies on the opposite side of the street from the school," the village said in the minutes of its July 18 meeting. "As a result, many students over the years have been walking in the street instead of using the available sidewalk on the north side of the street, putting themselves and vehicles at risk. The village has received many complaints."

Like I said, I'm hardly the first to express concerns about the situation. A column I wrote nearly a year ago about the issue may have helped revive efforts to achieve a solution. "I urge village officials to make these improvements a higher priority and to work with the county on a plan to fund engineering and construction costs," I wrote in a piece published on Oct. 19, 2016. Two weeks later, **Niemeyer** addressed the issue in a newsletter to residents. He said the village had been trying for years to extend the sidewalk along the south side of 175th Street. "This was targeted to be completed as part of the Cook County improvement of 175th Street to the west of Ridgeland Avenue," **Niemeyer** said in a newsletter dated Nov. 3, 2016. "Unfortunately, that

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**David J. Niemeyer**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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project stalled in 2009 due to a lack of funding. It was a Cook County-funded project that was to cost about \$6 million." He said in the newsletter that then-Mayor David Seaman and other village officials met at the time with Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle to get the project back on track.

Becky Schlikerman, a spokeswoman for Cook County, said the county board last week approved a contract for design and engineering services for three road projects in the area. Tinley Park is the lead agency for the roadwork, and the county will reimburse the village \$482,562 for engineering and design work related to the three projects, Schlikerman said. The three projects are 175th Street from Oak Park Avenue to Ridgeland Avenue, Ridgeland Avenue from 175th Street to Oak Forest Avenue, and Oak Forest Avenue from Ridgeland Avenue to 167th Street. "Included in every project along a county route is a complete streets analysis to determine the appropriate accommodation for pedestrian and bicycle traffic, per the county's complete streets ordinance," she said.

On 175th Street, a 5-foot sidewalk will be provided on both sides of the street, she said, referring to the span between Oak Park and Ridgeland. That's west of the area that has me most concerned. Still, I credit Tinley Park officials for realizing the need for a sidewalk between Ridgeland Avenue and the high school and for hiring a contractor to build it. Nolan believes the new sidewalk along the south side of 175th Street will finally resolve safety concerns that have existed since Bremen High School District 228 opened Tinley Park High School in 1961. "This sidewalk will now allow students to safely be off the shoulder of the road," she said.

There's an adage that you can't make an omelet without breaking a few eggs. The work will temporarily inconvenience about a dozen homeowners along 175th Street. They've had a rough summer, with noise and dust related to construction of the Freedom Pond water-retention project on what was formerly part of the Panduit property. Lately, the intersection of Ridgeland Avenue and 175th Street has been tough to negotiate, with one lane blocked on 175th west of Ridgeland. Nolan said she is grateful to residents who will be inconvenienced during sidewalk construction. "Village officials shared with us that this is being done in two separate phases to minimize the inconvenience to homeowners. They are anticipating each phase to last for approximately two weeks at a time."

The village said in July the new sidewalk would be designed to accommodate existing landscaping in front of homes along the route. "The one thing I hope we can all agree upon is the fact that a two-week inconvenience to provide a safe passage for our students to walk to school is far more valuable than dealing with the aftermath of a student being struck by a car on the shoulder of the road," Nolan said.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**David J. Niemeyer**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Daily Southtown (Chicago, IL)  
April 20, 2017

**Tinley Park resolves lawsuit - Board votes to approve settlement of \$2.45 million**

Author: Mike Nolan

With a quick, uneventful vote at Tuesday's village board meeting, Tinley Park officials laid to rest one legal controversy stemming from plans, now abandoned, to build apartments in the village that would target low-income renters. The settlement with Buckeye Community Hope Foundation, the Ohio-based nonprofit that proposed to build the 47-unit The Reserve, means the apartment project won't be built but it's unclear whether the agreement will also help in settling a separate lawsuit against the village, brought by the Justice Department, alleging violations of federal fair housing laws.

On Wednesday, a year to the day since Buckeye filed its federal lawsuit, a check for \$2.45 million was to have been delivered to the Chicago offices of the law firm Holland & Knight, which represented Buckeye in the lawsuit. Per the terms of the settlement, Tinley Park will pay Buckeye \$75,392 from the village's general fund. Buckeye will receive an additional \$684,608 from a legal settlement fund held on the village's behalf by its insurer, the Intergovernmental Risk Management Association. IRMA will then pay Buckeye another \$1.69 million out of its own fund, for a total settlement of \$2.45 million.

**Dave Niemeyer**, Tinley Park's village manager, said that IRMA had urged the village to settle the Buckeye matter and was also involved in negotiating the amount of the settlement. Steven Elrod, an attorney with Holland & Knight, declined to comment Wednesday on how the dollar amount was calculated.

Village officials said that the continuing cost of pursuing its defense of the lawsuit was a major factor in agreeing to settle. Trustee Brian Younker, prior to the board vote, said that the legal fees for the village could have been "well in excess" of \$1 million had the matter gone to trial and the outcome of the case been appealed by either side. Buckeye sued after the village's Plan Commission, in early February of last year, tabled a vote that would have cleared the way for The Reserve to be built. Buckeye alleged that village officials had improperly interfered in blocking the project and discriminated against prospective tenants of building.

As part of the settlement, Tinley Park denies any wrongful conduct on its part. The village contended that the building was required to have street-level commercial space, while Buckeye maintained that its apartment development had been in compliance with village codes at the time the Plan Commission considered the project. Enforcing street-level commercial requirements, Buckeye argued, was discriminatory against affordable housing.

Buckeye "would have preferred to build its residential development as it originally planned," and was "disappointed in the way the village conducted itself" during the review process, Elrod said. "We feel strongly we would have prevailed" had the case gone to trial, he said. Attorneys for the

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**David J. Niemeyer**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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village and Buckeye had "been talking about settlement concepts on and off for several months," and one proposal that had been on the table, but not pursued, called for Buckeye to build The Reserve but with commercial space on the ground floor, Elrod said.

Separate from the Buckeye settlement, attorneys for the village are awaiting a judge's decision on Tinley Park's motion to dismiss a lawsuit brought last November by the Justice Department alleging village officials violated federal fair housing laws by not approving the apartments.

Also, this past January, Tinley Park's former planning director Amy Connolly filed a complaint with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development alleging her suspension violated federal fair housing laws. Connolly was suspended from her job, which she'd held since the fall of 2007, about two weeks after the Plan Commission tabled a vote on The Reserve. She had played a key role in reviewing plans for the project and had determined it complied with village development rules in place at the time.

Changes to the village's Legacy Code governing development in the downtown business district were made to firm up the "street level commercial" requirement, and an ordinance finalizing those revisions was approved by the village board at its Tuesday meeting. Connolly resigned in May of last year to take the job of city development director in Racine, Wis. HUD is investigating her complaint and could file a lawsuit against Tinley Park should it find that her claims have merit, Connolly's attorney, Patrick Walsh, said Wednesday.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**David J. Niemeyer**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Daily Southtown (IL)  
February 13, 2017

**Tinley Park Opts Out of New Cook Ordinances**

Author: Mike Nolan

Tinley Park has become the latest community to opt out of new Cook County laws boosting employees' minimum wage and providing paid sick leave. In an ordinance approved unanimously at Tuesday's Village Board meeting, the village requires Tinley Park private sector employers to abide by state and federal laws covering minimum wage, but exempts them from following the new county rules that take effect July 1.

Other Chicago suburbs, including Barrington, Oak Forest and Rosemont, also have voted to opt out of the county's regulations, which cover incorporated, as well as unincorporated areas. The Cook County Board last fall approved ordinances requiring employers to provide paid sick leave, as well as increase the minimum wage paid to employees.

The minimum wage will rise from the state's current \$8.25 to \$10 starting July 1, with dollar-an-hour hikes kicking in July 1 of subsequent years, reaching \$13 by July 2020. Beyond 2020, increases will be tied to the rate of inflation, but not exceed 2.5 percent. Also starting July 1, employees, with few exceptions, will earn an hour of paid sick leave for every 40 hours worked, up to a maximum of 40 hours of sick leave annually. Suburbs that are near the border of Cook and its collar counties are concerned that they could be at a disadvantage if businesses in their communities are required to follow the new Cook County requirements while those nearby in an adjacent county are not.

In a memo last month to trustees, Tinley Park village manager **Dave Niemeyer** noted that because portions of the village are in both Cook and Will counties, businesses "would essentially be operating under two different sets of rules" regarding wages and sick time.

Before the Village Board's vote, Trustee Michael Pannitto said that he was not opposed to protections for employees, but that the county regulations went "a little too far."

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**David J. Niemeyer**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Tinley Park (IL)  
January 26, 2017

**For the Record**

Author: **David Niemeyer**

The Village of Tinley Park is undertaking several new and exciting projects this year. With the music branding initiative, a complete redesign of the Village website, development of the 280-acre state property along Harlem Avenue and continued efforts to increase government transparency through social media and live-streaming of Village Board meetings, 2017 is already shaping up to be a very busy and productive year. Another project with far-reaching implications for the future of Tinley Park is the new strategic plan, which the Village Board approved at its Jan. 17 meeting. The plan will guide the Village for years to come and provides several key benefits.

The plan documents the priorities of both the Village Board and residents, and sets a course for action several years in the future. This is in stark contrast to a traditional budget, which is normally only a one-year financial planning document. The plan will also provide direction and accountability to staff and help to communicate with residents the direction in which the Village Board is headed. It also prioritizes limited resources and funding. At the beginning of this process, the Board chose to develop a plan that involved substantial input from residents and community leaders. Residents were able to participate in an online survey, and I'm happy to report that we received a total of 1,191 responses. Focus groups also convened with residents, businesses, community leaders, civic groups and students to ensure all facets of our community were represented in the new plan.

The Village Board then convened a two-day planning process where they reviewed the community input and began to develop goals, which were ranked from a priority one to a priority four and included many ambitious aims in the areas of community development, public safety, infrastructure, marketing and finances. The full plan is available for viewing on the Village website by clicking [here](#). It will be reviewed with the Board regularly and will be used as a guide for making future Village budget decisions. It will also be reviewed for potential changes each year in December when the Village begins its budget planning process. I encourage you to review the plan online and give me any comments you may have!

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**David J. Niemeyer**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Chicago Business (IL)  
November 28, 2016

**Feds Hit Tinley Park with Housing Discrimination Suit**

Author: Dennis Rodkin

Tinley Park officials stalled approvals of a proposed low-income housing development in the wake of local residents' race-based criticism of the plan, according to a lawsuit filed by the U.S. Department of Justice. The suit, filed on Nov. 23, charges village officials violated the Fair Housing Act by effectively mothballing a developer's plan to build a 47-unit, three-story apartment building called the Reserve. The units would be rented to people making less than 60 percent of the area's median income—primarily "low, very low, or extremely low income households," according to the Justice Department suit. The developer would finance the below-market rents using the federal Low Income Housing Tax Credit. The architecture and other details of the proposal conformed with all requirements laid out in the village's master plan, which meant, according to that same master plan, that it should speed through the approval process, the Justice Department claims.

After Tinley Park residents voiced objections at village meetings and in Facebook groups last winter, the project was referred back to the suburb's planning department in February. In the nine months since, "the planning department has not requested additional information about the Reserve" from the developer, Buckeye Community SixtyNine, according to the suit. The developer is affiliated with Buckeye Community Hope Foundation, based in Columbus, Ohio. The stalled approval process indicates village officials "capitulated" to community residents' race-based opposition to the project, the Justice Department charges. Regional demographics suggest blacks would be three times as likely to qualify for the rentals than white households, the suit says.

"The village wholeheartedly disagrees that any decision made by the village in regard to the Reserve project was in any way based on race or any other improper considerations," said a statement released by Dave Seaman, Tinley Park's mayor, and **Dave Niemeyer**, village manager. "The village of Tinley Park does provide affordable housing to its residents, promotes diversity and provides services for those in need. The village continues to object to the use of taxpayer dollars on this issue, but is prepared to defend its actions through further court proceedings, if necessary."

Tinley Park's population is 88.8 percent white, according to the 2010 U.S. Census, and 3.7 percent black. Buckeye began communicating with Tinley Park officials about building on a vacant site at Oak Park Avenue and 183rd Street in February 2015, according to the suit, and submitted a final application to the village's planning department in December.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**David J. Niemeyer**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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**BREAKDOWN OF UNITS**

After the Daily Southtown reported in January that the affordable-housing project was proposed, "Tinley Park residents initiated a campaign to oppose and stop development of The Reserve," the Justice Department charges in its suit. Two Facebook groups, Concerned Citizens for Tinley Park and Citizens for Tinley Park, both of them with village trustees as members, had discussions about the proposal, the suit says. Members' comments "are disparaging towards future residents of the Reserve," according to the suit. The comments included: "Wth, we pay high taxes and house prices to live in HUD neighborhoods." "This needs to be stopped. It will bring so much crime and ruin Tinley." "Whitey doesn't have a chance." When one commenter posted a photo of an African-American man pouring malt liquor on a gravestone, the suit says, another commented, "Is that one of the hopeful occupants?"

**MEETINGS HELD**

About 300 people attended a Feb. 2 meeting of the Tinley Park board of trustees, some of them complaining the proposed affordable housing development would depress property values and bring in residents who needed government services that cost more than the taxes generated by the development. Despite the fact that the project's being in "precise conformance" meant it should be allowed to move ahead, Tinley Park's Plan Commission sent the proposal back to the planning department staff for further review, the suit says.

The proposal has been left on hold since that time, the suit charges. "Tinley Park's actions were taken in response to community opposition based on the race and racial stereotypes of the prospective tenants of affordable housing," the Justice Department charges. Separately, Buckeye, the developer, sued Tinley Park in April over the delays in approval. That case is still pending. The village has also been sued by a group opposed to the project, who allege an October 2015 ordinance changed the master plan's language to no longer require but encourage first-floor commercial space in certain new buildings. The change favors the proposal for the Reserve, which has no first-floor commercial space.



**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**David J. Niemeyer**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Tinley Park (IL)  
October 20, 2016

**For the Record**

Author: **David Niemeyer**

With the Village's new Facebook page launching just a few weeks ago and the recent announcement that we'll be pursuing music as Tinley Park's new brand, it's been an incredibly busy and productive month. I'd like to take a few minutes to update you on another recent development, namely that the Village Board has decided to hire two outside experts who will help to improve our staff's efficiency and make sure we are paying competitive but fair salaries and benefits to our employees.

The Village hired Paypoint HR to look at the salaries of all non-union employees to ensure they're competitive and comparable to other similarly sized communities. They'll also examine how we can improve our merit pay system and will take a hard look at benefits - things such as health insurance, vacation pay, etc. This study will also include both public and private sector comparisons where appropriate, with a focus on job descriptions and how positions compare to each other. In my experience, professionally managed communities will typically undertake comprehensive salary surveys every few years. It has been about 10 years since Tinley Park did its last comprehensive salary survey and pay plan review.

The Village also hired Matrix Consulting Group to review the Village Hall organizational structure to make sure it aligns with the goals and service level expectations of the residents and Village Board. The expert will conduct a best-management practice and comparative assessment of staffing allocations, analyze the organization, analyze our operations and staffing in each function, review whether redundant or unnecessary tasks can be eliminated, recommend how technology can be used to better deliver services, and analyze the effectiveness of Village operations and potential cost-savings opportunities.

It's important to note that, for both of these studies, not every single position in the Village is going to have an exact comparable match. Some of our staff members may perform the duties of two or more employees at a comparable location, while other jobs that are performed by one person elsewhere are spread out here amongst several people. All of this means it's not always going to be an easy cookie-cutter comparison, which is one reason why we've elected to hire an independent company that specializes in conducting these kinds of studies.

A key advantage of having an independent expert conduct these studies is assurance of an impartial and unbiased analysis. Occasionally, towns will hire more staff and pay the corresponding salaries and benefits to undertake special projects such as conducting these studies rather than hiring outside experts. I support moving forward with an external expert who can get this project completed in a timely manner, free from other distractions.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**David J. Niemeyer**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Both studies should be completed within the next several months and, when finished, should yield an end product that will provide us with the tools needed to help make our Village staff as efficient as it can be. We also want to continue to attract and retain talented, experienced employees while making sure the salaries are competitive and comparable to other similarly sized organizations in the public and private sectors. Using the information provided from these studies, I'm confident we can do just that.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**David J. Niemeyer**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Chicago Tribune: Daily Southtown (IL)

July 13, 2016

**Tinley Park Eyes \$2.5 Million County Grant, But Property Owners Must OK Annexation**

Author: Mike Nolan

Tinley Park officials are hoping to convince dozens of homeowners in the Kimberly Heights subdivision to agree to annex into the village, wooing them with promises of Lake Michigan water, better police protection and freshly paved streets. The village is in line for a \$2.5 million grant from Cook County, part of the county's initiative to do away with pockets of unincorporated territory, and would use the money to install water lines in part of the subdivision that lacks access to Lake Michigan water, as well as improve stormwater drainage.

The snag is that everyone would have to be on board with the annexation proposal for the county to award the grant, Village Manager **Dave Niemeyer** told residents at an informational meeting Monday. And residents would be on the hook for sharing in the costs of extending water lines and were told their property taxes could go up about 17 percent annually. Kimberly Heights is bounded by James Street to the north, 167th Street to the south, Ridgeland Avenue to the west and Austin Boulevard to the east. Many property owners in Kimberly Heights previously annexed into the village, which put in water lines, although there are still sections in the western portion of the subdivision that remain unincorporated. Most of the homes that don't have access to water lines and rely on wells are in the eastern third of the subdivision. A separate sanitary district handles sewage in the subdivision, but that district would be eliminated should residents agree to annex.

In total, 70 homeowners would need to petition the village to request annexation, although **Niemeyer** said Cook County officials would be asked if the 100-percent threshold is negotiable, provided there is sufficient interest among property owners to annex. About 80 people who live in the subdivision attended the meeting at Tinley Park High School, where they were told that of the \$2.5 million grant, \$1 million would be earmarked for extending water lines and the balance for improving drainage ditches throughout the subdivision. To cover the estimated \$1.7 million price tag to install water lines through the east section of the subdivision, all property owners seeking to annex would share in the cost. Homeowners in the eastern portion would pay an estimated \$12,400 each, plus as much as \$4,500 to run water from the street to their home, while those properties in the area that is already largely annexed would pay an estimated \$10,800 per homeowner, plus a separate charge to run a water line into their home.

The village wouldn't force them to abandon their wells and connect to the municipal water supply, although they would still be responsible for their portion of the cost of extending water lines. They would be able to spread the cost over 15 years, although not the cost of running water into their home. Still, some residents said that the cost might be out of reach for some on fixed incomes who want Lake Michigan water, and asked whether the village could pursue other grants. **Niemeyer** said that while the village could potentially seek a low-interest loan, government grants are hard to come by.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**David J. Niemeyer**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Homeowners asked whether the village would consider a forced annexation of their properties should not enough of them agree to voluntarily annex. While the village has in the past taken that route in a handful of cases, **Niemeyer** said the Village Board has generally been opposed to it. The village told homeowners that should they annex, the village would not put in curbs, gutters or sidewalks to help maintain the "rural character" of the neighborhood, but streetlights would be installed at some intersections. The village said it would resurface streets in the subdivision if the remaining unincorporated properties are annexed. Some residents said that having Tinley Park police respond to emergency calls would be a benefit of annexation, noting Cook County sheriff's police are spread thin over a large area of unincorporated sections in Harvey and South Holland to also patrol. Tinley Park police do accompany ambulances that are dispatched to calls in Kimberly Heights.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**David J. Niemeyer**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Tinley Park (IL)  
June 2, 2016

**For the Record**

Author: **David Niemeyer**

Editor's Note: In this new column, Village Manager **Dave Niemeyer** shares information on key issues affecting the Village of Tinley Park. Look for it on a semi-regular basis in the Community Email.

I'd like to take a few moments to address a recent allegation that claims the Village hasn't been collecting on the value of its recyclable materials for 26 years. The contract has its roots in the year 1990, a time when the world was just waking up to the importance of recycling and taking actions to protect the environment for future generations. At the June 26, 1990 Tinley Park Village Board meeting, the board voted on two notable pieces of legislation: Ordinance 90-O-053 regarding recycling regulations, as well as Resolution 90-R-027 approving a three-year deal with Tinley Park Disposal.

The wording in the ordinance stated the Village is entitled to collect on the full value of the recycled items. This likely was a boilerplate ordinance used by multiple municipalities at the time, which the Village decided to adopt as its own. The contract with Tinley Park Disposal, a resolution which again was voted on the same day as the ordinance, stated the refuse contractor would give the Village a flat annual payment of \$10,000 in lieu of collecting on the value of the recyclable materials. During the 1990 competitive bidding process for the refuse contractor, bidders were allowed to offer various methods of payment to the Village for the value of recycling, including a flat fee.

This payment was increased to \$12,000 in 1993 and remained at that rate until the annual payment was deleted altogether in 2001 in exchange for the refuse contractor agreeing to take responsibility for the delivery and cost of recycling bins, an expense the Village had previously paid. The Village's legal counsel is of the opinion that the contract with Tinley Park Disposal supersedes the Village code, both of which were approved on the same day. In retrospect, the Village should have realized the ordinance and resolution were at odds and reworded the ordinance, but this is a minor issue.

The Village's next steps on this issue will be to reword the Village Code to better compliment the refuse contract. [Click here](#) for a timetable of events, and [click here](#) to read the minutes from the June 26, 1990 Tinley Park Village Board Meeting.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**David J. Niemeyer**

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Illinois Leaks (IL)

April 2, 2016

**Tinley Park Planning Director Amy Connolly Preposterously Cries Discrimination**

Author: Unknown

Correspondence between disgraced Tinley Park Planning Director Amy Connolly and embattled Village Manager **David Niemeyer** shows what appears to be a threat made by Connolly of a discrimination lawsuit against the Village after Connolly was put on paid administrative leave for her role in allegedly tampering with the Village's Legacy Code zoning ordinance. Both Connolly and Village Attorney Thomas Melody (of the Orland Park firm Klein Thorpe Jenkins) are personally named in a lawsuit filed on 3/22/16 by citizens of Tinley Park in Cook County Circuit Court chancery division to have a Judge declare void all tampering to the zoning code that Connolly and Melody are alleged to have done in August and September 2015 to intentionally benefit the Columbus, Ohio-based Buckeye Community Hope Foundation.

The lawsuit alleges that Buckeye needed the zoning code tampered with to remove the words "street level commercial required" and replace them with "street level commercial permitted" for Buckeye to be able to build a low income housing project in the formerly "commercial required" Oak Park Avenue Corridor of downtown Tinley Park. Buckeye's project, called "The Reserve," has never included the kind of street level commercial space that the Legacy Code zoning ordinance required (before it was tampered with in 2015, in what the lawsuit alleges was a deliberate act designed to specifically benefit Buckeye by removing the word "required" and altering it to "permitted" so \$16 million "The Reserve" project could proceed).

A housing project in 2014 for senior living residential units by a developer called PIRHL without street level commercial space was not allowed to proceed because of the strict "commercial required" zoning code. The lawsuit alleges that Connolly and Melody intentionally tampered with the zoning code to allow Buckeye to succeed in 2015 where PIRHL failed in 2014. A letter from Village Manager **David Niemeyer** to Connolly, dated 2/17/16, placed Connolly on immediate administrative leave, took back her computer and other Village issued items, and asked/barrred Connolly from setting foot on Village premises. This disciplinary action was taken by the Village against Connolly when emails surfaced between Connolly and Buckeye that seemed to show improper collusion leading up to efforts to "clean up" the zoning code to clear a path for Buckeye to get its way where PIRHL was stopped. At multiple Board meetings in February and March 2016, thousands of Tinley Park citizens demanded an investigation into Connolly's actions, necessitating her suspension.

Connolly appears to have lashed out against the Village of Tinley Park on 2/25/16, when she raised the specter of a discrimination lawsuit based on a wild perversion of the Fair Housing Act. In Connolly's warped logic, she apparently believes the Village can be sued for placing her on paid administrative leave while it investigates Connolly's actions in allegedly tampering with the zoning code in improper and possibly illegal ways. Connolly claims that she has "been discriminated and retaliated against for lawfully aiding in the exercise and/or enjoyment of fair

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**David J. Niemeyer**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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housing rights relative to the Reserve Project.” The problem with this absurd contention by Connolly is that it does not appear that her actions in removing the words “street level commercial required” and ultimately replacing them with “street level commercial permitted” in the Legacy Code zoning ordinance were lawful, according to the lawsuit filed against the Village. As Tinley Park’s Planning Director, her job was not to aid an out-of-state developer by intentionally altering existing zoning code so that the developer’s housing project could then slip through. Those actions are both at root of the lawsuit and the reason for Connolly’s suspension and paid administrative leave.

On 3/22/16, the Village of Tinley Park appointed Cook County Sheriff Tom Dart as its official Inspector General and asked his office to immediately begin investigating the propriety and legality of all actions taken to alter the Legacy Code zoning ordinance. This maneuver by Connolly in claiming discrimination may have spared her from being terminated outright, since she remains on paid administrative leave as of this writing. It appears the Village was frightened of a potential discrimination or wrongful termination lawsuit, which has allowed Connolly to sit at home and collect her full paycheck and benefits while the Village figures out their next move. During board meetings, repeated calls for Connolly’s termination have been made by residents of Tinley Park who don’t understand why the Village can’t just fire her. Many ask what a public employee needs to do to lose her job in our state.

The next important date on the horizon appears to be 5/1/16, when the Village of Tinley Park announces its new budget and staffing for 2016. This is the day when apparently the Village will appoint high-ranking positions such as Village Manager and Planning Director, which appears to be an opportunity for the Village to decline to renew Amy Connolly’s employment with the Village. A working theory amongst people following this matter closely is that perhaps the Village is keeping Connolly on paid administrative leave until the clock runs out on 5/1/16 and the Village can cut her loose without Connolly being able to make any sort of wrongful termination claim. If that’s true, then Connolly has found a clever way to keep getting paid and to maintain all of her platinum-plated benefits from 2/17/16 (the date she was placed on leave) until 5/1/16, the date that allegedly the Village has a clear window to potentially let Connolly go for good.

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**David J. Niemeyer**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Chicago Tribune: Daily Southtown (IL)  
February 17, 2016

**Tinley Park Suspends Planning Director Amid Reserve Probe**

Author: Gregory Pratt and Mike Nolan

Tinley Park has suspended Planning Director Amy Connolly while the village commissions an outside review of the approval process behind a controversial proposed housing project, officials said. The village placed Connolly on paid leave Wednesday pending an investigation into the review process for The Reserve, a proposed 47-unit, low- and moderate-income apartment complex to be built on the northeast corner of 183<sup>rd</sup> Street and Oak Park Avenue. Tinley officials plan to hire an outside law firm to conduct the investigation, which Village Manager **Dave Niemeyer** said he expected will happen "very soon." Mayor Dave Seaman said the Village Board's consensus is to hire Chicago firm Winston & Strawn, but the deal hasn't been completed. "We made promises and we're keeping promises," Seaman said. "We said we would give this a thorough review, and this is the first step in reviewing not only what happened in this particular instance ... but, at a broader level, the zoning process."

Village officials have faced mounting criticism in recent weeks from residents about the project. Many residents feel the village hasn't been transparent about the project, and said The Reserve would attract crime, lowering property values. Connolly's attorney, Patrick Walsh, said Connolly looks forward to participating in the investigation, "and hopefully providing the investigators with the evidence that they need to come to the correct conclusions." "Amy has no doubt her name will be cleared of any wrongdoing, and that it will be shown what she's really done is help the village, rather than cause it any harm," Walsh said. "There is documentary evidence that everyone knew exactly what this project was, long before any votes," he said. Walsh called the suspension, "The worst case of scapegoating I've ever seen in my life."

The village's Planning Department had previously deemed the project to be in compliance with zoning and development codes governing building in the village's Legacy District — the area that takes in most of the Oak Park Avenue business district. Those codes were put in place to streamline the project review process for companies in an effort to lure development to the downtown area. An unintended consequence, at least in this case, is that the Village Board is playing no role in evaluating the apartment building proposal. Tinley's Plan Commission tabled a vote earlier this month that could have given final approval to the project, instead sending it back to the Planning Department for further review. On Wednesday, the village announced that the board had approved the creation of a new Citizens Advisory Committee that will include Tinley Park residents Matt Coughlin, Trent Ridgway, Charlie Smith and Roxanne DeVos. This new committee will assist the independent planning consultant in its review, the village said in a release. Local attorney Steve Eberhardt and Coughlin, the main face of the Citizens of Tinley Park group that has voiced opposition to the project, questioned a timetable Seaman previously laid out for the review. The mayor previously told the *Daily Southtown* he believed it could be completed in about 40 days, but Eberhardt said that was "unrealistic," and Coughlin said that no timetable needs to be set as the ultimate goal is "to get to the truth."



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**David J. Niemeyer**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Chicago Tribune: Tinley Park (IL)

November 9, 2015

**Tinley Park Hired PR Firm to Deal with Overcharging Water Meters Fallout**

Author: Gregory Pratt

Tinley Park officials hired a public relations firm to help shape their response to the ongoing controversy over inaccurate water meters, records show. Tinley officials hired Winnetka-based Prairie State Strategies to provide "crisis communications, community outreach and engagement counseling designed to broaden public awareness" of village actions involving the town's water meters, records show. In June, a Tribune investigation chronicled widespread problems with Tinley Park's so-called smart water meters. The Tribune found that the suburb knew for years that its meters were prone to overbill residents yet gave the public inaccurate assurances that the meters worked fine. Along the way, Tinley Park officials repeatedly under-refunded residents whose meters were overcharging. The firm was hired about a month after the investigation was published. Through October, Tinley Park has racked up a \$10,725 tab with the firm at \$300 an hour.

Douglas O'Brien, the public relations consultant, said he has been assisting the village "in enhancing their communications with the public." "We've spent a good deal of time on the water meter issue because that is obviously front and center right now in terms of the public's interest," said O'Brien, who also said that it's "tremendously widespread" for governments to use outside communications consultants. Tinley does not typically use outside public relations firms. One resident whose meter was removed for recording water use without flow, Sean Draves, questioned the expense. "If you are telling the truth and being honest, why would you need someone to craft that message for you?" Draves said. "I bet that (money) could have been used to square up some water accounts."

Village Manager **Dave Niemeyer** said it's a "relatively small contract." "Our goal through all of this is to get the truth and the facts out. ... That's why we hire somebody with expertise to help us do that," **Niemeyer** said. Tinley has turned to O'Brien for guidance multiple times as the controversy has unfolded. When Public Works Director Dale Schepers resigned in July amid questions over his handling of the issue, Tinley turned to the company for help crafting its message. In August, the consultant helped prepare Tinley Park officials for a town hall forum hosted by state Sen. Michael Hastings, D-Tinley Park, where residents grilled Mayor Dave Seaman. Later that month, Tinley again called on the firm after a resident filed a lawsuit over the water meters seeking class-action status that accused local officials of "unfair, immoral, unjust, oppressive and unscrupulous" conduct.

Tinley officials vowed in the wake of the Tribune investigation to perform independent audits of their water meters program. To that end, the village hired consultant West Monroe Partners to perform a two-phase review. Last month, Tinley released its consultant's report acknowledging problems with the meters but downplaying their significance. The Tribune found the consultant used looser standards for meter accuracy than ones that a top national expert said should have

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**David J. Niemeyer**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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been used, but **Niemeyer** defended the review, which cost about \$124,000, as an "honest assessment." At the same time, Tinley officials said they were putting a second phase of the review on hold because of the lawsuit. They also said they were holding off on taking certain actions recommended by the consultant, like random testing of meters, because of the litigation. Like with other events in the water meter controversy, Tinley consulted with its public relations firm on the Phase 1 report, records show.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**David J. Niemeyer**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Chicago Tribune: Daily Southtown (IL)  
October 30, 2015

**Trace Sues Tinley Park Over Unpaid Bill**

Author: Gregory Pratt

Tinley Park is being sued over \$492,000 its former ambulance contractor claims it is owed from the village. Tinley officials have adamantly denied owing Trace Ambulance any money for past services while Trace previously billed Tinley for \$492,000. A Will County court may end up deciding who is right in a controversy that has been simmering since summer 2014, when Tinley Park dropped longtime vendor Trace Ambulance for New Lenox-based Kurtz Ambulance.

Christopher Vandenberg, president of the company based in Tinley Park, said Trace "attempted for several months" to reach an agreement with the village, but Tinley "continued to deny that any amount was due to Trace." "Unfortunately, because the Village was unwilling to even acknowledge that any amounts were owed, we were left with no choice but to initiate the litigation to recover the amounts we were contractually due," Vandenberg said in an email. **Dave Niemeyer**, Tinley's Village Manager, said the village is "vigorously defending this claim" but declined further comment.

In court documents, Tinley Park has denied owing Trace any money and denied that Trace complied with all its contractual obligations. The lawsuit was filed in Will County earlier this year. At a Friday hearing, a Will County judge scheduled status hearing in the case for Jan. 5. The lawsuit asks for a judge to declare that Tinley "is obligated to compensate Trace pursuant to the contract," Vandenberg said. The lawsuit does not specify how much Tinley allegedly owes, but \$492,000 is what the company billed Trace last year, and Tinley refused to pay, **Niemeyer** said.

Vandenberg, whose relative Jake Vandenberg is a trustee on the village board, said he still hopes "that we can avoid the expense of prolonged litigation and resolve this matter amicably." Jake Vandenberg said in an email that he has "zero financial interest" in the ambulance company and has not participated in any board discussions about Trace or any litigation it is involved in with the village. The financial dispute began last summer, after Tinley awarded Kurtz a contract worth an estimated \$3.7 million through July 2018. Tinley sought a new ambulance contract in spring 2014, and Kurtz and Trace were the only competitors.

Trace contends its expired deal with Tinley said the village would pay \$200 for each hour the town required more than the number of ambulances stipulated in the contract. After Tinley Park dropped Trace, the company tallied those hours since May 2010 and sent the village a final bill totaling \$492,206. The village received its final bill from Trace less than two weeks after Kurtz took over. In a written response to Trace's invoice last summer, Tinley Park Treasurer Brad Bettenhausen said the village was surprised, "as we had not been previously advised such charges existed." "It would be expected that had such charges arisen, they would have been brought (to) the village's attention and billed at regular intervals over the course of the contract

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****David J. Niemeyer***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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period, with such billing expected to occur no less than annually," Bettenhausen wrote the company at the time. "No such notice or billing of such charges has occurred" before the bill. The town denied Trace's bill and also questioned its accuracy, saying it could find no record that it had requested the additional service. Switching vendors was a contentious process for the village. The first signs of conflict emerged at a public safety meeting in May 2014, when village officials revealed the Kurtz bid had come in "significantly" lower than Trace's. Trace executives warned that the health care industry is undergoing many changes and changing vendors would be a "risk."

Ultimately, Tinley officials said they made the switch because Trace's proposal was 21 percent more expensive than Kurtz's. "I can't justify paying 21 percent more just because the company is here in Tinley," Trustee Brian Maher said at the time. Trace shares a long history with Tinley, having served as the village's ambulance provider since 1979 except for a brief interruption in the 1990s, officials previously said. The ambulance contract became a campaign issue during the spring election, as incumbent trustees backed by former Mayor Ed Zabrocki slammed Jake Vandenberg's bid to serve on the board as "sour grapes" over Trace losing the contract. Vandenberg denied the claim before the election, saying he has "nothing to do" with the ambulance company.

### Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

David J. Niemeyer

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Chicago Tribune: Tinley Park (IL)

October 14, 2015

#### **Tinley Park Water Meter Report Criticized as ‘Propaganda’**

Author: Joe Mahr and Gregory Pratt

In the first answer to a scandal involving water meter inaccuracy and overcharging, a consultant hired by Tinley Park acknowledged problems with the meters but downplayed the significance — sparking immediate criticism of the consultants' methods and conclusions as the village faces what could be a costly lawsuit. The 18-page presentation was portrayed by village administrators as confirmation that the problems are not widespread. But Village Manager **Dave Niemeyer** acknowledged that the village, even after the report, doesn't know the extent of the problems and is unwilling to immediately do random sampling to figure out the extent as recommended by the consultants. An originally planned second-phase investigation to study the issue more deeply has been paused because of a pending lawsuit. "Believe me, there's no one who wants to put this behind us more than us, but certainly the litigation obviously complicates it and is drawing out the process," **Niemeyer** said. **Niemeyer** touted the consultants as experts who did solid work, but the Tribune found they used looser standards for meter accuracy than ones a top national expert said should have been used.

And several residents who've complained about the meters said they suspect the findings were skewed to protect the village's reputation at the expense of finding the truth. "This (report) seems like a propaganda piece for the village of Tinley Park," said Donna Gerlich, whom the village previously acknowledged had a meter that overcharged her and her husband. Another resident whose meter was confirmed to have problems, Angela Kaczmarek, said the report "seems biased toward keeping the village guilt-free." The consultants, Chicago-based West Monroe Partners, said Tuesday they could not immediately comment and directed questions to the village. **Niemeyer** defended the review, which cost about \$124,000, as an "honest assessment."

The West Monroe report comes four months after a Tribune investigation found village officials knew for years their smart electronic water meters were regularly overstating how much water was going through them, yet did little to ferret out bad meters and ensure residents affected were fully refunded. Instead of alerting the public, officials initially downplayed the problem by falsely telling residents far fewer meters had overbilled residents than they had found and that all tested meters had passed industry standards, when they hadn't. The scandal led to the ouster of the village's public works director and spurred a lawsuit that accused officials of "unfair, immoral, unjust, oppressive and unscrupulous" conduct. The plaintiff is trying to get court approval to include all Tinley Park water users as plaintiffs, which could make it a high-profile, and costly, class-action lawsuit.

The controversy occurred amid a political sea change in Tinley Park, where a longtime mayor resigned, and several of his allies on the village board lost re-election bids to rivals. The new mayor, Dave Seaman, has led village officials in vowing an open and honest review of so-called "spinning" meters. Spinning is when the readings on a water meter rise higher and faster than

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**David J. Niemeyer**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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they should. The review released this week raised questions among residents and an industry expert. The consultants concluded most smart meters "appear" to be within national standards, citing a summertime test that they said found 84 percent of those tested meters passed national standards. But missing were specifics of how the other 16 percent failed. Meters can fail for overcharging and undercharging. A Tribune analysis found most of those meters overcharged. And that was based on the consultants using a "weighted" formula that allowed meters to fail some flow tests but pass overall. In one case, a meter failed one flow test by overcharging more than 8 percent, yet under the "weighted" formula was still considered accurate.

Tom Kelly, a Maryland water official who heads the industry's national committee on meter standards, told the Tribune on Tuesday that the national standards call for a stricter metric: failing a meter that overcharged at any flow test. Using that metric, the Tribune found more than 22 percent of the tested meters would have flunked, compared with just 9 percent flunked for overcharging under the consultants' standard. Kelly said even a 9 percent failure rate is bad, but a 22 percent failure rate is "completely unacceptable." "If the customers got ahold of that (statistic) ... they're going to scream, and rightfully so. Fair is fair," Kelly said.

**Niemeyer** said he was confident in the consultants' work and, regardless, discounted the high failure rate as being tied to a sample that included many meters pulled for suspicions of overbilling. He said a better measure would be random sampling of village meters — something long called for in national standards, and also recommended by West Monroe's report. But **Niemeyer** said the village hasn't decided whether to do that because of concern of how it might interfere with the village's defense of itself in the lawsuit. The consultants also suggested the village had over-counted how many meters had spun, but didn't offer any data on how many meters they thought had spun, or were spinning.

The Tribune previously reported that the village noted at least 355 cases over the years of spinning meters, and that doesn't count thousands more entries of failures that lacked specifics on how the meters failed. But the consultants said they "rarely observed" a meter spinning, and the spinning they saw was only when meters didn't have water going through them, and when water was put through them those meters actually under-billed. Village officials said the consultants suspected that workers sometimes misdiagnosed meters as spinning. Also at issue is exactly how meters can spin. Assistant Manager Steve Tilton said the consultants believed the only way is by a meter spinning consistently in ways that always boost consumption readings without going back down. But one national expert has told the Tribune it's possible the meters spin intermittently too, based on records the Tribune provided him of meters with up-and-down consumption levels that passed some accuracy tests before later testing as spinners.

The consultants also questioned whether spinning meters actually lead to overcharges. The consultants said they separately reviewed 10 accounts of residents with suspicious meters and found "no direct correlation" between spinning and the amount of water on the customer's bills. It's unclear which accounts the consultants were reviewing to find no correlation of spinning to higher-billed amounts. **Niemeyer** and Tilton said they didn't know, nor could they immediately provide records. And it's the finding that most frustrates residents previously profiled by the

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Tribune. At Gerlich's townhouse, she and her husband had consumption levels hover about 8,000 gallons per billing period until it began creeping up over five years until it hit 29,000 gallons in early 2011, when the Gerlichs complained. The village found the meter spinning and replaced it. Once the meter was replaced, the couple's recorded consumption returned to about 8,000 gallons. "It's not like all of a sudden we were taking 10 showers a day. There's only two people in the house," she said. "Reading that report, it just infuriates me because it's just like they're saying 'Oh no, everything's fine. It's just your imagination.' "

Other residents, such as Laura Konieczny, criticized the report. The village replaced her meter after she complained it was overbilling her. She said the report seems skewed toward protecting the village. The report offered no explanation of the cases cited by the Tribune. Instead, the report focused on how, in general, water bills were far higher because of rate increases imposed by the city of Chicago that have been passed on to residents, even as consumption rates, on average, have dropped. It said that, in general, the 93 homes that had smart meters replaced last fall didn't have any less reported consumption than homes without smart meter replacement. It even credited the village's smart meters for giving the village "more accurate metering," although the consultants chided "less than comprehensive management" over billing that "placed the burden of proof on the customer to address issues."

A big issue left unresolved is what additional refunds, if any, affected residents should get. The Tribune, in reviewing accounts, found affected residents repeatedly appeared to have been short-changed. The Gerlichs, for example, had their bills cut by \$109 but could be owed \$317 more, under a Tribune analysis. The report offered no specific plan for refunds. Instead, it questioned the village's unclear refund policy while also telling the village that it should use its random sampling and engineering analyses of spinning meters to gauge how much meters spin, which can inform how much people should be refunded. Among other recommendations, it suggested monthly billing, instead of quarterly, to better manage the system. And "to begin rebuilding trust with the community and utility stakeholders," it suggested an "aggressive communication campaign" that included, among other things, a focus group of residents "to assist with marketing and testing of system changes."

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**David J. Niemeyer**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Chicago Tribune: Daily Southtown (IL)  
September 26, 2015

**Tinley Park Overspent \$1 Million on Pond, Owes Orland Hills \$280,000**

Author: Gregory Pratt

Tinley Park owes neighboring Orland Hills about \$280,000 in sales taxes it agreed to pay as part of an annexation agreement from a decade ago, records and interviews show. The \$280,000 debt is in addition to about \$1 million Tinley Park overspent as part of a deal to divide up costs and revenue related to a retention pond and strip mall, records show. Orland Hills officials have sent three letters to Tinley Park this year about past-due sales taxes and in May formally threatened to sue Tinley for not making its payments, records show. "They know they owe us some money," said Orland Hills Administrator Conrad Kiebles, who noted in an interview that his town "let it go for probably too long."

Tinley's Village Manager, **Dave Niemeyer**, said his suburb is "still hoping to work something out with Orland Hills, and my understanding is they would like to (work something out) also." The debt dates back to a 2005 annexation agreement between Tinley Park and Orland Hills, where Tinley annexed land near 171st Street and LaGrange Road. Tinley Park agreed to front the costs for a retention pond that would cost \$614,325 and split sales tax revenue from a shopping center with Orland Hills to help make up for that expense, records and interviews show. Instead of an anticipated \$614,325, however, it cost Tinley Park about \$1.6 million to build the retention pond, **Niemeyer** said.

Tinley officials also expected to recoup their investment in five years, **Niemeyer** said, but sales tax revenue has been less than expected. "It's now actually projected to take, with no change to the agreement, as much as 30-plus years," **Niemeyer** said. Tinley Park is withholding payment on its sales taxes "due to the understanding that the retention pond reimbursement was going to be renegotiated," **Niemeyer** said. At one point, **Niemeyer** said, Tinley and Orland Hills' previous administrators talked about renegotiating the deal. Brian O'Neill, Orland Hills' assistant administrator, said he didn't dispute that there might have been informal talks but said only both towns' village boards could change the agreement.

O'Neill also said he's 99 percent sure there's nothing in the agreement that spelled out any time frame for Tinley Park to be recouped for its pond expense. "There is nothing in the agreement that calls for any change in the agreement, any void in the agreement or payment due to Orland Hills," O'Neill said. Kiebles, Orland Hills' administrator, said his town would like Tinley to begin the payments as soon as possible. The \$280,000 figure was released by Tinley Park. Orland Hills officials said they don't know exactly how much money Tinley owes but said the \$280,000 figure is "in the ballpark of where we thought it would be." Orland Hills officials met with Tinley in February, then wrote to the village in March after they didn't hear back by a Feb. 20 deadline. In May, an attorney for Orland Hills sent a letter to Tinley saying it is in default and threatening a lawsuit.



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**David J. Niemeyer**

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**Niemeyer** said he couldn't immediately explain why the pond construction cost so much more than it was originally projected. But, he said, the project was managed by Orland Hills, and Tinley officials told them they were concerned about cost overruns "at the time." O'Neill said "things are subject to change" with construction projects, and cost overruns are normal. He said he doesn't know what caused the overruns but said the higher cost would have been known as the project was ongoing and didn't "sneak up on anyone." Each side emphasized in interviews that they're attempting to negotiate an amicable resolution.

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**David J. Niemeyer**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Chicago Tribune (IL)  
August 4, 2015

**Tinley Park Awards No-Bid Projects to Political Insider**

Author: Gregory Pratt

Every year, Tinley Park officials spend tens of thousands of dollars printing three newsletters that tout the town's virtues. In a recent edition of the Tinley Park Exchange, Mayor Ed Zbrocki lauded the village's "conservative financial management" and boasted of cost-cutting measures during the recession. But a Tribune analysis of Tinley Park's expenses for the newsletter and other printing shows the village has awarded no-bid projects to a political insider's company, and experts question the transparency of those deals. Since 2004, Tinley Park has spent more than \$1 million on jobs from Crossmark Printing, a business owned by the mayor's most recent campaign manager. Crossmark's owner, Marty Ward, is also a longtime village commissioner. By contrast, the southwest suburb has paid more than 100 vendors combined less than \$700,000 for printing in the same time frame, invoice records released by the village show. Tinley Park officials said Ward's connections to the town's leaders have not played a role in the village sending jobs to Crossmark or assigning it the newsletter without any competitive bidding process since 2004. Zbrocki said the village has simply been satisfied with the company's track record. "They get the work because they do a good job. Should we bid it out? Probably we should have," Zbrocki said. "I would hope once we bid it out he gets it again."

Watchdog groups said officials should have bid out the newsletter even if they were happy with the service. "That might be an acceptable rationale if the vendor had no other relationship with the city," said David Melton, executive director of the Illinois Campaign for Political Reform. "At a minimum, they should be doing an open bid process." Local business owners echoed those concerns. Ron Strenge, co-owner of Force Enterprises in Tinley Park, said he has sent a salesman to ask village officials how his company can get on the bid list for the Exchange. So far, Strenge said, he hasn't been given the opportunity to make a proposal. "If it was bid, and (Crossmark) legitimately won the bids, then there could be no complaints about it," Strenge said. "But under circumstances where other people don't even get the chance to bid on it, it seems like there's a problem there."

Village Manager **David Niemeyer** said Tinley Park plans to bid out the Exchange this fall. The last time it went to bid was 2004, according to the village. Asked why the village hadn't gone to bid in a decade, **Niemeyer** said it is "not unusual for a municipality that has a long-standing, satisfactory relationship with a vendor to maintain that relationship for a number of years." This isn't the first time Tinley Park's choice of vendor has come under scrutiny. The Tribune reported in March that the village had spent \$176,000 at Heather's Haus Florist, a family business of the mayor's longtime secretary. Other florists received a fraction of the town's business by comparison.

In January, the Tribune reported that Tinley Park paid a business owned by a sister-in-law of the village's marketing director more than \$86,000 for holiday decoration work since 2000. Zbrocki

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**David J. Niemeyer**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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acknowledged at the time that Tinley Park should have bought flowers from different local businesses but said staff fell into a routine based on past purchases. In response to questions about the holiday decorations, he said the village was supporting a local business that does good work. This week, Zabrocki said all towns have vendors they turn to, often because they've reached a certain "comfort level" with the company's work. "This happens all over," he said. In addition to Ward's tenure as a village commissioner, which began in the late 1990s, and his service during the mayor's most recent re-election campaign, Crossmark has made political contributions to Zabrocki dating to 1994, state campaign records show. Crossmark has also done more than \$92,000 worth of work for political committees affiliated with Tinley Park officials, records show. Ward flatly rejects any suggestion that the village turned to him because of his connections. Rather, he said, Crossmark receives work from the village because of its high quality and low prices. "It can't be anything other than that," Ward said.

Ward founded the company in 1991 after working in the printing industry since the 1970s, he said. Crossmark employs 12 people full time and does work for 18 municipalities, as well as 30 schools and school districts and 14 nonprofits, he said. To Ward, Crossmark represents a "great American story." "A dream and vision of entrepreneurship. Providing quality workmanship in the manufacturing sector. Supporting the town you lived in for over 30 years," Ward wrote in an email. In a follow-up message, Ward reiterated that he has nothing to do with how the village spends money. "I believe I made it very clear that Crossmark does not have any control in decision making in the village for print," Ward wrote. "Nor do I."

Since 1991, Crossmark has done about \$1.3 million worth of business with the village, a vendor report released by the town shows. Tinley Park has spent \$1 million at Crossmark since 2004, and officials estimated that about half can be attributed to the Exchange. Besides the Exchange, Tinley Park officials have made a range of purchases big and small from Crossmark over the years, including gold foil business cards for the Tinley Park term limits commission, holiday cards and cooking fire prevention place mats, invoice records show. Local businessman Thomas Kane, who owns the Printer's Quill in Mokena, said he was "shocked" by the amount of money paid to Crossmark compared with other businesses. He said the village should spread purchases out among local companies.

Not all towns print expensive newsletters. Naperville used to print one that cost \$35,000 for up to six editions a year but cut back in 2011 because of the economic downturn, city spokeswoman Linda LaCloche said. Today, Naperville sends out a two-sided sheet of paper with residents' utility bills. Arlington Heights no longer has a printed newsletter, ending publication in 2010 because of budget cuts, staff attorney Lisa Farrington said. Tinley Park officials use the Exchange, which is mailed to all residents, to highlight village projects and activities. The town's elected leaders also write brief essays for the publication. For example, one trustee recently noted the Babylonian roots of code compliance. The latest issue mixes practical advice, such as "Coyote tips for the summer," with self-congratulatory articles such as "Tinley Park commended for economic development success." Beneath the mayor's most recent letter to residents is a message that town officials often emphasize. "Shop Tinley Park," the newsletter reads. "It's great for all of us."

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**David J. Niemeyer**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Chicago Tribune: Tinley Park (IL)  
July 13, 2015

**Tinley Park Suspends Public Works Boss as Water Meter Issues Intensify**

Author: Gregory Pratt, Joe Mahr and Lauren Zumbach

Tinley Park has suspended its Public Works director after the village told an independent water meter testing company to "not report if the meter passed or failed," according to a letter obtained by the Tribune. The suspension with pay comes in the wake of a Tribune investigation into chronic problems with electronic SmartMeters that Public Works Director Dale Schepers has long defended. The investigation, published in June, found the suburb has known for years that its meters were prone to overbill residents, yet it gave residents inaccurate information in an online article and newsletter mailing that said the meters work fine. The village also failed to fully refund some residents who were overcharged, the Tribune found.

Officials assured residents earlier this year that existing meters fall within industry standards for accuracy, but the Tribune found inconsistencies with that statement. In the months before its investigation was published, the Tribune questioned Schepers and other public officials extensively about accuracy tests for water meters, including situations where meters were passed when experts said they should have failed. Village officials said they decided the meters didn't need to meet national standards after they were installed. Tinley officials recently took it one step further, according to a letter dated June 30.

Officials asked the firm M.E. Simpson, based in Valparaiso, Ind., that has done testing for the village to stop printing on its reports when meters fail national standards. Village officials told Simpson they would like to be the ones who "make the determination if the meter passed or failed" based on the company's tests, according to the letter. Michael Simpson, the company's president, said in an interview Monday that he was uncomfortable with the request because he felt "it was delving into an area where you could violate trust." "It has to be unbiased because in a case where there are issues like Tinley Park has had, you want an honorable and fair third party sharing correct information with everyone so you know what the answer is and it's fair," Simpson said. Simpson sent a letter to the suburb refusing the village's request.

Acting Mayor Dave Seaman and Village Manager **Dave Niemeyer** declined to comment on specifics of Schepers' suspension, but both men said they were unhappy the testing company was told not to include "pass" or "fail" on its tests. Simpson said **Niemeyer** called him last week and said to continue presenting reports "exactly the way they're supposed to be." Schepers, the Public Works director since 2004, could not be reached. The suspension comes before the village embarks on what it said will be an independent investigation into the water meter situation.

Village officials previously said they hope to hire an independent consultant to audit the program by July 28, have an initial report done by Aug. 28, and a final report by Oct. 28. Meanwhile, the village released more records to the Tribune last week that document more problems with the meters. The village has had thousands of failures over the years, though records don't always list

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**David J. Niemeyer**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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the specific failures. In its June investigation, the Tribune found records of at least 355 meters that had over-recorded the amount of water flowing through, known as spinning. The latest records show 44 more. Seaman said the village could not release more information about Schepers at this time but said the top priority is fixing its problem with the water meters program. "We want to get the whole situation resolved as quickly as possible, up to and including the infamous meter situation," Seaman said.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**David J. Niemeyer**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Chicago Tribune (IL)  
February 4, 2015

**Tinley Park Proposes New Village Purchasing Policy**

Author: Gregory Pratt

Tinley Park officials unveiled a proposed purchasing policy Tuesday night that could prevent politically connected firms from receiving exclusive business from the south suburb. The policy is being amended to ensure staff receives multiple quotes on certain purchases and to institute periodic meetings between the village and potential vendors to let businesses know of tentative and scheduled bids, among other changes. The proposed revisions come after the Tribune reported numerous stories throughout 2014 about no-bid business being handed to companies with extensive ties to Tinley Park's leaders. The proposed policy also recommends that village staff "rotate the purchase" when purchasing from local businesses.

"What we don't want to do is just say rotate (purchases) for the sake of rotating, and all of a sudden we lose something or we get a product or a price that's not as good as the other one," said **Dave Niemeyer**, village manager. "But certainly, we want to make sure that (if) we have three or four businesses in town that have similar products, similar qualities, similar service, that they're all given a fair chance." The policy revisions still require full approval from village officials.

Last year, the Tribune reported that village officials spent \$119,000 since 1989 for food from Ed & Joe's Restaurant and Pizzeria, whose owner is chairman of an influential Tinley Park commission. This was significantly more money than was spent at the next-closest competitor. In 2011, Tinley Park awarded a garbage contract worth at least \$24 million to a politically connected firm tied to a longtime commissioner — extending a contract that's been given to the same company since 1993. A Tribune analysis showed that a flower shop owned by family of the mayor's secretary did \$176,000 worth of business with the village over the years, about eight times more than its nearest competitor in the same time frame.

And Crossmark Printing, a company owned by the mayor's most recent campaign manager, did \$1 million in business with the village since 2004. More than 100 other vendors combined received less than \$700,000 for printing business in the same time frame. Under the proposed policy, which was unveiled at the village's Finance and Economic Development Committee meeting Tuesday, staff would need to receive three or more quotes on any purchase over \$5,000. **Niemeyer** said that's been the village's informal practice but it's now being codified.

The most controversial item in the proposed policy would require village employees to disclose if they own businesses that the village uses. "To avoid the potential for or the appearance of favoritism or collusion" on purchases, any item or service bought from a business owned in whole or part by a village employee must be disclosed by the employee on a form. Trustees Dave Seaman and Greg Hannon expressed concerns about creating a bureaucracy with the requirement.

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**David J. Niemeyer**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Daily Southtown: Web Edition Articles (Chicago, IL)  
December 16, 2014

**Tinley Park to get \$700,000 grant for convention center upgrades**  
Author: Mike Nolan

Tinley Park is getting a \$700,000 state grant to make improvements to the village’s convention center that officials hope could eventually lead to increased business there. The grant from the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, announced Tuesday by state Sen. Michael Hastings, D-Orland Hills, would pay for much-needed improvements, such as parking lot repairs and improving Wi-Fi access at the center, Harlem Avenue and 183rd Street.

Tinley Park last week submitted a budget to the state outlining its plans for the money, a portion of which would also be used to increase marketing to draw more shows, business meetings and other events to the 120,000-square-foot building, village manager **David Niemeyer** said. That could ultimately benefit village businesses, especially hotels and restaurants, and the village and state would also see a larger share of tax revenue as a result, according to **Niemeyer**. He said once the state department reviews and approves the village’s proposed project budget, Tinley Park will receive the grant money and work can begin sometime next year.

Along with repairing and resurfacing the center’s main parking lot, the lot lighting will be retrofitted with energy-saving bulbs, and interior work will include setting up a video conferencing room and increasing wireless access points to allow for better Wi-Fi use “throughout the building on a more consistent basis,” **Niemeyer** said.

Separate from the grant, the village has hired a consultant, Roger Brooks International, to help gauge its “tourism friendliness” and suggest tactics for reaching a broader pool of groups and organizations that might use the convention center, he said. Village officials plan to discuss the findings of that study next month, and Tinley Park is earmarking \$55,000 from the grant to help implement the recommendations, **Niemeyer** said.

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**David J. Niemeyer**

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Chicago Tribune (IL)

April 1, 2014

**Pick for Tinley Park Manager Aims to ‘Make a Difference’**

Author: Gregory Pratt

After several months of searching for a new village manager, Tinley Park officials said they settled on **David Niemeyer** because of his extensive experience in local government. Mayor Ed Zabrocki said the village wanted a manager who could hit the ground running and knows the south suburbs. **Niemeyer** most recently was village manager in Oak Brook. "**Dave** was the one who the board felt most comfortable with, and felt he had the experience," Zabrocki said. Village officials said the hire was expected to be finalized April 1 at the town's Village Board meeting. **Niemeyer** will make \$170,000 in salary, according to a compensation report posted on Tinley Park's website. He has 27 years of experience in village management, according to a Tinley Park press release. Before becoming Oak Brook's village manager, **Niemeyer** worked as city manager of Des Plaines from 2003 to 2007, village manager in Homewood from 1998 to 2003, village manager of Richton Park from 1993 to 1998, village administrator for Orland Hills from 1988 to 1993 and city administrator/assistant to the mayor in Harvard. **Niemeyer** said he enjoys working in municipal government because "you can make a difference at a local level."

During his career, **Niemeyer** said he is proud to have helped develop long-term strategic plans for his communities, maintained financial strength in Oak Brook despite the Great Recession and developed employee appreciation programs. Oak Brook Mayor Gopal Lalmalani said **Niemeyer's** hire is Tinley Park's gain. "**Dave** is a wonderful guy and a very good manager," Lalmalani said. "He did a great job for Oak Brook for seven years." **Niemeyer** has also had the opportunity to do hands-on work. When he worked for Harvard, **Niemeyer** said, the town didn't have assistant managers or on-staff planners. "I had to do everything," he said. Starting at a small town gave him "the perspective of what it's like to be working as a department head and learn a lot of the operational aspects of what a municipality does," **Niemeyer** said. Blaine Wing, who worked with **Niemeyer** for about six years in Oak Brook, praised his former boss. "He was a very sound and reasonable manager, concerned about the residents, employees and businesses, as well as the elected officials," Wing said. "All of his decisions were well thought out."

Over the years, Tinley Park has been known for the longevity of staff and elected officials. **Niemeyer** will replace former Village Manager Scott Niehaus, who resigned in November to take the manager's job in Lombard. Niehaus had been Tinley Park's village manager since 2003. Tinley Park has only had three managers since 1973. Dennis Kallsen served from 1976 to 1991, followed by Dave Dorgan from 1991 to 2003, and then Niehaus. **Niemeyer** said that stability was one of the main attractions for him. "One of the things a manager always looks at is what's been the tenure of previous managers," he said. Their tenure "points to a stability in this community that was very attractive to me." **Niemeyer** has family in Oak Lawn, Palos Heights and Orland Park, he said. For fun, **Niemeyer** likes to play tennis and has taken cycling trips in Europe and Australia.



**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**David J. Niemeyer**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Patch.com (IL)  
March 25, 2014

**Tinley Park Chooses New Village Manager**

Author: Lauren Traut

Tinley Park has selected a new village manager to fill the vacancy left by the departure of Scott Niehaus. Oak Brook's current Village Manager **David Niemeyer** will replace Niehaus, who left in January for a managerial position in Lombard, village staff said Tuesday evening. "**David Niemeyer** brings an energetic, collaborative and results-oriented mentality to the Village of Tinley Park," Mayor Edward J. Zabrocki said. "**David** is an experienced and especially gifted professional who will serve the Village of Tinley Park with the same passion and commitment we've come to expect from our Village Managers over the years." The Village Board is expected to approve **Niemeyer's** appointment during its April 1 meeting.

"I'm very excited to come to Tinley Park," **Niemeyer** said. "I've lived in the south and southwest suburbs the majority of my life, and I'm just grateful to be able to come back here and work with one of the premier communities in the southwest suburbs." **Niemeyer** received a bachelor of science degree in political science in 1983 and a master of public administration degree in 1985, both from Northern Illinois University in DeKalb, Illinois. **Niemeyer** has 27 years of experience in village management. His most recent experience was as Village Manager of Oak Brook, Illinois from 2007 to the present. Before that, he served as City Manager of Des Plaines, Illinois from 2003 to 2007; Village Manager of Homewood from 1998 to 2003; Village Manager of Richton Park from 1993 to 1998; Village Administrator for Orland Hills from 1988 to 1993; and City Administrator/Assistant to the Mayor in Harvard, Illinois from 1986 to 1988. **Niemeyer** is expected to begin in June.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****David J. Niemeyer***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Doings (IL)

March 20, 2014

**Incentives Help Lure 750 Jobs to Town**

Author: Chuck Fieldman

The Oak Brook Village Board has agreed to some financial incentives for a real estate company planning to build a new corporate headquarters in town. Duchussois Real Estate plans to build a 252,600-square-foot facility at 1818 Swift Drive, currently occupied by Follett Higher Education Group. The new corporate headquarters building is for the Chamberlain Group of Elmhurst, which specializes in garage door openers and related products. The largest financial incentive in the agreement is a 50 percent reduction in fees, which amounts to about \$100,000. Also included is reimbursement of up to 50 percent of public infrastructure costs up to a maximum of \$35,000, or a maximum total \$70,000 infrastructure reimbursement. The additional amount would come from the cost of possible water main relocation. Up to \$35,000 would come from the village's water fund as a reimbursement to the company doing the project.

As part of the agreement, Chamberlain agreed to occupy its new building for at least five years. No timeline for construction or occupancy has yet been set. Chamberlain will bring about 750 employees to the Oak Brook building and possibly more in the future if additional adjacent properties are later purchased. Follett Higher Education Group is moving to the nearby Westbrook Corporate Center in Westchester. Follett's last day in Oak Brook is March 21. "This is a huge project," Village Manager **Dave Niemeyer** said. "Chamberlain's relocation to Oak Brook will be a significant positive economic impact to our community. It will be easier for their employees to shop and dine in Oak Brook, our hotels will benefit from overnight stays, and Oak Brook will be exposed to other corporate professionals who visit Chamberlain."

With trustees Don Adler and Mark Boy absent, Mike Manzo cast the lone vote against the financial incentives for the project, but said he is very pleased to have Chamberlain coming to Oak Brook. "It's a wonderful fit; I love the development, but if it's not going to generate some sales tax, I can't support any financial incentives," Manzo said. "We don't have a property tax in Oak Brook, so sales tax is even more important for us." Manzo said his bigger concern is not wanting any precedent set for continuing to provide financial incentives for businesses that don't generate sales tax revenue for the village. "We have no process for financial incentives; we're the only community I know that offers incentives for office buildings," he said.

**Niemeyer** said village staff is going to work on a set of guidelines for offering financial incentives to businesses interested in coming to Oak Brook.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**David J. Niemeyer**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Doings (IL)  
December 19, 2013

**Capital Projects a Focus for 2014 Village Budget**  
Author: Chuck Fieldman

The Oak Brook Village Board approved a balanced 2014 budget Dec. 10 that allows for the completion of significant capital improvements. Expected expenditures of \$52.5 million are up more than 11 percent from \$47 million in 2013, while anticipated revenues of \$52.8 million are up 6 percent from \$49.8 million. “About half of the increase in expenditures is from capital projects,” Village Manager **Dave Niemeyer** said. “We have held off on capital projects the past few years because of the economy and us really trying to keep expenses as low as possible.” **Niemeyer** said that by policy the village looks to maintain a six-month reserve in its general fund. “We now have eight months in there because we have held off on many projects and cut staff over the past few years,” he said. “We always estimate our revenues conservatively.”

It is particularly important that Oak Brook’s expected revenues be calculated conservatively because the largest source, sales tax, makes up 23 percent of money taken in by the village. Oak Brook does not assess a property tax. “We’ve projected sales tax to increase by 2 percent over last year, and it could be more than that,” **Niemeyer** said. Major capital expenses include \$3.1 million for street resurfacing, \$1.35 million for water main replacement in York Woods, a \$495,000 Sports Core subsidy, \$275,000 for locker room and drainage improvements at the Sports Core, a \$115,000 subsidy for polo, a \$750,000 pumper truck for the Fire Department, and \$300,000 for two dump trucks.

However, trustees were clear all capital expenditures would need to be approved by the Village Board on an individual basis. “We typically don’t spend everything that’s in the budget,” said Trustee Asif Yusuf. “We’ve left the door open for flexibility with these capital projects.” The budget also includes about \$260,000 for new employees. “We really have been at bare bones with our staffing the past few years,” **Niemeyer** said. “Hiring a few additional people will not have us back to anywhere near where we were before, but there are some positions we should fill.” A full-time person to be in charge of the non-golf areas of the Sports Core is a possibility, as is turning a part-time catering position at the Sports Core into a full-time job. “This isn’t about creating a bunch of new jobs; it’s about filling some positions that really need to be filled and will help us run more efficiently,” **Niemeyer** said.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**David J. Niemeyer**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Chicago Sun-Times: Web Edition Articles (IL)  
March 19, 2013

**Judge upholds Oak Brook’s firing of Drew Peterson’s cop son**

Author: Pioneer Press

The firing of former Oak Brook Police Officer Stephen Peterson in 2011 was upheld Monday by DuPage County Judge Terence M. Sheen. After he was fired by Oak Brook’s Police and Fire Commission, Peterson filed a lawsuit in DuPage County, seeking to overturn his dismissal.

Peterson was dismissed after the Fire and Police Commission determined that Peterson didn’t disclose important information to Illinois State Police during their investigation into the disappearance of his father’s fourth wife, Stacy. Drew Peterson, Stephen’s father, is serving 38 years in prison for the 2004 murder of his third wife, Kathleen Savio. Authorities have said that Drew Peterson gave his son three weapons and \$236,000 shortly after Stacy Peterson vanished from her Bolingbrook home on Oct. 28, 2007, but Stephen Peterson didn’t immediately disclose that information to investigators.

“In this case, it was in no way arbitrary or unreasonable for the board to conclude that Officer Peterson exhibited conduct incompatible with continued service as a police officer,” Sheen wrote in his opinion. “Therefore, this court finds that Officer Peterson’s conduct, when viewed in its entirety warrants the sanction of discharge.”

In firing Stephen Peterson, commission members said in a prepared statement that he had “used extremely poor judgment with respect to the weapons and the money he received from his father.”

“We agree with the judge’s decision and the actions our Police and Fire Commission took,” Oak Brook Village Manager **David Niemeyer** said.

Peterson has 30 days to appeal Sheen’s decision to the Illinois Appellate Court.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**David J. Niemeyer**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Doings (IL)  
November 15, 2012

**Economic Development Key for Village**

Author: Chuck Fieldman

With April municipal elections approaching, we sat down with village managers to ask about issues facing their community. **David Niemeyer** has been village manager in Oak Brook since 2007. He has worked in local government for about 25 years.

Q. Can you briefly describe the top three issues Oak Brook faces?

A. I would say right now, certainly like every other community, economic development and redevelopment. We have a rather unique situation here where we partner with the Chamber of Commerce. We're very proactive, and that's something that's become more the case recently. Ten years ago, there wasn't much done to be proactive, but there's a lot of competition now, with the city and other suburbs, in terms of bringing new businesses here. We just finished our first economic development brochure. We have something we started about three years ago called a Rapid Response Team. When a business is interested in coming to town, we put on a presentation as one group. Another issue is something we're now addressing with our new residential enhancement committee. We're an older community. Our population dropped almost 10 percent in our last census, and our average age is 55. We have a lot of good things to bring young families here, but not enough people know about it. We're planning to do more marketing. The third issue is dealing with a new environment of reduced revenues from years ago. We have a smaller staff, and we're always continuing to look for ways to run more efficiently.

Q. Given the economy, how would you describe Oak Brook's fiscal situation?

A. We're in excellent fiscal condition. When the revenues went down we made corresponding cuts. We do rely on sales tax, and our sales tax has rebounded some, although it's not what it was at one time. We have healthier reserves than before, but we always have to be cautious because sales tax can go up and down. More than 50 percent of our operating budget is based on sales tax.

Q. How is the state's pension crisis affecting Oak Brook?

A. The pension crisis, I think, is the underpinning of the state's financial crisis. We want our state to get fiscally healthier. The appearance of the state of Illinois is that we can't address big issues. That doesn't help the business environment. We have a great local business environment here; that's probably the one negative in a lot of our business people's minds — that we're in Illinois.

Q. Do you think Oak Brook is doing a good job conducting its business transparently?

A. Yes. We have really made extra efforts to get stuff available to the public, to put things on our website. (Assistant Village Manager) Blaine (Wing) and I, as well as the board, are very accessible to residents. We're a small community here. We're very transparent in the work that we do.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**David J. Niemeyer**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Pioneer Press (IL)

August 22, 2012

**Pension: (Suburban) Sheahan Challenges Oak Brook Officials to Open Deposition Session**

Author: Chuck Fieldman

Former Oak Brook Police Chief Tom Sheahan is challenging village officials to a public deposition session. Sheahan offered his challenge through The Doings after the Village Board's Aug. 14 hiring of an investigator to look into how Sheahan's pension left the village with a \$750,000 unfunded liability. The purpose of the investigation is to look into how Sheahan, appointed in 2005, was able to use a piece of 2007 legislation introduced by state Rep. Robert Molaro to boost his pension at the expense of Oak Brook's taxpayers, village officials said.

The legislation allowed Sheahan to transfer his previous pension credits to Oak Brook. Sheahan resigned as chief in 2011 after slightly more than six years with the Oak Brook Police Department. His \$750,000 pension liability is over a 20-year period, he said. "They have been making it seem like I pulled something really sneaky, and that's just not the case," Sheahan said. "It took three weeks to negotiate my contract with the Village Board, and it went back and forth three to five times before it was finished." Sheahan said he would submit to eight hours of deposition over a two-day period, with questions being asked of him by the village's attorney. "I'd be happy to do that as long as it's televised in Oak Brook and put on their website," he said. "My other stipulation is that all the Village Board members, the village president, the village manager and the assistant village manager submit to questions from me, and I can use anything uncovered during the deposition in my lawsuit." Sheahan is involved in a lawsuit against Oak Brook and several of its employees, claiming they caused damage to his reputation and "stigmatized him in his profession."

Village Manager **Dave Niemeyer** didn't accept Sheahan's challenge for open-session depositions. "We're in litigation with him; he basically began the litigation, and we'll defend ourselves in court through the legal system," **Niemeyer** said. "We feel we have a very strong case." Sheahan said never met or spoke to Molaro until after Molaro had retired from the senate and had been hired by Oak Brook as a lobbyist. Molaro was appointed as a \$5,000 a month lobbyist by the village in 2009. "I was directed to meet with him by **Dave Niemeyer** to talk about a traffic light to help Costco," Sheahan said. "I really feel like I have been targeted here, and their targeting of me is libelous and slanderous. I have three lawyers looking into it."

Sheahan said if current Police Chief James Kruger stays six years, his pension liability will be similar for the village, and said former police and fire chiefs have pension liabilities twice as much. **Niemeyer** said the village wouldn't be paying anything toward Kruger's pension for time he worked elsewhere. "And with all the others, our pension responsibilities are based on their time working here, not other places," **Niemeyer** said.

Oak Brook officials have said on several occasions that Sheahan was the only person in Illinois affected by the legislation proposed by Molaro. Molaro was appointed as a \$5,000 per month

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**David J. Niemeyer**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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lobbyist by the village in 2009. “The village knows that isn’t true,” he said. “IMRF gave Oak Brook a list of 20 people affected by this.” IMRF is the Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund. **Niemeyer** said Oak Brook officials received a list from IMRF of 20 people who were eligible to take advantage of the pension legislation, but that Sheahan is the only one who took advantage of it. “And when Molaro introduced the legislation, he said, without mentioning a specific name, that it was to benefit one individual,” **Niemeyer** said. “Our big issue with this is that he’s the only one who is benefitting from this legislation. We want to know how that happened.”

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**David J. Niemeyer**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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[CB&A Note: We asked Mr. **Niemeyer** about this incident. He recalls that after the Chief filed the suit, his attorneys did not show up in court so the judge dismissed the suit.]

The Doings (Oak Brook - Oakbrook Terrace, IL)

December 29, 2011

**Craig, Sheahan, Former Business Owner Sue Village**

Author: Steve Schering

Former Oak Brook village president John Craig, former police chief Tom Sheahan and former Sky Bar owner Iwona Burnat have filed a lawsuit against Oak Brook residents and village officials. The lawsuit was filed Dec. 16 in U.S. District Court in Chicago. The lawsuit names the village, Oak Brook Police Officers George Peterson, Garrett Church and Parry Barnes, Police Sgt. Brian Strockis, Police Lt. Jason Cates, Police Lt. Tamie Shuey, Village Manager **David Niemeyer**, former trustee Moin Saiyed, Village President Gopal Lalmalani and former trustee Robert Sanford as defendants.

In the document, the three accuse Oak Brook police officers of creating e-mails “containing false facts with regard to President Craig,” in relation to Craig’s incident with three Oak Brook police officers at the Sky Bar on Nov. 13, 2010. According to an investigation by the Better Government Association, the police officers were at Sky Bar that November evening for a “bar check” and claimed Craig, who was there, yelled at them. They also claimed Craig pulled his retired police badge on them and threatened to get them fired. Craig denied wrongdoing and claimed the officers were trying to make him look bad because of the impending village election.

The plaintiffs accuse **Niemeyer** of offering Cates and Shuey, “immunity from any internal discipline for their misdeeds and misconduct stemming from (the) Nov. 13, 2010 incident,” and claims **Niemeyer** offered immunity to other officers “if they provided him with damaging information regarding Sheahan.” The document claims Sheahan was “forced to resign as the chief of police of Oak Brook on April 26, 2011” because the environment he worked in became “hostile and more than unbearable.” The complaint claims the defendants “intensified their harassment of the Sky Bar,” and acted to “destroy the Sky Bar’s business,” which led to Sky Bar being “forced out of business” in late October.

Lalmalani, who defeated Craig in the April village election, is named for allegedly committing actions that were “retaliatory, malicious and intended to punish Sky Bar and Burnat for not supporting his election.” “The village does not believe the complaint has merit and will be vigorously defending against the claims,” Oak Brook Village Attorney Peter Friedman said. Craig and Sheahan claim to have suffered “serious and ongoing physical and psychological injuries,” due to the actions of the defendants. The plaintiffs have hired Ivan Tomic of the Tomic Law Group of Chicago to represent them. Phone calls and messages left for Tomic at his office were not immediately returned. The plaintiffs seek compensatory damages, punitive damages, reasonable attorney fees, an award of damages and any judgment for compensatory damages against the defendants, to be determined at trial.



**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**David J. Niemeyer**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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[CB&A Note: Only the information relevant to **David J. Niemeyer** is listed below.]

Daily Herald (Arlington Heights, IL)  
November 2, 2010

**Five towns get federal cash for better transit**

Author: Robert Sanchez

Nearly \$3 million in federal money will help pay for trails and streetscape enhancements in Lisle, Oak Brook, Villa Park, Warrenville and Woodridge. The planned upgrades in those DuPage County communities are among 120 projects statewide that received a total of nearly \$90 million in federal cash through a state-run program, according to the Illinois Department of Transportation. Officials said the Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program is meant to improve the quality of life in the state by "promoting alternative transportation, such as bike and hike trails, streetscape and beautification, and preserving transportation resources."

Oak Brook officials estimate that the roughly \$569,000 the village received will pay about 80 percent of the cost for its 22nd Street beautification project. The village wants to install decorative lights, median plantings and other enhancements along a stretch that runs from Spring Road to Salt Creek.

Village Manager **David Niemeyer** said the project had been on hold because of budgetary concerns. "Fortunately, now we have been able to get grant money for it," he said.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**David J. Niemeyer**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Trib Local (IL)  
October 4, 2010

**Oak Brook Budget Pinched by Firefighters' Pensions**

Author: Heather MacDonald

Faced with a looming budget shortfall, Oak Brook officials say they can no longer afford to foot the bill for its firefighters' pensions after several years of "astronomical" increases. Over the last several weeks, village officials cut \$1 million across the board from next year's budget as expenses continue to outpace tax receipts, said Village Manager **David Niemeyer**. At a meeting of the village's Citizens Finance Advisory Committee last month, Village President John W. Craig said the village's budget was being pushed into the red by its obligations to fund the retirement plans for the village's firefighters. "We need to face the reality that we can't afford the pension programs as they are structured now," Craig said, adding that village-sponsored special events are also on the chopping block.

In 2010, the village paid more than \$1 million toward its firefighters' pensions and more than \$950,000 toward police officers pensions, after several years of "astronomical" increases set by state law, **Niemeyer** said. Oak Brook's budget is complicated by the fact that the village does not levy a property tax, but instead relies on sales tax revenue from the upscale Oak Brook Center, which attracts shoppers from all over the area. "That makes it very challenging," **Niemeyer** said. Craig supports reducing the department from 28 to 21 or 22 firefighters, and contracting with a private company to cover calls for service as needed. That means the village would not have to pay those firefighters pensions. However, such a move is prohibited by the village's agreement with International Association of Fire Fighters Local 4646, and union president George Grodek said it would threaten public safety. "You get what you pay for," Grodek said, adding that many contract firefighters have less experience and are not as qualified as members of the department. Grodek said he was skeptical that the village was truly in a financial crisis, noting that the village has \$9 million in its rainy day fund, far more than most towns. "Last year, [the board of trustees] wouldn't cut leaf pickup, but now they want to slash the fire department," Grodek said. "I guess the fire department is a non-essential service."

Because Oak Brook does not have a local property tax, the village keeps enough cash on hand to pay six months' worth of village bills because sales tax receipts can swing up and down based on shoppers' whims, **Niemeyer** said. An advisory referendum on the November ballot will ask Oak Brook voters whether the state's public employee pension system should be reformed. Much of the outcry over pensions is based on misinformation, Grodek said. "The public doesn't understand the toll this profession takes on your body," Grodek said. "We have bad knees, bad ankles. We can't get another job. We just go home and lick our wounds." Oak Brook firefighters have been working without a contract since December 2007, when their last contract with the village expired. In an effort to reach a new deal, mediation began Sept. 30, but neither Grodek nor **Niemeyer** said he expected a quick resolution to the years-long dispute over staffing levels, wages and a host of other issues. "Negotiations are never easy," **Niemeyer** said.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**David J. Niemeyer**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Daily Herald (IL)  
March 26, 2010

**Oak Brook Backs Off on Cutting Ambulance**

Author: Anna Madrzyk

The village of Oak Brook has backed off a plan to eliminate one of its two ambulances to save \$350,000 a year. A week after staff notified Northlake-based Paramedic Services Incorporated of the village's plans to cancel its contract - and touted the move as "smart government" in a news release - the village board decided to hold off on taking action. Instead, the board decided to create a committee to look at "all the various options" in a report by fire safety analysts McGrath Consulting Group, said Village Manager **David Niemeyer**. Eliminating an ambulance was not one of the consultant's recommendations.

In a letter to Oak Brook residents, three former Oak Brook fire chiefs denounced the move as "a threat to the community we took an oath to protect." Oak Brook is struggling to cope with a sharp decline in sales tax revenues due to the troubled economy. Residents do not pay a property tax for village services. "Nobody would want to do this (eliminate an ambulance) in ordinary times," **Niemeyer** said.

In addition to its own staff, the village has a contract with PSI to provide two firefighter/paramedics per shift - the staffing for the second ambulance. About 20 percent of emergency calls occur when there are two non-related emergencies going on at once. If Oak Brook eliminated one ambulance, neighboring communities would be called to respond and "there could be a significant delay," said James Bodony, retired Oak Brook fire chief. Furthermore, some calls - such as cardiac arrests and high-speed crashes - need two two-person ambulance crews. "If someone is in full cardiac arrest, four people are barely enough," Bodony said.

The committee to study the report will be formed during the next month, **Niemeyer** said. The village already has adopted some of the consultant's recommendations, including a wireless fire alarm system to reduce the village's comparatively high number of false alarms. The village also is changing its procedure for false alarm notification and follow-up, **Niemeyer** said. And it has put a fire truck and a reserve engine up for sale, as the consultants recommended. The 82-page fire study report is available online at [www.oak-brook.org](http://www.oak-brook.org).

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**David J. Niemeyer**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Daily Herald (Arlington Heights, IL)  
July 22, 2009

**Oak Brook trims \$1.3 million**

Author: By Anna Madrzyk

The wealthy community of Oak Brook has joined the list of municipalities laying off employees due to the economic downturn. Trustees Monday approved nearly \$1.3 million in cutbacks to offset declines in sales tax revenue. The cuts reduce the village's payroll by the equivalent of 14.75 full-time positions spread across all departments. Some of the positions already were vacant. The aim was to "minimize the impact the cuts would have on village operations and services to residents," Village Manager **David Niemeyer** said.

The measures include:

- \* Combining the engineering and public works departments, and eliminating the position of village engineer for a savings of \$161,185 in salary and benefits.
- \* Requiring employees in clerical positions to work 40 hours a week instead of 35 or 37.5 hours — in effect a pay cut. This will save roughly \$25,000 in the straight-time overtime clerical employees received when they worked between 35 or 37.5 hours and 40 hours a week.
- \* Outsourcing the IT department for a savings of about \$60,000 a year.
- \* Eliminating the positions of deputy village clerk, records management clerk and receptionist at village hall to save about \$206,000. Three part-time employees and a minute-taker will be added for a total cost of \$49,485.
- \* Cutting two full-time dispatchers and two full-time records positions in the police department. In addition, one full-time and one part-time dispatcher position will remain vacant.
- \* Doing fire inspections on shift rather than special details, saving roughly \$60,000 a year.

The package of cutbacks includes \$300,000 from the nearly \$1.4 million budget of the Oak Brook Public Library, but village trustees are waiting to hear from the consultant hired to study the library's staffing, organization and workflow before making a decision. That report is expected in mid-August.

Village officials say they are considering turning the library over to a for-profit company that can run it more inexpensively, but only as a last resort. The Friends of the Oak Brook Public Library oppose privatization.

Earlier this month, village trustees voted to hire Calihan Catering of Chicago to run the clubhouse banquet facility of the Oak Brook Bath & Tennis Club, used for weddings, parties and civic events. The clubhouse has been losing money, but **Niemeyer** projects the outsourcing will result in a net gain of \$50,000 a year.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**David J. Niemeyer**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Daily Herald (IL)

October 1, 2009

**Ugly Battle has Librarians in Oak Brook Turning to Teamsters**

Author: Burt Constable

Telling her mother that she wanted to come to the aid of a library under attack, 11-year-old Sydney Sabbagha stood at the podium before the Oak Brook village board. "I used to go to the library knowing there were people there to help me find a book. Now there is no one to help me," Sydney said solemnly. "It will never be the same without the people you fired." Sydney nestled back into her seat, but that didn't stop 69-year-old criminal attorney Constantine "Connie" Xinos from boldly putting her in her place. "Those who come up here with tears in their eyes talking about the library, put your money where your mouth is," Xinos shot back. He told Sydney and others who spoke against the layoffs of the three full-time staffers (including the head librarian and children's librarian) and two part-timers to stop "whining" and raise the money themselves. "I don't care that you guys miss the librarian, and she was nice, and she helped you find books," Xinos told them.

"Don't cry crocodile tears about people who are making \$100,000 a year wiping tables and putting the books back on the shelves," Xinos smirked, apparently referencing the fired head librarian, who has advanced degrees and made \$98,676 a year. He said Oak Brook had to "stop indulging people in their hobbies" and "their little, personal, private wants." Sydney was upset and "her little friend was in tears" after Xinos spoke at the meeting last week, says mom Hope Sabbagha. "I wanted that kid to lose sleep that night," a grinning Xinos says Wednesday, as he invites me for a nearly two-hour interview in his Mercedes-Benz in the gated Oak Brook community where he lives. "This is the real world and the lesson, you folks who brought your kids here, is if you want something, pay for it."

Xinos, who unsuccessfully sued to stop the building of the new library, which opened in 2002, sits on one side of the issue. He lost his election bid to be a village board member, but has been president of his home association since 1983 and worked to elect board members who agree with him about the library. On the other side sits Barbara Benezra, the longtime president of the Friends of the Oak Brook Public Library, who considers the library "my third child." "This is the heart of the village," Benezra says as she tours the library and surrounding gardens under a sign sporting a Cicero quotation reading, "If you have a garden and a library, you have everything you need." "We don't have a grocery store," Benezra says. "We have this." While Benezra acknowledges the need for some budget cuts at the library, given the recession, she says, "There's always been a faction of this town that's been anti-library."

The librarians, who stereotypically remain hushed for this story, obviously feel a bit threatened. They have turned to the Teamsters for some labor help. Teamster librarians in Oak Brook? Mercy. "We get good contracts for all kinds of professionals," says Brian Rainville, executive director of Teamsters Joint Council 25, which oversees 100,000 Chicago-area Teamsters, from pharmacists to zoo keepers. "They have given us petitions," Village Manager **David Niemeyer**

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**David J. Niemeyer**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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says of the Teamsters. "Assuming they do become certified, we'll have to negotiate with them." Other village employees are unionized and the village works out contracts with them. Everybody thinks Oak Brook is rich and has all kinds of resources, but we don't," **Niemeyer** says. "Oak Brook has very low taxes and that's a point of pride in this town."

Begun as a volunteer effort in 1961 with donated books, the library occupied a small space in village hall until it moved into an old school two years later. It stayed there until the village built the new library. The library is a village department funded by the general fund, same as the police, fire department and public works. It has no taxing power. Its budget comes from the village, and much of that money comes from sales tax, as there is no property tax. And sales at the mall and other businesses are down. "We're probably going through what a lot of towns are going through," **Niemeyer** says of the budget cuts. "None of these things are easy."

It's not complicated for Xinos. "You may like the library, but when you call 9-1-1, you want a policeman or a fireman before someone to tell you where the books are in the library," says the man who has talked of privatizing, outsourcing or even closing the library. "I understand that my philosophy is conservative," Xinos says, adding that government just needs to catch bad guys, put out fires, fix the streets and make sure buildings are sturdy. He campaigned, successfully, against a plan to bring subsidized housing for seniors into town by declaring, "I don't want to live next to poor people. I don't want poor people in my town."

A poor kid who grew up in Berwyn and worked in his dad's cafeteria in Chicago, Xinos went to law school and served in the Marines. Xinos says he speaks for Oak Brook's view of the Teamsters when he says, "Nobody here likes those kind of people." Xinos, who says he never had children in part because he wasn't sure he'd be able to support them, sprinkles the F-word throughout his conversations. He dismisses a recent library event involving dogs with a blunt three-word rant in which he bookends swear words around the word "that."

That attitude doesn't represent the silent majority in Oak Brook, who support the library, Benezra says. "There's been no discussion on the village board about closing the library," **Niemeyer** notes. "There is great pride in our library. We have an outstanding library." What the library will look like in the 2010 budget depends on Xinos, Benezra, Teamsters, librarians, the village board and the people of Oak Brook.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**David J. Niemeyer**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Daily Herald (IL)

July 5, 2009

**Oak Brook Could Privatize Library as a ‘Last Resort’**

Author: Anna Madrzyk

Faced with declining sales tax revenue, the village of Oak Brook is considering a radical step to save money: Privatizing its public library. Village trustees are looking at several options to cut \$300,000 - more than 20 percent - from the library's nearly \$1.4 million annual budget. One possibility, which officials say would be a last resort, is to turn the library over to a for-profit company that can run it more inexpensively. "The odds of outsourcing are low," Trustee Gerald Wolin said. "But it's not out of the question." And that has library supporters worried.

"Privatizing is a Draconian solution which will destroy the library as a viable community resource," said Barbara Benezra, president of Friends of the Oak Brook Public Library, in a statement to village trustees.

Privatization of public libraries "is still a very rare phenomenon nationwide," said Bob Doyle, executive director of the Illinois Library Association in Chicago. Oak Brook Public Library would join just a dozen or so library systems in Oregon, Texas, Tennessee and California that have been privatized. Typically, librarians who aren't laid off become employees of the for-profit company, but with reduced salaries and benefits. Outsourcing companies also hire more paraprofessionals to cut costs. And patrons may find they can no longer check out a book at a neighboring library or order several copies for a book group discussion through interlibrary loan. "There are a lot of negatives," Wolin said.

Oak Brook trustees are looking to make up to \$1.5 million in "sustainable" cutbacks communitywide, Village Manager **David Niemeyer** said. These are permanent cost reductions, not one-time savings such as employee furlough days adopted in some municipalities. Unlike most suburbs, Oak Brook does not collect property taxes for village services, but instead relies on sales taxes to support its general fund. Sales tax is expected to be down \$650,000 by the end of 2009. Revenue from state income tax and interest is also down, **Niemeyer** said. The board does not want to dip into its \$9 million in cash reserves. "We have a policy that we should make our best effort to keep six months of reserves in the general fund," **Niemeyer** said. "That's higher than most towns, but that's because we rely on sales tax."

Earlier this year, Library Director Meg Klinkow-Hartmann put together a proposal for \$97,000 in savings that included cutbacks in library hours, eliminating three part-time positions and cutting back on book purchases. But after three new trustees were seated in April, the new village board decided cuts needed to be much deeper. The board last month hired a consultant to study the library's staffing, organization and work flow. Library Associates Companies is conducting on-site interviews at the library this month. A report is expected in mid-August. The firm already has a contract with the DuPage Library System to provide staffing services and support for its 132 members, including public, academic, school and special libraries in five counties. The company is involved in partial outsourcing - a library project or a function, such as

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**David J. Niemeyer**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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recruiting - but not running an entire library. A different company - Maryland-based Library Systems and Services - is the leader in contracts to run privatized public libraries. "We have many outsourcing contracts, but not to take over the entire facility," said Deborah Schwarz, president and CEO of Library Associates, which is based in Los Angeles. The consultant will be looking for efficiencies, but "privatization was not discussed." "Anytime you have an outside consultant coming to look at things, people get a little nervous," Schwarz added. "We are all librarians ourselves and we have great empathy for the staff."

The American Library Association does not support turning over control of taxpayer-funded library services to an outside, for-profit company. Public libraries are best staffed by professional librarians who are a part of the community and understand the needs of the people they serve, said Jim Rettig, association president. Oak Brook's library, for example, has an extensive collection of foreign-language materials tailored to its diverse community. "I want the library to continue to be a viable community asset run by librarians who know us," Benezra said. Programs for senior citizens and children and the Evergreen Concerts all contribute to making the library "the heart and soul of our community." The Friends board is asking for cutbacks to include temporary cuts in materials and hours of operation, rather than focusing solely on staff for cost savings, and to reinstate the cuts when the economy turns around. **Niemeyer** said he has heard "a lot of concern about the outsourcing option," but the board "is just trying to do the fiscally responsible thing and look at all options."

**Other cuts on horizon in Oak Brook**

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Oak Brook is looking to get out of the catering business and make some money. The village is reviewing bids from two caterers - Calihan Catering and Backyard Grill, both of Chicago - to run the clubhouse banquet facility of Oak Brook Bath & Tennis Club, used for weddings, parties and civic events. The clubhouse is expected to lose \$116,805 in 2009, although that's actually better than it did in some previous years, Village Manager **David Niemeyer** said. "We just aren't experts at the restaurant business," he said. The village would get a cut of the catering firm's profit, "turning a losing enterprise into a moneymaking enterprise," **Niemeyer** said.

**Niemeyer** said he expects that a recommendation on which firm to hire will be made at the July 14 board of trustees meeting. The village board has directed **Niemeyer** to look for up to \$1.5 million in budget cuts to offset a decline in sales tax revenue due to the slumping economy. This is on top of \$1.3 million in cutbacks made earlier this year, primarily through freezing positions in village departments. Trustees "are concerned some of the cuts are not sustainable and asked (staff) to go back and find further cuts," **Niemeyer** said. **Niemeyer** said he is working on recommendations now and expects discussion at the July 14 meeting.



**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**David J. Niemeyer**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Oak Brook Suburban Life (IL)  
June 6, 2008

**Village Gets Cop Charges Dropped**

Author: Petras Barcas

The village of Oak Brook won two lawsuits in federal court May 30 that alleged the village improperly fired a former police officer, as well as interfered with a bid by a private company to install the next generation of squad car cameras.

The first suit, filed last year by former Oak Brook police Sgt. Randy Mucha, 43, alleged that he was improperly terminated. Mucha was suspended and later fired from his job last summer in part for allegedly requesting conviction information on a resident. He then filed suit in the U.S. District Court in Chicago against the village, Police Chief Thomas Sheahan, and the town's Police and Fire Commission.

Four counts of the suit were dismissed, including one that sought administrative review of the Board of Fire and Police Commission's decisions, and one that alleged the board conspired with Sheahan to fire Mucha. "All along, I felt the actions we took in both cases were appropriate," Oak Brook Village Manager **David Niemeyer** said. "The village of Oak Brook, in the last few years, has had a lot of litigations filed, and we are going to respond."

Other counts of the Mucha suit alleged Sheahan made defamatory statements that Mucha had child pornography on his computer, and that there was an invasion of privacy involving other nonpornographic pictures on Mucha's computer. A separate legal case involved Closed Circuit Innovations. The company alleged the village and Sheahan discriminated against CCI, interfered with existing business relationships and denied it an opportunity to bid on the village's new squad car cameras. All of the claims were dismissed.

"This is an example of two cases where we responded aggressively and we're happy with the outcome," said **Niemeyer**. "These are significant victories for the village. Oak Brook will continue to aggressively fight all unmeritorious lawsuits filed against the village."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**David J. Niemeyer**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Doings (Oak Brook - Oakbrook Terrace, IL)  
August 16, 2007

**OB Offers Village Manager Post to 20-Year Veteran**

Author: Alissa Raschke

After almost six months with no permanent village manager at the helm, Oak Brook is one step away from filling the post. President John Craig announced Tuesday that, pending contract negotiations, acting village manager **David Niemeyer** will permanently take the position.

**Niemeyer**, an Oak Lawn native, stepped in as acting village manager in mid-July, after acting/assistant village manager Jeff Moline left Oak Brook for a different job opportunity. He said he found out about the opening from the PAR Group, a consulting firm the village hired to assist in the search.

Craig said **Niemeyer** has proven himself in the past few weeks. "**(Niemeyer)** has come into our village and has worked very hard to acclimate himself to Oak Brook's style of government and unique way of life," Craig said. "As village president, I think this is good for the village." A 20-year veteran of public administration, **Niemeyer** last worked in Des Plaines. "I've been a city manager in Illinois since 1986," **Niemeyer** said. "I've been with five communities, smaller than Oak Brook and larger."

He added that despite the rough road the village has been down in recent years, he's looking forward to working in Oak Brook. "I'm very excited about the opportunity and impressed by the way everyone works together here, the elected officials and staff," **Niemeyer** said. "Everybody seems to be pulling toward the same goals, and there's a lot of projects to work on."

Craig said the board is still looking over the contract, but that it should be finalized soon. "His contract is under review," Craig said. "We should have this done within a week." Since former village manager Rick Boehm left the village in March, there have been three acting village managers, including Moline, **Niemeyer** and, for a short time, Pat Horn. Now the board is turning its attention to finding a permanent village attorney, a position that has been open since Kenneth Kubiesa resigned in May. The board is holding special meetings to consider the applicants; the field has been narrowed to three candidates.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**David J. Niemeyer**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Doings (Oak Brook - Oakbrook Terrace, IL)  
July 19, 2007

**Acting Village Manager Named in Oak Brook**  
Author: Alissa Raschke

The resignation of acting village manager Jeff Moline last week left Oak Brook with three top positions open, but village President John Craig has taken steps to fill the openings. Craig appointed **David Niemeyer** acting village manager, where he will stay until the Village Board completes the search for a new village manager, according to a press release.

**Niemeyer**, who most recently worked in Des Plaines, has 20 years of experience in local government. Though he will take over most of the duties of village manager, the board amended the ordinance for the temporary appointment to limit the acting village manager's power and budget. He will not have the authority to hire or fire anyone, change job descriptions or make large purchases without the approval of the board.

An Oak Lawn native, **Niemeyer** is one of the candidates the PAR Group has selected for permanent village manager. "I became aware of the position through the PAR Group," **Niemeyer** said. "Oak Brook is a very prestigious town." He said he's aware of the legal issues the village is facing but he is not deterred. "I've dealt with a variety of towns, and certainly Des Plaines had its share of issues," **Niemeyer** said of his last job. "The positive here far outweighs the negative." He added that he's anticipating getting to know Oak Brook. "I enjoy working with the public and I look forward to input from residents," he said.

The search is still on for a new permanent village manager, assistant village manager and village attorney. The village has been working with the PAR Group since earlier this year when then-manager Rick Boehm announced his resignation. At a July 3 special board meeting, Craig said the board hoped to have a decision made on a new manager by the end of July. "The Board of Trustees is working closely with the PAR Group to expedite the hiring of a new village manager," Craig said in a statement issued by the village. "In the meantime, (**Niemeyer**) will be able to fill the gap and help us through this transition period."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**David J. Niemeyer**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Daily Herald (Arlington Heights, IL)  
May 22, 2007

**Des Plaines city manager resigns**

Author: Ames Boykin

Des Plaines aldermen unanimously accepted the resignation of City Manager **David Niemeyer** on Monday, two weeks after they cleared the mayor to work out the terms of ending his employment. **Niemeyer**, who earned \$123,188 in the post he held since 2003, will get seven months' pay plus \$10,000 for his retirement plan under the terms aldermen approved Monday.

**Niemeyer's** last day on the job was Monday, when he reported to work, but he didn't attend the council meeting. **Niemeyer** couldn't be reached for comment late Monday.

Aldermen, after a closed-door meeting May 7, gave Mayor Tony Arredia a vague direction in open session, which officials later said was the OK to deal with **Niemeyer** on a separation agreement. "The council didn't like the direction he was going in," Arredia said. "They thought there were things that should have been done faster." Without getting specific, Arredia cited development issues as among those things that aldermen felt could have been done more quickly.

Arredia plans to give **Niemeyer** a letter of recommendation Tuesday. **Niemeyer's** father has been ill, so negotiations between the mayor and **Niemeyer** took longer than expected, according to the mayor.

In 2004, Des Plaines voters approved a change in government, putting the city manager in charge of day-to-day business and department heads. Since **Niemeyer's** performance evaluation became a topic of discussion this month, aldermen have questioned the city manager's role in light of the government change. That will be the topic for future committee meetings.

Arredia denied the decision on **Niemeyer** was the result of a power struggle between the city manager and aldermen amid the change in government that stripped the city council of the powers it previously had. "City managers reach plateaus where it's time to move on," Arredia said. "It's one of those things."

Since Des Plaines operates under a managerial form of government, an acting manager must be named. Assistant City Manager Jason Bajor will fill in, Arredia said. The city also plans to hire a headhunter firm to find **Niemeyer's** replacement. Arredia said he expects the council to pick a successor within six months.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**David J. Niemeyer**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Daily Herald (Arlington Heights, IL)  
February 23, 2007

**City manager bargains for new post**

Author: Ames Boykin

Des Plaines City Manager **David Niemeyer** is bargaining with aldermen in an attempt to win their support for a new assistant director of human resources. **Niemeyer** in a memo has told aldermen that he is willing to essentially trade two part-time positions, a marketing plan, strategic plan follow-up and new bulletin board for aldermen's approval of the proposed \$94,652 position.

If the city council agrees to trim the spending as **Niemeyer** suggests, it would save \$61,401. **Niemeyer** calls the new assistant director position one of his "top priorities" in this year's proposed budget. After budget talks, city officials boosted this year's planned spending from \$115.9 million to \$116.8 million. **Niemeyer's** request comes as city council members expect to vote on the plan March 5.

**Niemeyer** cites a new staffing study the city commissioned. The study recommends five management positions in the city manager's office, while the city currently has three.

During budget talks, 3rd Ward Alderman Laura Murphy questioned whether **Niemeyer** was creating positions based on personalities. "I have organized the office around three people with multiple talents to save the city money," he wrote.

The new position isn't an unusual request for a city of Des Plaines' size, **Niemeyer** said. Mount Prospect has a deputy human resources director.

Murphy has no plans to reverse her opposition to the assistant human resources director. **Niemeyer's** suggestion led her to question why the positions he's willing to forego are even necessary. "Since they are bargaining positions, perhaps they're not needed," Murphy said. Such give-and-take is common during the budget process, he said.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**David J. Niemeyer**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Daily Herald (Arlington Heights, IL)  
September 7, 2006

**Black sheep of TIF family Des Plaines tackles lone money- - loser**

Author: Ames Boykin

Des Plaines officials will reexamine how to pay off the debt from one of the city's newest special taxing districts to minimize the deficit that a study has projected. A financial report on the city's four taxing districts was mostly glowing, but one district will end up costing the city money in the long run. The tax increment financing district it created in 2000 at Wille and Mount Prospect roads is earning only about half, or \$530,000, of the annual debt the city must pay for the 47-acre district, or \$950,000. It is an industrial district, housing warehouse facilities.

City Manager **David Niemeyer** plans to meet with the city's debt adviser next week to begin making suggestions to try to minimize the debt. The suggestions will likely be included in next year's budget. The problem, however, is clear. As the city entered into a redevelopment agreement for the second phase of work, Des Plaines officials agreed to sell the land for \$6 per square foot, as that's what they paid for the land in the first phase. The city ended up shelling out \$16 per square foot for the land, but was locked into the price it had agreed on, Assistant City Attorney Ray Bartel said. "We didn't anticipate the rapid escalation of the land," Bartel said.

Fourth Ward Alderman Dick Sayad, who chairs the finance committee, asked the city's consultant for advice on a next step. Evanston-based consultant Leslie Murphy, whose firm did the study for Des Plaines, said Des Plaines could enter into another billboard deal for the area. A billboard pact for the area will bring the city a one-time payment of \$800,000 next year.

Restructuring the debt also is an option. Extending the life of the district, which expires in 2024, also could be done - although Murphy cautioned the city can't add more years to a district that already has problems.

Eighth Ward Alderman Rosemary Argus, who represents the area where the Wille Road district is located, is optimistic. By the time the district expires, the schools and park district will enjoy a boost in their tax revenue because of the redevelopment, she said. "We started with nothing much, and now we have something," Argus said.

**Niemeyer** also noted the study found that the city will boast a \$64 million profit when all four districts are added together.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**David J. Niemeyer**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Daily Herald (Arlington Heights, IL)  
April 5, 2006

**City could put stamp on investigation \$43,000 over budget, - Des Plaines wants to know why**

Author: Ames Boykin

Des Plaines wants to launch an investigation into how a deal to open a new downtown post office ended up costing the city more money than it bargained for. City officials also are considering filing a lawsuit to recoup some of the extra money spent on the new post office, which is expected to open by May 1. It's unclear whether the city would appoint a Des Plaines staffer to conduct an investigation, or hire a consultant. Aldermen are expected this spring to further discuss the proposed probe.

Wrangling between the city and the building's owners over cost overruns began last December. To date, the city has spent \$265,000 toward the project. That's \$43,000 more than the city originally agreed to pay two years ago. "I just want to know what went wrong," 3rd Ward Alderman Laura Murphy said.

In 2004, city officials decided to help pay for a new downtown post office after displacing its old location with the new Metropolitan Square project. If the new facility at 680-84 Lee St. doesn't open by May 1, the city last month agreed to pay the building owners a \$3,958 monthly fee for rent and taxes. The city would pay that amount until the post office opened. It was just the latest concession by the city to the building owners, who wanted the city to pay more money toward the project.

Robert Shambora, an owner of the building who sits on the city's economic development commission, didn't return phone calls Tuesday.

Shambora's Cheshire Cheese, LLC, Arlington Heights-based Charter Construction Co., FGM Architects Engineers of Oak Brook and the U.S. Postal Service in a deal the city proposed in February would have each paid about \$5,000. But the building owners refused, so the city last month agreed to pay the total tab for the cost overruns.

City Manager **David Niemeyer** said aldermen would make the decisions about how to proceed with any probe into the deal since he may be in a situation where he would be part of the investigation. "There's probably things that both the city as well as the other parties could have done differently," **Niemeyer** said.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**David J. Niemeyer**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Daily Herald (Arlington Heights, IL)  
January 10, 2006

**Alderman fails to dispute claim on residency**

Author: Ames Boykin

Des Plaines 5th Ward Alderman Carla Brookman missed a deadline that the city set to provide a list of where she has lived since 2001, officials said Monday. Brookman, who has been accused of living outside the area she represents, had until Friday to provide the city with a chronological list of her residences. As of Monday, the city still had no list from Brookman.

Brookman agreed to the request the city's legal and licensing committee made in November, denying the allegations that she has lived outside her ward. Brookman, who first won the 5th Ward seat in 1997, didn't return phone calls seeking comment on Monday.

The committee plans to meet to discuss the issue but hasn't yet determined a date, said 3rd Ward Alderman Laura Murphy, who chairs the committee. "A deadline's a deadline," Murphy said. "It's not rocket science: Where did you live and when did you live there?"

City officials also plan to look into Brookman's accusations that City Manager **David Niemeyer** knew Brookman had moved to a rental home in the 5th Ward while renovation work continued on her primary residence. **Niemeyer** acknowledged that he signed change of address forms for her fire captain husband, but said that he signs numerous forms as city manager.

Brookman is accused of violating state law by living outside the 5th Ward, but state and county prosecutors have refused to investigate the city's claims, telling officials the city could pursue its own action. City water bills showed little or no water use at the Brookmans' home.

Brookman told a city worker in 2002 that she and her husband lived with her mother in the 3rd Ward, according to city records. She also has her city council packets delivered to her mother's home. But Brookman has said the packets are delivered there because her mother is home to receive them.

Some residents also have told the city they believe Brookman lived in a home in the 3rd Ward that her daughter once owned. Brookman has denied this, and accused her colleagues of unfairly targeting her for political reasons.



**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**David J. Niemeyer**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Daily Herald (Arlington Heights, IL)  
January 10, 2006

**Des Plaines has no copy of settlement**

Author: Ames Boykin

Des Plaines city officials say they don't have a copy of the agreement to settle a sexual harassment lawsuit, and have no plans to make the terms public despite arguments made by the Illinois attorney general's office. Former paralegal Debra Lathom sued the city, saying 6th Ward Alderman Tom Becker sexually harassed her at city hall in December 2002 and accusing city officials of allowing a pattern of abuse. The lawsuit was settled in November, and Becker has denied the allegations.

Terry Mutchler, an assistant attorney general who serves as the office's public access counselor, in a letter last month told the city the document is public. But an attorney for the city disagrees, saying the city council never voted on the matter and there is no copy of the document at city hall.

City Manager **David Niemeyer** said Mutchler misunderstood that the city council had voted on the agreement with Lathom when she penned her letter to the city. Mutchler couldn't be reached for comment Monday.

An insurance pool handled the case and settlement on behalf of the city, and the city paid no money directly to Lathom to settle, said Paul N. Keller, an attorney who represents the insurance pool. Des Plaines this year has budgeted \$2.1 million in premiums to pay to Municipal Insurance Cooperative Agency to handle its legal cases.

While no Des Plaines officials have reviewed the settlement or have a copy, the terms were "verbally disclosed" to some officials, Keller said in a Dec. 22 letter to Mutchler. Both sides also agreed to keep the terms from the public, he said. "Ms. Lathom ... has indicated that she considers the terms of the settlement to be confidential information, and has directed the city not to disclose those terms unless required by law," Keller said.

Des Plaines city officials have denied the Daily Herald's request for the settlement information under the state's Freedom of Information Act. They also denied a separate request by the Des Plaines Journal newspaper.

State law allows certain exemptions to the Freedom of Information Act, including a choice to keep information decided by a third party or insurance pool from the public. However, the exemptions allowed under state law don't mandate the city to use them.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**David J. Niemeyer**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Daily Herald (Arlington Heights, IL)  
November 10, 2005

**Des Plaines settles suit City doesn't reveal terms of sexual - harassment case filed against officials**

Author: Ames Boykin

Attorneys for Des Plaines have agreed to settle a lawsuit in which a former employee accused Alderman Tom Becker of sexual harassment. U.S. District Judge Morton Denlow, who recommended the settlement last month, is expected to formally sign off on the tentative agreement Tuesday. City officials have refused to disclose the cash amount, saying a municipal insurance pool will pay the costs, not Des Plaines.

Des Plaines pays an annual fee to the Municipal Insurance Cooperative Association to handle its civil rights and tort cases. City officials also say the deal would bar both sides from talking about the amount. Further, under terms of the agreement, no guilt is acknowledged.

Debra Lathom, a former paralegal for the city, has already agreed to the settlement, according to court documents. Last year, she filed a lawsuit accusing Becker of harassing her at a December 2002 city hall function while he was wearing a Santa Claus outfit. According to the lawsuit, Becker grabbed Lathom, wrapped a leg around her when she tried to pull away, kissed her lips and asked her to sit on his lap, referring to his "jingle bells." Later, Becker "asked if Santa Claus had embarrassed her," the suit says. After asking if she planned to sue over the incident, the suit said Becker told her: "You can't do anything to me, I'm an alderman." The suit accuses Mayor Tony Arredia of saying, "I hear you were attacked by Santa," the suit says. The suit then says Arredia laughed.

Lathom had sought \$500,000 in damages from the city, although city officials said she had since lowered her request to \$90,000. Lathom's attorney didn't return phone calls seeking comment.

The settlement wouldn't increase the \$1,000 in premiums paid to the insurance pool every year, city officials said. Legal fees and fees paid to the insurance pool have cost the city about \$5,000 in the case, City Manager **David Niemeyer** said. But **Niemeyer** refused to give the settlement amount that Lathom will get.

Becker has denied the allegations, acknowledging he did kiss Lathom on the cheek at city hall and said, "Mrs. Claus, it's about time you got here." Becker said he's looking forward to moving past the allegations, which he said have caused him public embarrassment. "It's bothered me an awful lot," he said. Lathom had sought an apology, which Becker said attorneys for the city refused to include in the settlement.

A 2003 letter from Jason Bajor, current assistant city manager and director of human resources, to Lathom said a city investigation found Becker had violated the city's sexual harassment policy.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**David J. Niemeyer**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Daily Herald (Arlington Heights, IL)  
October 21, 2005

**Des Plaines has eye on Five Corners Business owners expect - litigation over their properties**

Author: Ames Boykin

Des Plaines city officials want to capitalize on the momentum of downtown redevelopment and declare the Five Corners area blighted so they can draw more development. Aldermen on Nov. 7 plan to discuss pursuing a feasibility study to decide whether to designate the area where River and Rand roads meet Lee/Mannheim as a special taxing district. Officials announced the city's intention a year ago.

But that idea apparently isn't sitting well with some business owners. They say they are forming a coalition to fend off the city's plans. The owners of Maine Scrap Metal, 1274 Rand Road, are leading the cause and have hired a Chicago law firm that specializes in representing property owners embroiled in eminent domain battles. On Thursday, they were funneling questions through the lawyers. Foran, O'Toole & Burke LLC representatives couldn't be reached for comment, though. The firm's Web site says the firm has built a reputation as "a champion of property owners' rights."

City Manager **David Niemeyer** said Des Plaines has used condemnation, or eminent domain, in the past to acquire property for the city's redevelopment plans. While the city may decide to use condemnation to acquire property for its plans, it's too early in the process and the decision hasn't been made yet, **Niemeyer** said. "We don't know at this point," **Niemeyer** said.

Another scenario would mean declaring the area as a tax increment financing district, but insisting on private developers to take charge of land acquisition, he said. Under that plan, the city wouldn't be involved in any land acquisition, **Niemeyer** said.

The city used eminent domain to acquire property for its downtown Metropolitan Square project, a mixed-used project that gave the downtown its first grocery store in decades.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**David J. Niemeyer**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Daily Herald (Arlington Heights, IL)  
July 12, 2005

**Official wants to ease rules on hiring**

Author: Kwame Patterson

Des Plaines city officials are asking for changes in the city's residency requirements for department heads. The council was set to discuss the issue, which was presented by City Manager **David J. Niemeyer**, Monday night. However, residency requirements is such a "big deal," according to **Niemeyer**, the council decided to postpone dialogue on the subject until July 25. "After talking with some of the aldermen, they wanted to hold deeper discussions because it's a big issue," he said.

As city manager, **Niemeyer** is in control of hiring and firing all department heads, a power that was given to him in November. He said lifting the residency restriction would allow him to get the best department heads and staff who may live outside of city limits.

In 2001, voters decided to enact a rule that all department heads live or move into city limits. The benefit is that a resident would have the city's best interest in mind. A resident would also contribute money into the city through taxes and they would be closer to the issues facing the city, **Niemeyer** said. However, requiring an employee to relocate to the community would be a strain on his or her personal and financial lives, he added.

The average price for a house in Des Plaines has risen by about \$108,766 from 2000 to 2005, while the average sale price for a townhouse or condominium in the city has risen by about \$52,000 during the same period, **Niemeyer** said. He added the increase in housing costs is good for the city but bad when it comes to bringing in new city employees.

**Niemeyer** would like to eliminate the statute or at least offer an alternative to the rule. He asks the city either extend the hiring radius to 15 to 25 miles from the city's border, lengthen the existing 9-month move in period or create economic incentives for department heads. The city now only offers moving expenses.

So far, the city requirement has not affected most of the city's department heads, as a most of them are grandfathered. But **Niemeyer** said he wants to address this issue now before it becomes a problem.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**David J. Niemeyer**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Daily Herald (Arlington Heights, IL)  
May 5, 2004

**Des Plaines hopes to keep information from leaking out**

Author: Amy McLaughlin

Des Plaines city officials say they want to plug a leak of information to the public about things discussed in closed-door city meetings. A complaint many aldermen have had for years has resurfaced again, city officials said.

City Manager **Dave Niemeyer** said information has gotten out about labor negotiations with a police union. Also, details that **Niemeyer** called inaccurate about what the city is offering as a severance package to William J. Schneider Jr. have gotten out to the public. Schneider agreed to resign last month after officials learned he'd pleaded guilty 10 years ago to mail fraud. **Niemeyer** said they are still negotiating the terms.

**Niemeyer** said he plans to look into the leaks and report back to aldermen. He said everyone who has been in the closed-door meetings, including staff and city council members, need to do a better job policing themselves. "The bottom line is I'm going to do what I can to find this out," **Niemeyer** said. "Obviously, the city manager can only do so much. But the aldermen are going to have to control themselves."

City officials say when information gets out about negotiations - particularly those about buying land or labor issues - it can hurt the city's bargaining power. "It's not a question of not wanting people to know," First Ward Alderman Patricia K. Beauvais said. "But it has all to do with saving the city money and not compromising its position."

Fourth Ward Alderman Dick Sayad also asked **Niemeyer** to come up with a procedure to prevent future leaks. "I want him to do whatever in his power to stop the leakage of information," Sayad said.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**David J. Niemeyer**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Daily Herald (Arlington Heights, IL)  
June 17, 2003

**New city manager in job for long run Niemeyer hopes to bring - stability to Des Plaines**  
Author: Amy McLaughlin

**David J. Niemeyer**, the newly appointed Des Plaines city manager, said Monday he plans to stick around for a while. **Niemeyer**, now village manager in South suburban Homewood, said he's aware of the city's recent history with managers and not fazed by it. His predecessor, Scott Miller, left after about a year with Des Plaines. Miller said it was difficult to do his job because of interference from some of the aldermen. Some residents now are looking for changes in city government to keep that from happening again. Several aldermen will meet next week to evaluate the city manager position.

**Niemeyer**, who was introduced to the public Monday during an afternoon news conference and later during a city council meeting, said he's not worried about the past. "I think my goal is to bring some stability into the organization," he said. "There are challenges that will keep me busy for years and years here." **Niemeyer** agreed with Des Plaines Mayor Tony Arredia, who said it's not uncommon to have personality clashes, on occasion, in city management. "It goes along with the territory," Arredia said.

**Niemeyer** said there's plenty happening in Des Plaines, including several upcoming development projects downtown and elsewhere throughout town. He said he's looking forward to learning what priorities other officials have for the town. "It's a good, solid community," **Niemeyer** said. "Des Plaines is really on the cusp of a lot of exciting issues."

**Niemeyer** said he was aware of the current debate about the city manager job. Seventh Ward Alderman Don Smith, who will chair the meeting on the topic next week, said he'd eventually like to get **Niemeyer's** input. The issue came up after one resident questioned whether the city was having a hard time keeping managers because the job lacked authority. Among the topics to be discussed next week are whether the city should adopt a managerial form of government by referendum or simply beef up the city's own laws regarding the city manager. The legal and licensing committee meeting is set for 9 a.m. June 26 at city hall, 1420 Miner St.

Selected from a group of 42 applicants, **Niemeyer** said he plans to move from Homewood to Des Plaines soon, a requirement for city managers and new department heads. "I'm sure that commute from home will start to get really old," he said. Arredia said he liked **Niemeyer's** background working with developers and unions. Sixth Ward Alderman Tom Becker said he liked **Niemeyer's** emphasis on customer service. "His resume rose to the top," Becker said.

**Niemeyer** has been manager of Homewood, a town of about 20,000, since 1998. Prior to that he was manager of South suburban Richton Park for five years. He's also been an administrator in South suburban Orland Hills and Northwest suburban Harvard. He will start the \$115,000-per-year job July 21.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**David J. Niemeyer**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Chicago Sun-Times (IL)  
November 5, 1993

**Steering Creates Suburb 'Black Belt,' Study Finds**

Author: Maudlyne Ihejirika

Black families seeking subsidized housing in suburban Cook County have been steered to a handful of poor south suburban communities, effectively creating a "black belt," according to a new study to be released today.

The study found that 70 percent of the families in the Cook County Housing Authority's subsidized Section 8 program are concentrated in the south suburbs, compared with 2 percent in the southwest suburbs. More than 90 percent of the Section 8 voucher recipients are black, according to the study conducted by Dr. Paul B. Fischer, a political science professor at Lake Forest College. The study was funded by the MacArthur Foundation.

"We have always said there seems to be a disproportionate amount of Section 8 housing out in the south suburbs, and not enough spread through the other suburbs of Chicago," said Richton Park Village Manager **David Niemeyer**.

The Section 8 program, administered by the county but underwritten with federal funds, is designed to expand housing opportunities for low income residents by granting them vouchers to cover 70 percent of their rent regardless of where they choose to live.

The yearlong study concluded the program had failed to achieve its goal. "The bottom line is the authority needs to change its administrative practices, and there needs to be aggressive fair housing activity in the suburbs, particularly in the southwest suburbs, which is a desert in subsidized housing and blacks," said Fischer.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**David J. Niemeyer**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Chicago Sun-Times (IL)  
September 11, 1992

**In Orland Hills, Bureaucracy Is A One-Man Band**

Author: Rebecca Carr

Want to build a commercial center in Orland Hills? Have a question about village finances? When do they pick up garbage? Go to the one man with all the answers. Ask **Dave Niemeyer**. **Niemeyer** is the village manager in the rapidly growing southwestern Cook County community of 6,000. He's also the finance director, planning director, personnel director, health director, economic development director and public relations manager.

Operating a one-stop shop in what once was the master bedroom of a converted sky-blue ranch house overlooking hundreds of acres of corn, **Niemeyer** doesn't just run the bureaucracy in Orland Hills. He is the bureaucracy. "**Dave** juggles an awful lot of balls in the air at the same time," said Village President Lorin L. Schab. On one recent day alone, 40 telephone messages were awaiting the 31-year-old native of the south suburbs.

Administrators like **Niemeyer** who wear a number of hats are fast becoming endangered species in the suburbs. As populations and commercial developments expand, many municipalities are being forced to keep pace by hiring more personnel and opening specialized service departments such as planning, health, finance and sanitation. And that means they quickly outgrow such modest office facilities as the ranch house in Orland Hills, acquired by the village in the 1960s when a homeowner defaulted on a loan. "The trend toward professional city managers is seen in communities that want to experience more growth," said Karen Jaworsky, program specialist for the 38-member South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association. "It's tough to be a one-man band."

Next door to Orland Hills, the community of Orland Park - where the population has jumped from just over 6,000 in 1970 to 37,320 last year - has built a multimillion-dollar prairie-style village hall to house its eight departments. It is also erecting a new \$3 million home for its public works agencies. But such developments also pose a dilemma. Although fast-growing suburbs must hire more personnel and add more departments, most want to preserve the quaint atmosphere of a village operation like **Niemeyer's**.

"We are one of the largest southwest suburban communities . . . but when there's a disaster the mayor and I are right there," said Orland Park Village Manager James L. Smithberg. For instance, Smithberg explained, both he and acting Mayor Richard F. Noyal personally hit the streets as the ad hoc village "flood control" team when the town was soaked by a major deluge on Wednesday. But keeping the "hometown" feel can be tricky for boom towns. "One thing we have consistently tried to do, regardless of growth, is to hold down the number of (village) employees," said Tinley Park Village Manager Dennis A. Kallsen, who has seen the population double in the 16 years he has been the village's chief operating officer. Communities where one person performs virtually all the municipal tasks are rapidly becoming extinct while more and



**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**David J. Niemeyer**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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more suburbs add sophisticated service-oriented departments, said Charles Tokar, village clerk in Chicago Ridge. Instead of offering just garbage pickup, for example, most suburban municipalities have added recycling. "The whole effort is to bring in professional managers, financial officers and trained individuals," Tokar said. "You have to run it like a business."

With maps of planned developments stacked near his desk, **Niemeyer** said he knows his days as a one-man band are numbered. On the drawing board are plans to replace the cornfield ranch house with a modern village hall on 159th Street. Even so, **Niemeyer** says moving into more spacious surroundings and hiring some help won't change his hands-on style of management. "We try to give them all of the answers right away," he said. "When we have a resident with a building problem, we will go out to the site and talk to him. The key is personal contact."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**David J. Niemeyer**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Chicago Sun-Times (IL)

May 24, 1992

**Birds, home buyers flock to Orland**

Author: Gary S. Meyers

Every spring and fall, Orland Park and Orland Hills residents can watch thousands of migrating birds fly to McGinnis Slough, a wildlife sanctuary northwest of the two south suburbs. All told, 15,000 expansive acres of natural resources hedge the towns on three sides.

Orland Park, 26 miles southwest of the Loop, has a residential flavor, but it's also home to several manufacturing, research and office facilities. Industrial areas include Advanced Pulver, Appleknoll Industrial Park, Glen Oaks, Midwest Business Park and Voss Industrial Park. Construction is also under way on Park Point shopping plaza, which will include a Target store. Orland Park is proud of its new Village Center Complex, which houses a village hall, recreation center and a civic center with an exhibition hall for cultural events and trade shows.

A smaller, younger community, Orland Hills draws many young families with its more affordable housing. Though working to keep its growth in check, the community's population has nearly doubled since 1980, expanding from 2,800 to 5,510. Village administrator **David Niemeyer** predicts it will peak at 8,000 in about 10 years.

Orland Hills is basically residential but shows potential for commercial growth. Until six years ago, the village had little sales tax revenue to offer relief from high property taxes. Then a hotel and a car dealership opened, followed by Orland Town Center with a Wal-Mart in October, 1991. Additions of an Eagle Foods, Phar-Mor and fast food chains are being planned. Village officials say these businesses will ease property owners' tax burden.

Orland Park has numerous recreational facilities at its 25 park sites. The 192-acre Centennial Park opens this weekend to commemorate the community's 100th anniversary. It currently includes a pool, tennis and basketball courts and baseball diamonds.

Residents in Orland Hills enjoy more than 60 acres of park land, with a fishing lake, a jogging trail and baseball diamonds. A new recreation department was recently created and a new recreational facility is being planned. Plans for construction of a village hall in Orland Town Center are under way in Orland Hills.

Housing. Homes in Orland Park and Orland Hills reflect the area's dynamic growth in recent years. While quaint, country charm may still be found in Old Orland, site of the area's oldest homes, most of the housing stock is in new, upscale subdivisions. Prices in Orland Park range between \$100,000 and \$650,000, while most are in the \$150,000 to \$200,000 range. The average home sold for \$174,366 in 1991. A new subdivision is being built near the Silver Lakes golf course where homes will be priced between \$249,000 to \$266,900.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**David J. Niemeyer**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Orland Park has an extensive condominium market. Condos and town houses range from \$54,000 to \$300,000. Orland Hills housing prices range from \$80,000 to \$150,000, with an average of \$107,031 in 1991. New single-family homes, with prices starting at \$148,500, are going up in the Ashbourne Hills subdivision. Apartments are abundant in the area. One-bedroom units rent for \$450 to \$640, while two bedrooms go for \$500 to \$745 a month.

Schools. Orland Park elementary students are served by four districts: Orland School District 135, Palos School District 118, Kirby School District 140 and Tinley School District 146. Orland Hills primary students attend Fernway School District 140 and Orland School District 135. High school students from both villages attend District 230's Carl Sandburg High School in Orland Park, which won the Excellence in Education Award in 1985. The average ACT score in 1990 was 22.4. (The state average was 20.9.)

Transportation. Interstate 80 is five minutes from Orland Hills and links up with the Tri-State Tollway (I-294), I-57 and the Stevenson Expy. (I-55).

Shopping. Orland Park offers some of the best shopping opportunities in greater Chicago, including Orland Park Place, Lakeview Plaza and Orland Square, which features Chicago's Big Four: Sears, Marshall Field's, J.C. Penney and Carson Pirie Scott, plus 150 stores, a food court and dining terrace. There also are antiques shops, arts and craft stores and women's clothing stores in town.

Hospitals. Palos Community Hospital, in nearby Palos Heights, is a 500-bed facility. The Palos Community Hospital Primary Care Center in Orland Park treats minor illnesses and injuries.

The 1992 edition of *Living in Greater Chicago* includes 310 suburban and city community profiles. It's available for \$5.95 in bookstores or \$7.95 by mail. For more information, call (312) 642-9000.

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Research Compiled by: Cara Slade and Amanda Dillabough  
Colin Baenziger & Associates

COLIN BAENZIGER  ASSOCIATES  
EXECUTIVE RECRUITING

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*Section 12*

*Jane K. Shang*

*Lake Worth Beach City Manager  
Candidate Report*

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*Cover Letter and Resume*

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June 7, 2021

Dear Mr. Baenziger,

Please find attached my resume for consideration for the position of City Manager –Lake Worth Beach, Florida.

You will note in my resume that for the past approximately five years as City Manager in Deltona, I worked closely with the community and City Commission to develop its first useable strategic plan. Prior to my arrival, there was no process to identify goals to be achieved and how to reach consensus. The City staff constantly drifted from project to project without completion. Inertia was prevalent because when you try to do everything you end up doing nothing. Once the strategic plan was adopted both the Commission and staff had clear direction on what projects were a priority, required staff time and funding. Deltona has an all funds budget of over \$170M and over 400 employees, excluding 83 contracted Sheriff's Department personnel. More has been accomplished in my tenure than under previous City Managers. In 2016 and with less than a year as City Manager, I received the City Manager of the Year award for Volusia County. My reputation is a "game changer" because I achieve results. For example, under my direction Amazon has built a 1.4M square foot distribution center in Deltona. Deltona is the envy of numerous municipalities across the nation. Deltona is now well on its way in transforming from a retirement/bedroom community (over 80% residential) to a more diversified property tax base. Prior to my arrival this development goal was discussed for over a decade with no results.

Before Deltona, I was the Deputy City Manager for Transportation and Public Works for El Paso, Texas. The City of El Paso is a border community of approximately 700,000 located adjacent to Juarez, Mexico (2.3M metropolitan area). Major issues facing the City of El Paso, similar to other communities, are ensuring reliable revenue estimates, providing excellent services to citizens in every area despite budget constraints, finding new revenue sources to address unfunded liabilities, maintaining/improving the community's quality of life, guiding economic development, job creation, environmental sustainability, public safety and increased health and human service needs. As the Deputy City Manager, I managed the City's airport and bus systems, \$1B capital improvement program, engineering department, facilities and land management, international bridges, streets and traffic program. Back then my portfolio had an operating budget of over \$160M, a capital budget of approximately \$1B and over 1600 employees. I also worked closely with the arts, public safety and human services departments regarding downtown revitalization and targeting investment in underserved areas to bring about equity and social justice.

If I am selected as the City Manager for Lake Worth Beach, Florida, I will continue to foster this spirit of teamwork and collaboration with the City administration. I am a "can do" leader who can facilitate and guide individuals/entities to achieve consensus and to achieve a common vision. I have public works experience as I have overseen capital improvement projects, construction, engineering, roadway, streets, traffic, storm water and water and sewer operations in Deltona and El Paso. I have also managed Community Redevelopment Areas/Agencies in both Deltona and El Paso.

I have the ability to carry out government initiatives and to make strategic decisions pertaining to land development, increasing property values and creating a business friendly environment. I have experience with smart growth and understand the value to building a vibrant community where

## Section 12

residents can live, work and play, as well as promoting solar initiatives, tourism and walkability. I have the ability to set the tone and vision for staff. I can find ways to gain efficiencies in service delivery and provide a new vision for how staff provides quality services to the community to promote social equity. I have been complimented with establishing the best senior management team and the most productive workforce in Deltona. I will strive to improve the quality of life for the community while still being environment and business friendly. I value partnerships with other communities on regional issues and resource sharing. I am a critical decision maker, am able to process information strategically and can implement decisions into reality. I have the ability to be “big picture” oriented while maintaining an acceptable level for details. I am highly accountable, diplomatic, dynamic, ethical, innovative, professional and self-confident. I also have the confidence to acknowledge my mistakes and to be held accountable.

My rebuilding of the Sun Metro bus system in El Paso from the verge of a meltdown into the Outstanding Transit Agency of the Year serves as an example of my ability to carry out a vision, to be focused on customer service and to transform a low performing department to a high performing department. My prior experience with the clean-up of the Boston Harbor, the “Big Dig” and 9/11 shows that I have the knowledge to deliver and come up with improved policies and procedures and innovative solutions to ensure economic results and to resolve problems. My extensive Boston experience gives me an excellent and progressive background in economic development and tourism. During that time period I also managed to maintain Airport operations in the black despite the downturn in air travel and growing safety mandates. I have strong negotiation skills that can find a way to turn disputes into consensus and to carry forward Lake Worth Beach’s goals and initiatives.

I have a diverse background which includes experience in community consensus building, construction, contract and union negotiations, economic development, environmental processes, fiscal management, land/project development and management, operations, public private partnerships, public works, real estate, strategic planning and implementation, smart growth development, tourism, transportation, utilities and zoning. I have worked and partnered with many organizations, including federal, state and local entities. I am a high performer, customer-focused, creative and dedicated individual. I will set a positive example of accountability, competence, hard work, ethics, leadership and professionalism to the organization and community. I will make Lake Worth Beach’s goals a reality as proven in my accomplishments. Fiscal innovation and community trust are crucial given the downturn in revenues and societal needs due to COVID-19.

My past experience and accomplishments in Deltona/El Paso/Tampa/Boston make me a strong candidate and an excellent fit to be the City Manager for Lake Worth Beach, Florida. Thank you for considering my application.

Sincerely,

Jane K. Shang  
janeshang2@aol.com  
386-259-5624



**Jane K. Shang 771 Mountain Ash Way, Deltona, Florida 32725**  
(386) 259-5624, email: janeshang2@aol.com

**SUMMARY**

More than 30 years of experience in government operations with expertise in the following areas:

- municipal, state and federal law
- community consensus building
- strategic planning and implementation
- economic development
- project development and management
- customer service and organizational change
- fiscal and labor management
- public sector administration and operations
- private public partnerships

**RELEVANT GOVERNMENT EXPERIENCE**

**City Manager, City of Deltona, Florida**

**June 2015-January 2020**

Deltona, the largest City in Volusia County (approx. 100,000), is located between Orlando and Daytona Beach. Deltona was incorporated as a City on December 31, 1995 and began as a retirement community. Being equidistance from Orlando and Daytona Beach, Deltona is now a bedroom community (85%). The current vision is to transition to a diversified tax base and recruit businesses, restaurants and employment.

Duties and Responsibilities as City Manager:

- Oversee day to day operations with approx. \$170M annual budget and approx. 400 employees, excluding 83 contracted personnel from Volusia County Sheriff's Office. Departments include City Manager's Office, City Clerk, Finance, Information Technology, Planning and Development (including CBDG and SHIP funds), Building and Enforcement Services, Human Resources, Law Enforcement, Fire/Rescue, Public Works/Deltona Water, Parks and Recreation, and The Center at Deltona (new \$8.9M events/venue facility for rent).
- Prepare and submit the annual budget, budget message and capital programs to the City Commission.
- Coordinate/direct federal, county and municipal officials, City departments and the public to optimize service and sound fiscal delivery.
- Coordinate with Volusia County Emergency Management staff during hurricane season and maintain healthy reserves (\$8.1M, increased annually for inflation) for natural disaster relief.

Achievements:

- Awards:
  - City Manager of the Year 2016: Volusia League of Cities.
  - Deltona Citizen of the Year 2017: Deltona Dream Keepers
  - Deltona City Manager Recognition: Guitars for Veterans, Deltona, Florida

## Section 12

-Game Changer Award to City Manager 2020: Deltona Dream Keepers  
\*11<sup>th</sup> City Manager in City's 24 year history.

### □ Economic Development:

-Amazon fulfillment center: 1.4M square foot/\$100M facility to open in September 2020.  
500 new jobs.

-Halifax Hospital: \$160M state of the art facility opened February 2020 plus 20,000 square foot medical office building to open in March 2020. Hundreds of new jobs.

-Two new emergency care facilities (Halifax and Advent Health) valued at approximately \$25M.

-Hundred million \$ of commercial development in the queue/completed, such as Wawa, RaceTrac, Hardee's, Burger King, Dunkin Donuts, McDonalds, Honest-1, and so on.

-1000 new homes in various stages of rezoning, design and construction.

-Manpower Group (Jan. 4, 2019) ranks Deltona as "#1 for net employment growth (37%)" compared to Tampa at 31% and Miami at 22%.

-Negotiated new solid waste contract which includes residential and commercial hauling. Contract supports new City Beautification Program.

-Built \$8.9M events facility to allow City to hold large entertaining and speaking events (ex. Ron DeSantis and Andrew Gillum, Governor's Election).

-Initiated on-line permitting and plans review for commercial and residential projects.

-Coined the phrase "Deltona...A City on the Move" for brand recognition and marketing.

### □ Fiscal:

-Developed first five year Strategic Plan which provides clear direction on City priorities.

-Aa2 Moody's Bond rating.

-Provided resources to protect City IT system from being "hacked" by outsiders. No data breach and no payment to outsiders.

-Obtained approximately \$15M in new grant funding from state legislature, Transportation Planning Organization and Volusia County for transportation and ecological/parks projects.

-Lowered and maintained millage rate while providing new services, hiring additional staff, maintaining excellent employee health, adding employee education benefits, providing employee raises and maintaining a balanced budget.

-Brought diversity into the hiring practices as the NAACP was on the verge of filing a lawsuit.

### □ Public Safety:

-Crime is down by double digits.

-Successfully negotiated two collective bargaining agreements with the Fire Department Union.

-Successfully negotiated medical transport agreement with Volusia County.

-Budgeted adequate reserves for hurricane disaster relief whereas some municipalities had to borrow funds to address need. Worked with FEMA on two hurricanes.

-Lowered City's ISO (Insurance Service Office) rating to bring insurance rates down.

### Deputy City Manager, El Paso, Texas

**2008-2015**

El Paso is a border municipality located adjacent to Juarez, Mexico. El Paso's population is approximately 700,000 and the metropolitan area, including Juarez, Mexico, is approximately 2.2 million.

#### Duties and Responsibilities as Deputy City Manager:

- Oversight responsibility for the following functions: airport, building maintenance, bus operations, engineering and construction, international bridges and trade development, parks management, streets and roadways, traffic management, economic development, finance, project planning and implementation, and service delivery.
- Development and oversight of over \$160M operating budget and \$1B Capital Improvement Program ("CIP") to support economic development, street infrastructure and quality of life policy goals established by the Mayor/City Council. Deliver projects on time and within budget.

#### Achievements:

- Transformed the Sun Metro bus system from a near meltdown to the Outstanding Transit Agency of the Year. Obtained federal funding for the City's \$145M Bus Rapid Transit ("BRT") program under the New Starts Program.
- Within the \$1B CIP, approximately \$500M is devoted to Quality of Life projects related to libraries, museum and cultural affairs, parks and zoo improvements. Projects include the siting, design and construction of a children's museum, cultural center, downtown revitalization, library facilities, multi-purpose area, regional parks, Olympic size and competition swimming pool and zoo facilities. Initiated first three years of Quality of Life program.
- Initiated smart growth zoning and development at El Paso Airport, which has approximately 5000 acres available for development.
- Negotiated and implemented the P3/560 Program to reduce border wait times at the City owned ports of entry. This program is one of five programs approved nationwide by the Department of Homeland Security. Worked with Economic Development to look at the City's international bridges as an economic asset for the City rather than for only transportation purposes.
- Secured funding at the Metropolitan Planning Organization to develop a CIP for International Bridges and the City's bus system.
- Gained the respect of the ADA community by championing accessibility issues. I chaired the Accessibility and Transition Committee previously chaired by the Mayor.

**Director, Engineering and Development.** HART, Tampa, FL      **2004-2008**

Duties and Responsibilities as Director:

- Directed the overall development and construction functions of the authority including New Starts projects, development of regional impact projects, transit centers, roadway improvements, land use reviews, and facility planning and development related to a bus and streetcar system.
- Developed and oversaw budget planning, federal and state grant applications/reporting, environmental site assessment and NEPA compliance, site review, community outreach, alternatives analysis, travel forecasting/modeling, preliminary engineering and design, ADA compliance, cost forecasting and reporting, procurement through Requests for Proposals, value engineering studies, design and construction award, and budget/contract administration in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles.

Achievements:

- Planned, funded and implemented the Capital Improvement Program within budget and on time, including facilities to support the organization's growth.
- Worked with marketing to promote the revitalization of historic Ybor City.
- Saved the organization several millions of dollars by negotiating an agreement with FTA to grandfather work completed according to the New Starts program.

**Manager. Logan Airport, Boston, MA.**

**1996-2004**

Duties and Responsibilities as Manager:

- Responsible for legal, property and fiscal management of approximately 40 airline accounts at Logan International Airport consisting of approximately 700,000 rentable square feet of space and generating approximately \$110M-\$120M in annual revenues. Also responsible for the portfolio management of non-tenant air carriers and airline related entities such as Federal Aviation Administration/Transportation Security Administration (35+ leases), flight kitchens (2), aviation service operators (6) and commercial service operators (35) which generate approximately \$11M in annual revenues. Essential tasks include:
  - (a) Economic oversight of Massport's commercial real estate development function;
  - (b) Participation in processes to bring new air carrier tenants and business to Logan Airport; and
  - (c) Participation in the development of capital improvement and rehabilitation budgets for airport facilities and long term economic development.

Achievements:

- Kept Logan Airport in the black fiscally during a period when most airlines were not paying tenant fees due to the down turn in the aviation industry as a result of 9/11. Maintained a revenue stream of approximately \$130M.
- Dramatically improved airline relationships between large and small carriers operating at Logan Airport. Airlines worked as a team during difficult financial times.

## **Section 12**

- Successfully negotiated concession agreements to improve customer satisfaction and to improve airport revenues.
- Earned the respect of the airline community.

**Assistant Director.** MBTA, Boston, MA

**1990-1996**

Duties and Responsibilities as Assistant Director:

- The MBTA operates a multi-modal transit system, including bus, BRT, commuter boat, commuter rail, light rail and subway. I was responsible for negotiating financial agreements and obtaining all necessary property rights for transportation. Types of acquisitions include easements, partial takings within downtown Boston buildings, a sand and gravel operation, commercial/industrial land with ongoing businesses-various types of acquisitions necessary to create a new railroad right of way corridor, to build or expand station sites/layover facilities, to provide handicap accessibility, to build bridges, etc.

Achievements:

- Negotiated and acquired property rights vital to construction projects ranging from \$0.5M to \$600M, including for the Central Artery Interfacing – “Big Dig”.
- Developed excellent relationships with the public and public officials during all negotiations.
- Possess extensive business, construction, real estate and transportation experience as well as knowledge of public sector, administrative, contract, environmental and eminent domain law.

**Senior Real Estate and Contracts Attorney.**

**1987-1990**

Massachusetts Water Resources Authority, Charlestown Navy Yard, MA

Duties and Responsibilities as Senior Attorney:

- Chief legal counsel/coordinator for eminent domain and relocation projects for the MWRA. Responsible for negotiating/resolving property acquisitions (water/sewer projects, office space, landfill location) with private and public (federal, state and municipal) entities and compliance with federal and state regulations for the clean-up of the Boston Harbor.

Achievements:

- Achieved over a 75% negotiation rate earning me a reputation for being fair and understanding. This was very difficult because very expensive homes (Boston suburbs) and pristine backyards were impacted. Saved the organization several hundreds of thousands of dollars in litigation costs.
- Participated in siting the location to build a facility to turn sludge into dry fertilization pellets.
- Successfully defended the organization against lawsuits aimed to stop construction of necessary infrastructure to clean-up the Boston Harbor.
- Earned high respects for my work despite the organization being the subject of numerous lawsuits and disliked for rising sewer and water rates.

**Assistant Corporation Counsel.** City of Boston, MA

**1986-1987**

Duties and Responsibilities as Assistant Corporation Counsel:

- Responsible for defending the City of Boston in court and before administrative bodies; researching and advising the Mayor and City Council as to policy making objectives; drafting legislation for passage; and acting as in-house counsel to City departments. Knowledge of federal and state procurement laws.

Achievements:

- Provided sound legal advice to the City of Boston.

**EDUCATION/MEMBERSHIPS:**

Brown University, A.B. 1980. Organizational Behavior/Business.

Suffolk Law School, J.D. 1985.

Admitted to Massachusetts Bar in December 1985.

CNU-A certified, 2011-2015

ICMA member and previously on Awards Committee

**REFERENCES:** furnished upon request



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*Candidate Introduction*

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**JANE K. SHANG**

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**EDUCATION**

Brown University, A.B., 1980, Organizational Behavior/Business.  
Suffolk Law School, J.D., 1985.  
Admitted to the Massachusetts Bar in December 1985.  
CNU-A certified, 2011-2015.

**EXPERIENCE**

City Manager, City of Deltona, Florida	2015-January 2020
Deputy City Manager, El Paso, Texas.	2008-2015
Director, HART, Tampa, Florida	2004-2008
Manager, Logan International Airport, Boston, MA	1996-2004
Assistant Director, MBTA, Boston, MA	1990-1996
Senior Attorney, MWRA, Charlestown Navy Yard, MA	1987-1990
Assistant Corporation Counsel, Boston, MA	1986-1987

**BACKGROUND**

The City of Deltona is located equidistance between Orlando and Daytona Beach, Florida. Deltona is a retirement/bedroom community (over 80% residential) with a population of approximately 100K. There are 34K households in Deltona with 40K cars leaving the City daily and only 2K cars coming into Deltona. There is very little business activity in Deltona, especially during the day. Residents leave the City for work, shopping and entertainment. Deltona has a general fund of approximately \$40M, an all funds budget of over \$170M and approximately 400 employees, excluding 83 contracted Sheriff's department personnel. For over a decade the vision of the City Commission and residents has been to diversify the property tax base by bringing in commercial businesses and creating local jobs. However, prior to my arrival, there was no process to identify goals to be achieved and how to reach consensus. The City staff constantly drifted from project to project without completion. During my tenure the City (with public input) adopted its first useable strategic plan. Also, I, with staff support, was able to convince Amazon to build a 1.4M square foot fulfillment center and to facilitate Halifax Hospital's construction of a \$140M new state of the art teaching hospital in Deltona. With these two major anchor businesses, Deltona is now on its way in attracting businesses and diversifying its tax base.

The three most important issues facing the City of Deltona are (a) developing and adhering to a strategic plan to provide clear direction on what goals are to be achieved and where funding/staff time should be allocated; (b) providing excellent and fair customer service to all residents given fiscal shortages and growing needs; and (c) diversifying its tax base given the shortage of businesses and high number of rental units.

- All municipalities spend hundreds of staff hours to establish an annual operating budget. However, to be useful, the operating budget must be tied to a vision/set of realistic goals. There is always a list of unmet needs and the list constantly grows. Without a strategic plan (ranging from immediate to long term), the City Commission and staff can easily fall into the trap that everything is a priority. Trying to do everything results in doing nothing. Promises are made that can't be kept. Residents then become angry and feel misled. Hard working staff become frustrated over the constant change in direction and become demoralized. I have the reputation of being a “game changer” because I help others to be focused on what is doable and to achieve results.
- The cost to provide services to the community constantly increases even after organizational efficiencies are achieved. The reason is not government waste but the need for more services increase with a growing population and inventory. The public does not understand or accept service cuts. However, government officials must gain the public's trust that services are being provided as efficiently as possible without raising taxes. Resources must also be allocated equitably throughout the community. I have the ability to be “future-focused” and strategic. I also have the ability and courage to be honest even when the truth can be unpopular and not what you want to hear.
- To diversify the tax base by encouraging more businesses, Deltona had to look critically at how the City conducts business. Processes were reviewed and changed. Change causes apprehension and stress but was necessary and long overdue. Also, Deltona's high absentee ownership rate had to be addressed by making the property owners fiscally and building code responsible for their tenants. Deltona diversified its housing mix by working with developers to build smart growth housing which encouraged home ownership to new buyers. Finally, I can alleviate revenue shortfalls by finding new revenues sources. I worked with staff to go after Transportation Planning Organization funds and supplemented the City's transportation budget by over \$12M.

**GENERAL, MANAGEMENT STYLE AND EXPERIENCE**

Lake Worth Beach offers me the opportunity to utilize my diverse background to address fiscal creativity and accountability, to move the City's Strategic Plan forward and to turn projects from discussion into reality. I am known as a “can do leader” because I have the ability to work with/guide staff to achieve results. This skill set is extremely important during times of change.

Staff is crucial to meeting the goals and objectives of an organization. I want to provide the environment and tools for staff to develop and to move up in the organization when possible. Unnecessary staff turnover is costly, labor intensive and a waste of valuable resources. I manage by empowerment. My vision is to create a strong leadership team that strives to problem solve and wants to continually improve/innovate. The end result will be high employee morale and outstanding customer service delivery to the public. I have been praised for developing staff and creating the best management team in Deltona.

**JANE K. SHANG**

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Further, to move a City forward, all must move in the same direction and support one another. Inward grandstanding at the expense of one's co-workers is toxic to an organization. Prior to my arrival to Deltona, directors fought with one another and cared only about his/her department rather than looking out for the entire City organization. This "me" attitude is problematic and challenging when developing an efficient, balanced and customer service oriented budget. Over time I developed a team of leaders that worked together and supported one another. Teamwork was very apparent during budget time when cuts had to be made and Directors volunteered to make cuts. The mentality changed from what is good for me and forget about everyone else to what are the needs of the entire City organization to provide excellent customer service to the residents.

Because of this trust and flexibility in staff, staff has proven to take pride and to be held accountable for his/her work. An atmosphere of honesty exists so that problems/delays are forthcoming, discussed and resolved immediately. Delays and a new course of action are made known to the City Administration which develops trust within the organization and to the public.

I enjoy working with and helping people. People and staff that have worked for/with me know that I believe City government exists to serve the community. Customer service to our community is the City mission. I believe in teamwork, collaboration, honesty, transparency and accountability. I live by three guiding principles: Always do the right thing, be fair and leave things better (hopefully a lot better) than how you found them. Further, my major in college was Business/Organizational Behavior. Throughout my career I have worked with numerous organizations from small, medium and large. I have always strived for the organization and staff to be the best that they can be and to provide outstanding customer service.

To be a City Manager you need certain strengths. My strength lies in my ability to lead by listening, being focused, having a vision and being results oriented. To lead you also need to have the honesty and strength to admit one's mistakes. The following are two examples of my ability to focus on an issue and problem solve.

First, the Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) distributes federal and state funds to state, county and municipal entities. Prior to my arrival, Deltona, in spite of being the largest city in Volusia County, was not a recipient of this funding source. I taught staff how to maneuver through a very complicated eligibility process. It can be political because the Board members consist of state, county and local municipalities (30+) fighting over the same pot of money. To the dismay of other members, Deltona is now receiving a fair share of funding (over \$12M in new funds) because we are making the case that what is good for Deltona is good for the region.

Second, I always value the reward of collaboration and partnerships. For over 10 years there was discussion about building a gym and sports fields for the Deltona Community. The question was where and how to come up with the funding. The YMCA and Deltona State College were both interested in building either a gym or sports fields but adequate funding was always an issue. The YMCA has expertise in programming youth events. Daytona State College has land. The

**JANE K. SHANG**

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solution was a pooling of resources. Daytona State College will donate the land, the City will provide funding for design and construction. Once built the YMCA could handle the programming.

Being a hard worker, I always want to see results. My test to determine whether my staff and I are meeting organizational goals is implementation of the strategic plan. A citizen satisfaction survey could also provide periodic feedback. The City organization exists to meet the needs and expectations of its citizenry. If the citizenry, including both the residents and businesses, are satisfied with government services and the quality of life in the community, government is meeting its goals. Strategic plans are both short and long term, as well as adjusted as circumstances require.

I have three proud achievements that I want to elaborate upon. First, I am proud to have been personally involved with getting Amazon to build a 1.4M square foot distribution center (equivalent to the size of 100 grocery stores) in Deltona. From this experience I have learned that financial incentives are helpful but not determinative in the selection process for big business. The best incentive is delivery. Amazon was looking at several sites along the I-4 corridor. I put together a team, consisting of myself and staff from economic development, planning and public works, to go after Amazon. We met with the developer and established a trusting working relationship. I listened and learned that Amazon wanted to open a new facility by the fall of 2020. This meant that the normal process of rezoning, design and construction had to be condensed from 30 months to around 12 months. To make this happen coordination between FDOT, Volusia County, City Commission, Duke Energy, a private landowner, design consultants, inspectors and other staff had to occur. I took the position that the developer's problems were my problems. My staff and I brought all these entities together and on the same timeline. Staff and I met with the developer at least weekly and daily at times. Problems or obstacles were not allowed to fester. We were proactive, creative and removed problem after problem. Staff and I convinced the developer that only Deltona could meet Amazon's needs. For the developer the process was easy but behind the scenes there was hard work, anticipation, determination and sweat.

Given the developer's positive experience with Deltona City staff, the developer plans to purchase additional acres to develop an industrial park for his other clients. Listening and understanding the desired end result has now opened the doors to transforming Deltona from a bedroom community to a place for business development. I understand the value of building a strong business base as an economic engine for the community and to improve the quality of life for residents. Currently, hundreds of millions of dollars in commercial development are in the queue/completed such as Wawa, RaceTrac, Hardee's, Burger King, Dunkin Donuts, McDonalds, Honest-1, new state of the art hospital (Halifax), two new emergency care facilities (Halifax and Advent Health) and so on. Under my direction, a ten year dream of building an event center, became a reality. The \$8.9M facility is the envy of every municipality in Volusia County.

**JANE K. SHANG**

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The second achievement relates to the transformation of the Sun Metro bus system from a near meltdown to the Outstanding Transit Agency of the Year. Prior to my arrival, if you rode the bus you had a 30% chance that the bus never arrived, would be late or would break down en route. To address this problem I put myself in the shoes of the customer and focused on customer service (externally and internally). My customers were the rider and the City staff. Emphasis was placed on building bus shelters to protect the rider from the heat; buying new buses; increased cleaning of the buses to provide a clean and comfortable environment for the rider; a new branding campaign to signify the start of a new beginning; and new uniforms and customer service training for the employees. When I left, on time performance is near 98%; ridership has increased from 11M riders to 17M riders, annually; the community loves and is proud of the system; the employees are proud to be part of the organization and employee morale is at its highest. Further, I helped to obtain federal funding for the City of El Paso's \$145M Bus Rapid Transit program under the New Starts Program. This achievement is an example of how I transformed a dysfunctional department to a highly efficient organization, improved employee morale, changed public opinion and won a national award for this transformation.

The third achievement relates to public corroboration. I am a firm believer that the needs of a community always outweigh available funding. This means that we must be fiscally prudent and efficient to provide quality municipal services. We must work collaboratively and pool our resources/expertise. It is not about competition but finding a way to provide services to all facets of the public. During my tenure at Deltona crime has dropped 30% because I worked with the Sheriff's office to instill the message that we, as a community, must do our part in preventing crime. The more eyes on the street the better. Churches and neighborhood watch groups got involved. Code enforcement looked for code violations. Residents started to take care of their property and remove hidden areas which can attract crime. Residents believed in the broken window theory and wanted to do their part. I also pushed for funding to invest in technology such as license plate readers (LPR). LPRs were not popular initially due to invasion of privacy fears. Education addressed this issue. Public safety, fostered by community engagement, became a collaborative event. The end result is safer neighborhoods, reduced blight and acceptance of new technology with license plate readers. A safe living environment makes a city desirable.

To keep project costs down, I have looked for other funding sources and to combine projects to fit the funding source. For example, I combined a water and sewer replacement project with a roadway project. The Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) distributes transportation funds to the region and will pay for other work considered ancillary to the roadway project. The water and sewer lines were old and required replacement sometime in the future (and was listed in the City's capital improvement plan). I convinced the TPO that the water and sewer lines should be replaced while the road was being excavated and rebuilt. It would make no sense to build a new road and not address the utilities in the road. Otherwise, the "new" road will need to be dug up in the future. The TPO agreed and will pay two thirds the cost for the road and utility lines. Financial creativity and thinking outside the box brought millions of dollars to Deltona.

### JANE K. SHANG

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Success also comes with failure. The failures make us learn and to grow. I am an individual with high integrity. I expect the same from my superiors, peers and staff. My biggest failure is that not all individuals look at mistakes as part of the learning process and individuals try to cover up his/her mistake or to deflect the mistake to someone else.

As a leader, you must work with and manage employees. I look for employees who believe in teamwork. During my career I have had to fire staff. Terminating employment is always difficult because you impact an individual's livelihood and potentially one's career path. During this process I handled it directly and compassionately. I always want to be able to live with my actions and to look myself in the mirror.

The challenges facing the new City Manager are:

- Establishing a working relationship with the new City Commission, collectively and individually, and the public. 2021 was a time of great change for Lake Worth Beach with four newly elected officials. The prior City Manager also left. Lake Worth Beach is looking for change. However, I look at challenges as opportunities. The same glass can be half empty or half full depending upon the view point. I believe in being positive. With the support of the City Commission, City staff and the public, anything is possible and achievable. My story about Amazon's 1.4M square foot facility is an example of when we all work together towards a common goal "mountains can be moved." I will be visible in the community. I will listen, let others talk and learn from the City's diverse community/residents.
- Creating and maintaining a vibrant/diverse economy. Lake Worth Beach is being noticed by developers. To achieve the City's vision to be a vibrant, desirable and sustainable City for residents to live, work and play, there must be a balance between new commercial/industrial development and existing/new residential housing projects. Development of the DecoGreen, Golden Roads and Gulfstream Hotel projects require careful oversight to ensure completion while maintaining the City's small town character, feel and integrity. The Downtown parking study must be implemented for economic growth and traffic safety. As growth occurs the City must maintain affordable housing and provide housing options for its workforce, as well as maintaining/preserving the City's sense of community pride, culture, history, natural environment and neighborhoods. Finding the right vision and planning for the future will make Lake Worth Beach a great city to live, work and play.
- Implementing a balanced budget while providing necessary services to all its residents. The majority of the target areas for growth are within the Community Redevelopment Area (CRA) which means that property taxes generated within the CRA will remain in the CRA. The taxes will not be available for use to the rest of the City. Fortunately, the City receives funds from a sales surcharge tax to use throughout the City for infrastructure improvements. New revenue sources, partnerships and pooling of resources must be found to ease growing fiscal demands. Infrastructure needs to protect Lake Worth Lagoon, flooding and rising sea levels must be addressed. Emergency



**JANE K. SHANG**

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preparedness, homelessness, opioid use, poverty, technological innovations and tourism are also on the list.

During the first six months, I will:

- Meet with the City Commission to understand their concerns, goals and objectives; both collectively and individually. Schedule regular biweekly meetings.
- Spend an enormous amount of time meeting with residents from the seventeen strong neighborhoods, as well as other community leaders. I want to listen and gain their trust.
- Meet with staff and residents to better understand the organizational structure. I will listen, observe and analyze. If necessary, I can make the hard decisions and appropriate changes.
- Keep the City Commission and public informed. To keep various entities informed I would have advisory committees/groups, community forums, individual meetings; group/stakeholder events; public workshops; and use social media such as the City website, Facebook, Facebook live, Instagram, Twitter and so on. I would also encourage the development of a detailed strategic plan for implementation. These methods allow for personal interaction and active dialogue. COVID-19 has caused the use of technology to communicate with the public. I still believe personal interaction is most effective.
- Monitor the 500 housing units in the queue to ensure development occurs as planned and work with business leaders to create local jobs and implement the Downtown Parking Study. I also want to review the City's finances by studying the projected and actual revenues against expenditures to ensure a balanced budget at the end of the fiscal year. The new fiscal budget must be adopted. Finally, I want to address the City's high absentee ownership rate.

As discussed within this introduction I have a long history of accomplishments and a long list of valuable strengths. The media and a disgruntled individual have sensationalized an oversight regarding my voter registration in Deltona dating back to 2015. They have characterized me falsely as discussed in my personal disclosure questionnaire. To relax, I enjoy yoga, walking, and cardio exercises.

**SIX ADJECTIVES OR PHRASES YOU WOULD USE TO DESCRIBE YOURSELF**

Game changer  
Visionary  
Exceptional leader and achiever  
Customer service oriented  
High integrity  
Accountable

**JANE K. SHANG**

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**REASON FOR WANTING TO LEAVE MOST RECENT JOB**

I resigned my position with the City of Deltona due to a philosophical and ethical difference with the newly elected Mayor. The Mayor put me in a difficult position where, had I not spoken up, I believe I would have violated the ICMA (City Manager) code of conduct and the Deltona City Charter. I left with numerous weeks of unused vacation/sick time and some severance pay.

**CURRENT/MOST RECENT OR RELEVANT SALARY**

My base salary was \$197,000. In addition, I received a car allowance, deferred compensation, pension plan, health insurance, dental and vision insurance, life insurance, disability insurance, vacation and sick time, and paid holidays.



## **Section 12**

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*CB&A Background Checks*

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**Background Check Summary for  
JANE K. SHANG**

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**Criminal Records Checks:**

Nationwide Criminal Records Search	No Records Found
County	
Volusia County, FL	No Records Found
El Paso County, TX	No Records Found
Hillsborough County, FL	No Record Found
Suffolk County, MA	Not Available*
State	
Florida	No Records Found
Texas	No Records Found
Massachusetts	Not Available*

**Civil Records Checks:**

County	
Volusia County, FL	No Records Found
El Paso County, TX	No Records Found
Hillsborough County, FL	No Record Found
Suffolk County, MA	Not Available*
Federal	
Florida	<b>July 2018</b> - Civil Lawsuit Filed Against the City of Deltona including Ms. Shang in her role As City Manager. <b>Disposition: August 2018</b> , terminated.  <i>* See Personal Disclosure for Candidate Explanation for Records Found</i>
Texas	No Records Found
Massachusetts	Not Available*

**Motor Vehicle**

Texas	No Records Found
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\* 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  
JANE K. SHANG**

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<b>Credit</b>	Excellent
<b>Personal Bankruptcy</b>	No Record Found
<b>Sex Offender Registry</b>	Not Listed
<b>Education</b>	Confirmed
<b>Employment</b>	Confirmed
<b>Social Media</b>	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  
JANE K. SHANG  
Personal Disclosure**

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**Personal Disclosure Questionnaire**

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Name of Applicant: JANE K. SHANG

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 "no" 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?  
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. NONE
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  SEE ADDENDUM
10. Please provide a list of any lawsuits in which you are or have been a party either as plaintiff or defendant.  
SEE ADDENDUM

Attested to: Jane K. Shang  
Signature of Applicant

Please email this form via PDF DOCUMENT to \_\_\_\_\_ or via fax to \_\_\_\_\_  
(561) 621-5965

(Note: Please be sure to sign the form with your actual signature if you are sending Fax or PDF Document)

**Background Check Summary for  
JANE K. SHANG  
Personal Disclosure Explanation**

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Lake Worth Beach, Florida  
Personal Disclosure Questionnaire (addendum) for  
Jane K. Shang

Question 4.

Yes. I am a listed party to the following suit filed on April 1, 2021:

Brandy L. White v.

City of Deltona, John Masiarczyk Sr., Heidi Herzberg, Gary Mitch Honaker, Anita Bradford, Robert McFall, Christopher Nabicht, Victor Ramos, Maritza Avila-Vazquez, Loren King, Jane Shang, Marsha Segal-George, Tracy Camille Hooper, Volusia County, Volusia County's Sheriff's Office, Unknown/Unnamed VCSO Employees

Question 9.

The issue of my voter registration is not an embarrassment but an oversight on my part which has been sensationalized by an individual (BW) and the press.

I have a long history of accomplishments and a long list of valuable strengths. Being human I did commit an oversight regarding my voter registration in Deltona dating back to 2015. I was living in a hotel for the first two months of my employment with the City and had to register my car from Texas to Florida. State law allows me to utilize City Hall as my address on my driver's license. Inadvertently the information on my driver's license was used for voter registration. I did not catch this oversight due to early voting. There was no difference in the ballots until in 2018. I was preoccupied and did not notice the difference. In late 2018 an anonymous call was made to report that I committed voter fraud. Once I realized this oversight I immediately acknowledged the oversight and corrected the form. Complaints to the Supervisor of Elections are forwarded to the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE). The initial investigation by FDLE found no wrong doing under the statute which requires specific intent rather than an oversight. A small group of anonymous individuals kept pursuing this matter and alleged a cover up. The local newspaper sensationalized the issue to sell newspapers. Eventually, the State Attorney's office became involved and wanted me to acknowledge my oversight through an agreement due to political pressure. I was never charged with a crime by either FDLE or the State Attorney so there is no criminal record but there is an internet trail. Many believe politics and discrimination issues came into play because a male in another nearby City also listed City Hall on his voter registration and no action was taken. Generally, the Supervisor of Elections encounters thousands of cases with incorrect addresses and no action is taken. Publicly, I have been transparent and from the very beginning acknowledged my oversight.

Related to the issue of voter fraud, an anonymous complaint was filed with ICMA for ethical violations. The complaint was formally reviewed. The ICMA Board found no reason to act on the complaint and closed the case.

I hope this one oversight will not erase all my strengths and accomplishments. I was recently selected as one of four finalists for the City Manager position at Ft. Myers, Florida. Unfairly,

**Background Check Summary for  
JANE K. SHANG  
Personal Disclosure Explanation**

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there exists an anonymous group that wants to discredit me. Also, a former City Commissioner from Deltona filed an ethics complaint against the then City Attorney and one against me. The complaints state that the City Attorney committed theft of City property and that I exceeded my authority as City Manager by allowing the City Attorney to take City property home. The complaints were reviewed by the Ethics Commission. The findings were that the City Attorney and I did not violate any ethical conduct. I was shocked by the complaint because throughout my career I have been known for my high ethics and integrity. Prior to Deltona I have never had any complaint filed against me. My word is binding because I remember and follow through with my commitments. Unfortunately, ethics complaints can be filed easily in Florida and hence, fairly common. They are a way a disgruntled individual can spread lies and an investigation without spending any money so they do.

Question 10.

I recall a few suits (code enforcement, property damage and wrongful termination) filed against the City of Deltona and listing me in my official capacity as City Manager. Also, please refer to question 4.

**Background Check Summary for  
JANE K. SHANG  
Personal Disclosure Explanation**

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Jane K. Shang statement  
DC# U90426

When I planned to move to Deltona in 2015, I initially lived in a hotel in Lake Mary. Because the position of City Manager sometimes can carry personal security and privacy risks, especially for a woman, I took steps to make confidential my home address and other information pursuant to Florida Statute s.119.071(4)(f). That statutory provision exempts from inspection, copying and release the home address, telephone number, date of birth and photographs of current or former managers of any local government agencies in most situations. This would include my position as City Manager of Deltona. For that reason, I used the City Hall address on my driver's license since about June 2015 or around the time I came to work for the City of Deltona. The Department of Motor Vehicles allows this. As part of having the address of City Hall on my driver's license, I must have carried that over to my voter registration address. I acknowledge that was a mistake and oversight on my part, although not done willfully or intentionally. I mistakenly erred in not complying with the voter identification information and for that, I continue to sincerely apologize for that unintentional mistake and error. When the personal error was brought to my attention I immediately corrected the unintentional mistake.

*Jane Kai Shang*  
6/4/2019



**Background Check Summary for  
JANE K. SHANG  
Personal Disclosure Explanation**

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STATE OF FLORIDA  
OFFICE OF THE STATE ATTORNEY  
SEVENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT  
PRETRIAL INTERVENTION CONTRACT

NAME CASE # DC# U90426  
Jane Kai Shang

It is alleged that you have committed an offense against the State of Florida on or about August 28, 2018, to wit:

**I. SUBMISSION OF FALSE VOTER IDENTIFICATION INFORMATION  
II. UNQUALIFIED ELECTOR WILLFULLY VOTING**

in violation of (F.S.)104.011 and 104.15 After an investigation of the offense and your background it appears that the interests of the State of Florida and your own will best be served by the following procedures, therefore:

On the authority of R.J. LARIZZA, State Attorney, in and for the Seventh Judicial Circuit, Florida, prosecuting in this matter for said violation will be deferred for a period of 12 Months from this date provided you abide by the following conditions:

- (1) You shall refrain from violation of any law (Federal, State and Local). In the event of a criminal arrest while on the Program you are subject to automatic dismissal.
- (2) No later than the fifth day of each month, or at the direction of your Pretrial Intervention Officer, you will make a full and truthful report to your officer on the form provided for that purpose.
- (3) You shall:
  - (a) maintain or actively seek gainful employment, such as weekly job employment logs or
  - (b) pursue a course of study as a full-time student;
  - (c) advise your employer of your Pretrial Intervention Supervision and current charges or  provide a current pay sub for verification; and
  - (d) support your dependents to the best of your ability
- (4) You shall **immediately** inform the Pretrial Intervention Officer of any change in residence, employment or arrest.
- (5) You will allow an investigation of your personal background and make yourself available for the services of the Pretrial Intervention Program. You shall also answer truthfully all inquiries by your Pretrial Intervention Officer and allow the officer to visit your home, employment, school or elsewhere, and carry out all instructions.
- (6) You will pay to the State of Florida at the rate of **\$50.00** per month toward the cost of your supervision, plus a 4% administrative processing fee in accordance with Florida Statutes 945.31 and 948.09.  Waived
- (7) You will not use intoxicants to excess and will be required to submit to urinalysis as directed by your Pretrial Intervention Officer.
- (8) You shall not leave the county of your residence without first procuring the consent of your Pretrial Intervention Officer. *Employment purposes will be authorized upon notification to probation officer.*
- (9) You shall pay to the Department of Corrections a **\$2.00 per month** surcharge fee for each month you are under supervision pursuant to Section 948.09(1)(2), F. S. *If the cost of supervision is waived for any months of supervision, this fee shall be exempt for the same period.*
- (10) You shall **pay one dollar (\$1.00) per month** for each month under supervision to be dispersed to First Step, Inc., a non-profit organization, in accordance with Florida Statute 948.02
- (11) You shall **pay a mandatory one time Drug Fee of Thirty Dollars (\$30.00)**, as directed by your Pretrial Intervention Officer.

**Background Check Summary for  
JANE K. SHANG  
Personal Disclosure Explanation**

**\*\*continued on following page\*  
\*\* SPECIAL CONDITIONS \*\***

**NOTE: ALL FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS SHALL BE PAID TO THE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS AND SHALL HAVE A 4% PROCESSING CHARGE ASSESSED AS REQUIRED BY F. S. 945.31, UNLESS OTHERWISE DIRECTED.**

- (12) You shall pay a total of \$100.00, for cost of prosecution, as directed by your officer.
- (13) You shall pay law enforcement investigative costs in the amount of \$ 5,178.83, to be dispersed to:

- Volusia County Sheriff's Office
- Daytona Beach Police Department
- Holly Hill Police Department
- Ormond Beach Police Department
- Port Orange Police Department
- Deland Police Department
- Orange City Police Department
- Edgewater Police Department
- Oak Hill Police Department
- Daytona Beach Shores Police Department
- X Other: Florida Department of Law Enforcement

- (14) You shall be required to do the following conditions as directed and approved by your Pretrial Intervention Supervisor:

- a)  Substance abuse evaluation and any recommended treatment
- b)  Anger Management Class
- c)  Mental health evaluation and any recommended treatment
- d)  Moral Reconciliation Therapy Program (MRT)
- e)  Anti-Theft/Impulse Control Class
- f)  Parenting Class
- g)  Write a letter of apology
- h)  Have no contact, directly/indirectly, with victim(s): \_\_\_\_\_
- i)  Do not trespass or return to scene of offense
- j) X Must perform ONE HUNDRED (100) hours of community service.
- k)  Sign the Disqualification Consent Agreement if requested and/or required.
- l) X OTHER: **12 MONTHS SUPERVISION, 100 HOURS COMMUNITY SERVICE, \$100 COST OF PROSECUTION, \$5,178.83 COST OF INVESTIGATION TO FDLE, LETTER ACKNOWLEDGING ACTIONS AND ACCEPTING RESPONSIBILITY**

- (15)  You shall pay restitution in the amount of \$ N/A to the following:
  - Jointly and severally liable with co-defendant(s): \_\_\_\_\_
  - Name: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Address: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

- You shall pay restitution in the amount of \$ N/A to the following:
  - Jointly and severally liable with co-defendant(s): \_\_\_\_\_
  - Name: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Address: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

**\*\*continued on following page\*\***

**Background Check Summary for  
JANE K. SHANG  
Personal Disclosure Explanation**

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It is understood that this agreement is a deferral of prosecution. If its terms are violated in any essential respect, or if any conditions are not completed within sixty (60) days prior to termination date, the prosecution may be commenced. If the agreement is not violated, no criminal prosecution concerning this charge will be instituted in this circuit. The initial charge will be dismissed and the State of Florida will be barred from prosecution. It is also understood that if this agreement is revoked that I will not be given any credit for time spent on Pretrial Intervention toward any sentence I might receive as a result of a conviction from the charge stated herein.

Defendant's Initials: JES Defense Counsel Initials: WV Assistant State Attorney's Initials: \_\_\_\_\_

*By signing this agreement, the defendant waives his or her rights to a speedy trial in this cause under the Constitution and Laws of Florida and the United States of America. The supervision period will begin upon the signing of the contract by the State.*

Defendant's Initials: JES Defense Counsel Initials: WV Assistant State Attorney's Initials: \_\_\_\_\_

Jane Kai Shang 6/14/2019  
JANE/KAI SHANG / DATE

Christopher G Walker 6/5/19  
CHRISTOPHER G WALKER / DATE  
ASSISTANT STATE ATTORNEY

Warren Lindsey  
WARREN LINDSEY  
DEFENSE ATTORNEY

JoAnn Coleman  
PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR

Department of Corrections  
Name: JoAnn Coleman (print)  
Phone: 386-447-3520

**Background Check Summary for  
JANE K. SHANG  
Personal Disclosure Explanation**

<u>FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS</u> <u>Pretrial Intervention Program</u>	
REFERRAL/PERSONAL CONTACT	DATE: _____ OFFICE _____
NAME: <u>JANE KAI SHANG</u> PHONE: _____	
AGE: <u>59</u> DOB: <u>7/26/1958</u> RACE: <u>A</u> SEX: <u>F</u> REFERRAL DATE: <u>5/2/2019</u>	
ADDRESS: <u>771 MOUNTAIN ASH WAY, DELTONA, FLORIDA 32725</u>	
DEFENSE COUNSEL: <u>WARREN LINDSEY, 1150 LOUISIANA AVE., SUITE 2, WINTER PARK, FLORIDA 32789 ; (407)644-4044</u>	
COURT: <u>CIRCUIT</u> CLERK #: <u>N/A</u>	
ARRESTING AGENCY: <u>FDLE ORLANDO REGIONAL OPS CENTER</u> OFFICER'S NAME: <u>ADMIN TED SILBERSTEIN</u>	
OFFENSE: <u>I. SUBMISSION OF FALSE VOTER IDENTIFICATION INFORMATION</u> <u>II. UNQUALIFIED ELECTOR WILLFULLY VOTING</u>	
ATTORNEY: <u>CHRISTOPHER G WALKER</u>	
PRETRIAL INTERVENTION INVESTIGATOR: _____	
REFERRAL SOURCE: <u>STATE ATTORNEY'S OFFICE</u>	
DESIRED PROGRAM: <u>YES</u>	
PRIOR RECORD: ADULT <u>NO</u> JUVENILE <u>NO</u> INTENT TO REMAIN _____	
PROBLEMS: ALCOHOL <u>N/A</u> DRUG <u>N/A</u> MENTAL <u>N/A</u> OTHER _____	
ACCEPT _____ REJECT/REASON _____	

1. SPECIAL CONDITION(S): \_\_\_\_\_  
12 MONTHS SUPERVISION, 100 HOURS COMMUNITY SERVICE, \$100 COST OF PROSECUTION, \$5,178.83 COST OF INVESTIGATION TO FDLE, LETTER ACKNOWLEDGING ACTIONS AND ACCEPTING RESPONSIBILITY  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Background Check Summary for  
JANE K. SHANG  
Personal Disclosure Explanation**

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2. **ADMISSION STATEMENT ATTACHED FOR DEFENDANT'S  
SIGNATURE: NO**
3. **APPROVED BY: \_\_\_\_\_**

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*CB&A Reference Notes*

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**Reference Notes**  
**Jane Shang**

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**Chris Nabicht – Commissioner, City of Deltona, FL 386-804-5191**

Mr. Nabicht has known Ms. Shang since 2015. They met during the interview process and he voted to hire her. She can take input from seven Commissioners, nail the focus down, and move projects forward.

Though Ms. Shang inherited Directors from the previous administration, which was more of a ‘good old boy’ system, she gave employees an even playing field. Everyone had an equal shot and they either succeeded or they failed. She replaced those who failed with good, quality people. When they built a community center, she hired an excellent architect and made the final decisions on what went into the building. Though no one is perfect, her day to day decision making is above average.

Initially Ms. Shang was not in the community as much because she was so hands-on with projects and working with Directors. She is rarely behind her desk and is always following up on projects and assignments. Her style has positives and negatives. Not being in the community as much at first could be considered a negative, but the work she did in the organization allowed them to accomplish more than they would have otherwise. Once the organization was working well, she was able to spend more time in the community.

With the normal public Ms. Shang interacted very well. She was hired at a time that the NACCP was planning to file a lawsuit because Deltona did not have any minorities in upper leadership positions even though the City has a diverse population. She met with representatives from the NAACP and heard their concerns. She looked for minority candidates who were qualified and brought them on board. Deltona has a small group of people who generate 100% of the problems, and she did not interact as well with this group. She worried too much about what they were saying, instead of giving them an answer and moving on.

Almost to a fault, Ms. Shang kept the Commissioners informed. The largest project that she led was the community center, but this was only one of her many accomplishments. She worked with Halifax to build a free-standing emergency room with an agreement to build a 60 bed hospital and doctors’ offices in the future. Before they completed the foundation on the emergency room, they wanted to immediately start construction of the hospital. She led the team through the permitting process and met the requirements for the Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (COPCN), a private ambulance service certificate, faster than anyone else in the state of Florida. She worked with contractors and staff to resolve issues.

An Amazon distribution center is still under construction and is directly attributable to Ms. Shang. She negotiated on behalf of the government as it was multi-jurisdictional because the roads involved belonged to two other cities, the county, and the state. She led the team flawlessly through the process, in spite of much opposition from the public. She spoke daily to the private partners, and there were several on the Amazon side. One aspect that made the process more challenging was that the developer did not have a signed contract with Amazon, they were still in negotiations. The developer moved forward in the hope that Amazon would sign the contract.

## Reference Notes

### Jane Shang

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Because the contract was not yet signed, they had to set up pass through incentives, through the developer to Amazon. The undertaking was significant and she managed the entire process.

One reason Mr. Nabicht chose Ms. Shang was her transportation experience. In addition to being hand-picked to manage LaGuardia during the 911 crisis, she took a bus transit system in El Paso that was failing and turned it into one of the top ten transit systems in the country. Deltona had many transportation needs and a very underserved pedestrian and commercial population. Mr. Nabicht was on the development review committee. During her tenure they brought in \$11 million dollars in federal funding for new transportation projects including sidewalks, trails, new roads, and shoulders on the sides of the roads.

What made Ms. Shang so successful in securing funds was her process. First, she improved the city's credit rating. The improved credit rating meant she was able to refinance the transportation bond which gave them an additional \$13 million dollars. TPO's require an applicant copay in a range of 10% minimum to 33% maximum. Most communities put the minimum amount in, Ms. Shang put the maximum in. Also, she made sure that the team had the proper certifications for each project, which is a requirement of the TPO. Most communities wait until after they receive the TPO funding to certify their staff. She realized that by contributing the maximum, having the lab certified technicians already on staff, and having plans that were shelf ready, they were more likely to select her projects so she secured a much larger share of the fund.

Another area that Ms. Shang excelled at is combing projects to save money over time. When they created the providence trail a water line had to be moved. It was built in the 1960s so she secured an additional million dollars to replace that line. If they were widening a road, she put the fiber optics in at the same time. They cannot currently afford a fiber optic network but the groundwork is laid for when they can afford it. She also oversaw the completion of an \$11 million dollar state of the art sewage treatment plant.

When Ms. Shang was hired they were at a three year impasse in union negotiations with the fire department. Within six weeks of Ms. Shang's involvement both sides had reappointed new negotiating teams and within three months they had a signed contract that cost the City less than what it cost for all the lawyer fees during the impasse. In addition, both sides were extremely happy with the contract. She had a tremendous relationship with labor.

Two controversies are notable with Ms. Shang, one professional and one personal. When they renewed the garbage contract they decided to move to an automated system where the truck has an arm to pick up the can and dump it. The idea is good and efficient but required reeducation for the public. Previously the residents had been able to put out whatever they wanted picked up, even dressers and couches, and it was picked up. Under the new contract the company would only pick up what was in the bin. They could call for a special pickup, and it was a free service unless the trash load was excessive, but this small group of residents did not want to have to call for a special pickup. They were wheeling their garbage cans into City Hall with 4 x 4 pictures of Ms. Shang that they put in the bins during meetings. Ultimately the pushback was so excessive



## Reference Notes Jane Shang

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that they resumed the service they had before. This controversy lasted for over two years and included many personal attacks on Ms. Shang.

In terms of personal controversy, Ms. Shang was living in a hotel when she applied for her driver's license after moving to Florida. The staff told her it was legal to list the address of City Hall because she is in a protected class. Without really thinking about the fact that voter registration is tied to driver's licenses, she did as they suggested and forgot to change the address once she secured permanent housing. She voted early for a few years, but when she walked into vote one year and tried to get a ballot, they told her she was not registered in that district. Her home was in district 4, city hall was in district 1. This small group of residents found out about it and crucified her. The Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) investigated the situation but could not prove intent so she was not charged. This group of citizens called the governor's office every day until he finally ordered a second investigation. It felt like the investigators were told to look at every aspect and find something to appease this group. She cooperated with them. When the second investigation was completed it sat on the State attorney's desk for a few months and these residents were hounding him on a daily basis. The state attorney called Ms. Shang in for a meeting and offered a pre-trial intervention. They essentially used her signature on her ballot to prove intent. Ms. Shang had to reimburse the cost of the investigation, be on probation which included drug screenings, and give 500 hours of community service but it did not result in a criminal charge on her record. She agreed and then held up her end of the agreement.

Ms. Shang was forced out of Deltona. The current Mayor inserted herself into negotiations between the city, Amazon, and the developer and then circumvented Ms. Shang. Ms. Shang exposed her illegal involvement in negotiations and the Mayor was the final vote to dismiss her. Some of the other Commissioners have a different opinion of Ms. Shang than the one in this reference but it was primarily because they did not get everything that they wanted.

Ms. Shang is a good person and deserves any city administrator position that she applies for, but she is best suited for a large community. She has the ability to turn a situation around. She is talented at selecting employees. She surrounds herself with talent and then stays very close to them, almost to the point of micro-managing but not quite, she is just very detail oriented. If there is an issue with the fire department, she rides with the EMS or fire personnel to get to know the ins and outs, and to hear from the boots on the ground. She does not want a canned answer from the brass, she wants to talk to the people who interface with the public so that she can find the best solution and outcome.

When Deltona became a city, Mr. Nabicht had worked for the fire department for seventeen years and was the longest tenured employee on staff, so he was entered into the computer as Employee 2, there was no Employee 1. He was the Fire Marshall when Ms. Shang was hired. Mr. Nabicht has worked for every city manager that Deltona has had through Ms. Shang's tenure and she is the best of them all. She did more for the employees than any other manager. Her departure was a significant loss.

Reference Notes  
Jane Shang

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**Words or phrases used to describe Jane Shang:**

- Hard working,
- Honest,
- Motivated,
- Personable,
- Giving, and
- Reasonable.

**Strengths:** Above average, diverse background including legal, good at moving seven different ideas in one direction, extremely detail oriented, fiscally responsible, good vision for planning.

**Weaknesses:** She is very passionate and takes things very personal, which can also be a strength. City Managers should have a view from 50k, she stays at that 20k level and knows employees by their first name.

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**Robert McFall – former Commissioner, City of Deltona, FL 386-785-4357**

Mr. McFall has known Ms. Shang since 2017. She was an excellent manager. She kept the Commission informed and did a good job with her direct reports. He rated her excellent in every category on her last performance evaluation in Deltona.

More than maintaining an organization, Ms. Shang was innovative. She elevated the organization's performance level and the quality of the staff. She was always looking to make processes run better. Almost immediately upon her arrival the City itself, meaning the streets and sidewalks, were cleaner than they had been. She was also focusing on establishing a sense of community in the City.

Early on Ms. Shang was not as visible in the community but she did attend rotary from the start and gave presentations. Over time she became involved in other community organizations. She was concerned about the public. When they received a complaint from a resident, she made sure it was properly handled by her or the appropriate staff member. She did not interact well with that small segment of the population who were overly concerned, but in general interactions she was fine. She could have had better public communication.

They met bi-weekly before the Council meetings. Ms. Shang was always responsive and phone calls were promptly answered. She was very good about keeping the elected body informed. One the Council set a vision, she involved the staff and focused on their goals and objectives.

In the construction of the Community Center Ms. Shang led the team. Also, when the Council set priorities for the coming year, she kept the goals visible during the year at Council meetings.

**Reference Notes**  
**Jane Shang**

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When they completed one of the goals, she marked it off to show progress. It helped them to remain focused and prioritize what was really important.

Ms. Shang has a good financial understanding, but she also hired talented finance employees. She is timely in completing work. When matters are stressful, she can be defensive at times but that is mostly when she is frustrated that a newspaper printed a story without giving her an opportunity to present the City's side. When she was frustrated, she spoke with the Commissioners to explain the situation and ask for direction and advice, instead of responding inappropriately. It was the right way to handle these types of matters.

Both controversies involving Ms. Shang happened because she was protecting City staff. During the opening of the Civic Center they had a Mother's Day dinner. One activist came in, walked around taking pictures, insisted on going into the back area, insisted on seeing permits and licenses. The activist was very disruptive and was asked to leave and come back at an appropriate time to look at the documentation. While it could have been handled better, this activist was very disruptive to their event.

In Florida you are not allowed to record someone without their knowledge and permission. An activist insisted on seeing public records and was very aggressive with the staff. Unbeknownst to the employee, she was also recording the conversation. Ms. Shang spoke to law enforcement and determined this recording was not legal. These situations were reported in the news, but she was protecting employees from citizens who were pushing the envelope. Nothing in her personal conduct would concern a reasonable person.

They were building a very large facility that Ms. Shang brought into the community. Something happened behind the scenes with the Mayor and Commissioners which, from what Mr. McFall heard, had nothing to do with Ms. Shang's performance. They made a motion to terminate her employment and it failed. Ms. Shang felt it was best to resign so the City could move forward.

Mr. McFall would not rehire Ms. Shang in Deltona because the dissidents are still in the community, but he would hire her in another community who wants a good, strong administrator. She is very knowledgeable and does very well in her interactions.

**Words or phrases used to describe Jane Shang:**

- Caring,
- Progressive,
- Focused,
- Leader, and
- Responsible.

**Reference Notes**  
**Jane Shang**

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**Strengths:** Hiring the right employees – meaning those who better adapted to their region and are well respected.

**Weaknesses:** In her zeal to protect employees from the dissonance in the community, the public sometimes felt that she went too far. Mr. McFall does not agree with this assessment, but it is something that he heard. Also, she was overly concerned with the very small, but very vocal, portion of the community that is never happy.

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**Mike Williams – President, West Volusia NAACP, FL 386-804-6136**

Mr. Williams has lived in Deltona since 1985 and has known Ms. Shang since 2015. As a manager, she was magnificent, spectacular, above board and rates an A+++++.

When Ms. Shang was hired, the NAACP was preparing to sue Deltona for a lack of diversity in City staff, particularly in management. They scheduled a meeting with her to discuss the issue. She asked for a chance to assess the situation and made major, major changes, which was refreshing because the City had been run by the ‘good old boy’ system for many years. She has Mr. Williams’ vote because under her management the City employees came to better reflect the demographics of Deltona. She did a marvelous job.

When Ms. Shang first arrived, her car was in the parking lot until nine or ten at night, and it was often the only car in the parking lot. She was very diligent and dedicated to resolving the issues. Every decision she made was for the benefit of the City.

Supporting community events like food drives, summer school, and mentoring programs, Ms. Shang was involved in the community. She worked well with the public and she worked well with the NAACP. She never had a poor interaction with any sensible member of the public.

While Ms. Shang kept Mr. Williams informed on items they were working on, some Commissioners felt that they were kept in the dark. Mr. Williams can only speak to his experience. He brought items of concern to her and she acted on them. She was always very customer service oriented.

Ms. Shang not only brought the city’s budget in line, she generated a surplus that they have not had before. She was very responsive and always punctual. She delivered what she said she would deliver. She under promises and over delivers.

The stress in Deltona has some impact on Ms. Shang because she is a good-hearted person. She is not conniving, and she does not stab people in the back. When she did something wrong, it was not intentional. Rather, it was an error of omission and not commission. Once she realized she had done wrong, she apologized and fixed it. She is not a vindictive person.

**Reference Notes**  
**Jane Shang**

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Mr. Williams was shocked when the Mayor voted to let Ms. Shang go. Ms. Shang put Deltona on its feet and on the map. Most of what you see happening in Deltona happened under her watch, including the Halifax hospital and emergency room. She secured millions of dollars from TPO for road improvements. They could not have had a better city manager than her, and she had a longer tenure than any other manager the City has employed.

**Words or phrases used to describe Jane Shang:**

- Honest,
- Trustworthy,
- Diligent,
- Dedicated,
- Has compassion for the downtrodden, and
- Experienced.

**Strengths:** Organization, diligent, dedicated, great people skills.

**Weaknesses:** Some employees said that she micro-managed them, but sometimes this style of management is necessary to make sure that employees complete their work. Also, some people commented on her race or her size, but these factors never bothered Mr. Williams.

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**Eileen Karlsruher – Board Member, Housing Authority, City of El Paso, TX**  
**915-478-0703**

Ms. Karlsruher has served on many boards and commissions for the City of El Paso since 1997. Ms. Karlsruher and Ms. Shang also served together on the home owner's board for their neighborhood. Ms. Shang was a strong member of the board.

Ms. Shang's job performance is excellent. She does not play political games but works to build consensus. She is fair and encourages others to provide input and opinions. Prior to her arrival the Civil Service Board heard complaints on a monthly basis. Ms. Shang addressed the issues and improved the environment, thus eliminating complaints.

Ms. Karlsruher has worked with the engineering department for twenty years, which has always been a challenge. During the last two years, under Ms. Shang's management, the department progressed, became more organized and has been easier to work with.

When Ms. Shang was given the authority to hire, she did very well. One of Ms. Karlsruher's engineers sat on a citizen committee that evaluated the hiring of a street department manager. The City Manager was not thrilled with the person selected by the committee, however Ms. Shang stood by the committee and the individual has done very well.

## Reference Notes Jane Shang

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Ms. Shang's decisions are based on common sense. She always considers the financial impact and determines the best use of money and resources. She sometimes questioned Council if what they were considering was worth the cost.

Ms. Shang is very innovative and finds the funding needed to meet goals. She attended cultural events and community meetings related to her portfolio. She loves the community and supports what they do. She is eager to participate even when it is not required.

Ms. Shang kept everyone well informed. She works well with the public. As a lawyer she learned to ask the right questions. She listens without interrupting, evaluates the data and then states her opinion. She led the organization to fulfill the goals of the elected body.

When tasked with overseeing the Metro system Ms. Shang had a rocky start with the worker's transit union. She questioned why the buses were only cleaned once per month and raised the standards. She was the first person in management to ride the bus around town, which allowed her to see firsthand where the problems were. After the bus system was updated, she rode the buses at 10:00 pm to make sure the lights were operational. She really cares and ensures everything is done right.

Ms. Shang was hired because the transit system was about to fail. She remodeled the facility. She added a work room and a cafeteria. She educated employees on better food choices so they would not fall asleep when driving the bus. El Paso has received many accolades on this design. She was successful because she listened to employees' needs and wants. She is a strong leader but she listens and does what is financially feasible.

In terms of financial skills Ms. Shang is better than most. She manages the budget well and truly understands public finance. She found funding to pay for much needed overtime. She is always timely in completing tasks. When she assigns a task to another employee, she follows up to make sure it was done. She understands that her role is to give advice to the Council but then moves forward in the direction they set.

Ms. Shang completed her daily tasks in a way to avoid controversy. Her employment was terminated in El Paso for political reasons and not performance. She had high expectations of employees and projects have been set back since her departure. Some in El Paso have realized what an asset she was and mourn her departure.

Ms. Karlsruher runs in different professional and social circles than Ms. Shang and therefore does not know whether others would disagree with the statements in this reference.

Ms. Karlsruher would hire Ms. Shang in a New York minute. If Ms. Shang returned to El Paso, their problems would be solved. She understands all facets of city government and did an excellent job managing her responsibilities. She is a quick study and never loses her temper. She truly understands public service. Her departure was a significant loss to El Paso.

Reference Notes  
Jane Shang

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**Words or phrases used to describe Jane Shang:**

- Enthusiastic,
- Team player,
- Energetic,
- Thinks outside the box,
- Kind and considerate, and
- Has a general concern for humanity.

**Strengths:** Listens to others, builds consensus.

**Weaknesses:** She is loyal to a fault. She now recognizes that she should have stood up for herself more. In managing employees she is learning to be fair in evaluations and not allow her feelings and friendship to influence decisions.

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**John R. O'Donnell – Murray Montgomery & O'Donnell, Washington, DC 202-253-3125**

From 2006 to 2014 Mr. O'Donnell represented the City of El Paso in Washington. One project he advocated for was the transit system. Another involved customs and border protection needed to move commercial and private traffic across the three bridges connecting Mexico and the United states, which are owned by the City of El Paso. They met in 2008.

Ms. Shang really stays on top of every project. She wants to know the current status and what the next steps are. She does everything she can to facilitate projects at a local level and in Washington. She worked to receive federal funding for projects.

When working in government, a manager has to use their best instincts to judge where the Council stands on each issue. Ms. Shang always did well but became more adept during her tenure. She was an outsider entering a highly charged political environment which would have been a challenge for anyone.

Mr. O'Donnell's firm proposed the creation of a small task force to facilitate legislation to resolve staffing issues on the bridges in El Paso. The City Council refused the proposal. Ms. Shang became involved in the process to reshape the project. She was supportive and made sure that the staff was engaged with the regional office in Dallas and in Washington. She showed innovation during the process. She asked what was needed to be successful and how she could help. Her support was much appreciated. When something does not work, she asks what can be done to make the venture successful rather than placing blame.

They had monthly and sometimes bi-weekly phone calls. Ms. Shang was very determined to have the call even when her schedule was full. Her diligence in communicating was much appreciated and is one of her best qualities.



**Reference Notes**  
**Jane Shang**

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Knowing Ms. Shang's workload and what she was responsible for, she appears to have good financial skills but Mr. O'Donnell was not employed by the city and does not have access to detailed financial information. She responds to requests as quickly as possible. She understood Mr. O'Donnell's priorities and helped him meet his deadlines. She is very responsive.

The downtown redevelopment project was controversial and is most likely the reason that the city manager and Ms. Shang are no longer with the City. They worked diligently to create a new vision for El Paso. They received criticism from those who had a different vision, but Ms. Shang expended much effort to move El Paso forward.

Mr. O'Donnell is not aware of anything embarrassing in Ms. Shang's background. While there might be some who would disagree with Mr. O'Donnell's opinion of Ms. Shang, he does not personally know anyone who would.

Ms. Shang understands the role she plays and will do very well in the right city with the right mix of staff. She would benefit from having staff who offer alternative viewpoints. Even experienced managers need a network to draw on when facing challenges.

**Words or phrases used to describe Jane Shang:**

- Determined,
- Thorough,
- Responsive, and
- Thoughtful.

**Strengths:** Patience, very intelligent.

**Weaknesses:** In the beginning her desire to be successful almost blinded her of the need to interact with others. Over time she began to understand that employees need to feel like they are part of a team effort rather than being the subject of an inquisition. She was much more collaborative by the end of her tenure.

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**David Dean – President and CEO, Dean International, Dallas, TX 214-750-0123 ext. 101  
214-668-0123**

Mr. Dean met Ms. Shang in 2008 when she was hired in El Paso. Mr. Dean's primary focus is infrastructure and transportation. El Paso has been actively involved in TEX21, which stands for Transportation Excellence for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Ms. Shang represented the City of El Paso on the Board. Mr. Dean got to know her well and watched her in action.

El Paso transitioned from a Strong Mayor to a City Manager form of government. Everyone had different expectations but Ms. Shang did a magnificent job of navigating the waters. She is very



**Reference Notes**  
**Jane Shang**

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poised and a true professional. She gave legislative testimony before different executive branches and always did a superb job. The expectations of elected officials have increased and are sometimes unreasonable. Even when governments move fast, they are still slower than the private sector. Newly elected officials often have an agenda and they placed much pressure on Ms. Shang and Ms. Wilson to expedite the process. Ms. Shang functioned superbly in this environment, even during the transition.

El Paso borders Mexico. Juarez, on the other side of the border, is twice the size of El Paso and has a very high crime rate. The environment was unusual. Ms. Shang easily acclimated to the West Texas area and fully assimilated with the Hispanic community. She worked well with the University of Texas officials and the Texas Department of Transportation employees.

Decisions made by Ms. Shang are absolutely good. She communicates well with staff and her supervisors but is always looking to improve the organization. She is creative and cost efficient. She does a wonderful job keeping everyone informed.

The same skill that Ms. Shang exhibited with the business community and stakeholders in transportation would translate to public interactions in local government. She is always very respectful and courteous. She contributes to the discussion but knows when to remain silent.

Elected officials in El Paso wanted a mass transportation system. They considered steel rails and trolleys. While some prefer the steel rail system it is considerably more expensive. Ms. Shang determined that a Rapid Transit System was the best advantage. She deserves almost 100% credit for the research and implementation. Ms. Shang made the best decision for their circumstances. The City has been recognized for this achievement. She also managed the airport and addressed the entire gamut of transportation issues.

Ms. Shang is very customer service oriented. Mr. Dean does not have personal knowledge of her financial understanding but he is well connected and if she had been unable to manage the budget, he would have heard about it. She completes assignments in a timely manner.

The controversy involving Ms. Shang was typical of municipal government. Nothing in her background would concern an employer. Ms. Wilson, the City manager, announced her resignation. A new City Manager typically wants to select their direct reports. Ms. Shang was highly paid and her remaining as Assistant City Manager would have been unusual given the circumstances. Mr. Dean does not know anyone who would disagree with the statements in this reference. The Council was completely satisfied with her performance.

Mr. Dean would hire Ms. Shang. She is fully adaptable to a new locality. She gives the job 150 to 200% and handles every responsibility well. She will be an asset to any organization.

Reference Notes  
Jane Shang

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**Words or phrases used to describe Jane Shang:**

- Competent,
- Consummate professional,
- Great communicator,
- Good listener,
- Very punctual and timely, and
- Always well informed.

**Strengths:** Communicates clearly and passionately, engages others, great intelligence, quick study, understands the government process, works well with community leaders, very focused and driven, sets goals and holds staff accountable.

**Weaknesses:** If she is too goal oriented, there might be casualties along the way though he never witnessed any casualties and found her to be very cordial. The Council seemed to enjoy interacting with her.

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**Julio Perez – Contract Compliance Officer, City of El Paso (915) 731-6659**

Mr. Perez first met Ms. Shang when he became employed for the City of El Paso in 2009. At first, he reported directly to Ms. Shang, but was soon promoted to a direct report. They worked together until 2014.

Ms. Shang is an excellent supervisor with a collaborative leadership style. She allows staff freedom to manage their departments, providing support and guidance only as needed. She is communicative and keeps her directors informed and up-to-date at all times. Ms. Shang is ethical and responsible in her monitoring of public funds and ensures the accounting and justification of every penny spent. She is respectful of time and schedules. Her meetings start and end promptly. She stays on top of projects and meets deadlines. Ms. Shang makes very good decisions and works well under pressure. She makes exceptional hires, considering passion, dedication, and communicative skills as well as credentials. An exemplary leader, she interacts with employees and is very present in the daily functions of each department she oversees.

Contractors were vocally impressed with Ms. Shang's habit of riding the buses when the City outsourced its transportation to Sun Metro Bus Systems (SMB). Ms. Shang proactively intermingles with customers, encouraging feedback on which implementations are successful and which areas need improvement. Once, buses were unable to run due to major construction, creating a hardship for transit dependent customers. Ms. Shang generated a non-traditional route and used smaller buses temporarily. She is particularly caring of the disabled, personally addressing their concerns much of the time. She is very well received in her community.

**Reference Notes**  
**Jane Shang**

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Ms. Shang was head of a series of roundtable discussions between the City and SMB representatives, when contractual issues arose. She successfully navigated the conflicting sides through tough decisions and brought satisfactory to both parties. Ms. Shang is greatly experienced in public presentations and interacts well with citizens, boards, and media. She is direct, concise, and clear. Her common sense keeps ideas and resolutions at doable levels. Her explanations are logical, accurate, speak to all levels of understanding. She inspires confidence and is an excellent liaison for her City.

Ms. Shang was relieved of her position as deputy city manager when the new city manager reorganized. This change did not reflect negatively on Ms. Shang. Under her guidance and leadership, her departments flourished above all others citywide. Mr. Perez would willingly work for Ms. Shang again and highly recommends her.

**Words or phrases used to describe Jane Shang:**

- Personable,
- Organized,
- Innovative,
- Dedicated,
- Responsive, and
- Passionate about her job.

**Strengths:** Exceptional managerial skills, customer focused, detail oriented, and delivers successful projects and resolutions.

**Weaknesses:** Ms. Shang coordinates her departments well, but the interactions between various departments can always be improved upon.

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**Joyce Wilson – former City Manager, City of El Paso, TX (915) 887-2204**

Ms. Wilson supervised Ms. Shang from 2007 to 2014.

Ms. Shang’s innovation and creativity delivered on critical projects for the City. She proved instrumental in the preliminary downtown Trolley. Working closely with customs and border protection, she created the methodology for new photo ID procedures and decreased wait times at city owned international ports.

Ms. Shang collaborates very well with federal agencies. She overcame many challenges in generating capital tracking/reporting systems and in minimizing disruptions to citizens during project implementations. She markets products in ways that greatly appeal to customers.

**Reference Notes**  
**Jane Shang**

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Ms. Shang is very loyal. She makes good decisions generally and hired several key personnel. She seeks guidance and direction from her superiors, as needed. She is a hard worker who values promptness and respects deadlines. She proactively rallies employees and moves her organization forward and upward.

Ms. Shang oversaw every capital improvement citywide. She reached out to civic groups, the disabled community, and businesses. She attentively listened to and addressed individual concerns. Her emphasis on the customer ensured quality service from her departments.

Knowledgeable and experienced, Ms. Shang is a proven government professional with a clean background. She will be a great hire.

**Words or phrases used to describe Jane Shang:**

- Ethical,
- Tenacious,
- Hardworking,
- Trustworthy,
- Committed,
- Diligent, and
- Deliberate.

**Strengths:** Credentialed, technologically astute, and an expert in infrastructure and capital programs.

**Weaknesses:** Ms. Shang sometimes micromanaged her departments, sometimes held employees to overly high expectations, might could trust her instincts more in decision making, and, at times, became too political with her city council.

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**Prepared by:** Lynelle Klein  
Colin Baenziger & Associates

**Section 12**

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*CB&A Internet Research*

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**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Jane K. Shang**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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May 1, 2020  
Section: FL News

**Vehicles stretch for mile outside Deltona church where former city manager donated to grocery giveaway**

Author: Katie Kustura

DELTONA — The line of cars outside New Hope Baptist Church stretched as far as the eye could see. Feeding the community is a monthly effort of New Hope Human Services, the church's nonprofit, but on Wednesday it had doubled in size in an effort to mitigate the impact the coronavirus pandemic has had on residents and their ability to keep food on the table.

“This is a special one,” Dot Bradley, the nonprofit’s director, said. “Former city manager **Jane Shang**, she gave a generous donation to help make this event possible today, so we're really grateful that we're able to bless our community and give them some hope, especially during this time of COVID-19.”

The nonprofit Second Harvest Food Bank of Central Florida also contributed to the effort. Bradley said the vehicles began lining up along Lake Helen Osteen Road at least a couple of hours before the event officially started at 11 a.m. Attendees stayed in their respective vehicles as volunteers directed them through the church’s parking lot to where additional volunteers stood ready to load the trunks with bags of groceries. Other volunteers, including Victor Ramos, the city’s vice mayor, were assembling the bags, which were filled with a little bit of everything: meats, fresh produce, canned goods, snacks, water and a few rolls of toilet paper.

Bradley said she was glad to be able to provide lunch to the volunteers “to replenish them after they have given of themselves like they have today.” Patricia Harkness, a retired Deltona resident, said she was happy to be able to pick up food for herself and her husband and to see some familiar faces, though they were covered with masks, at the same time. “I stay at home, I try to work in my garden and I try to call the different people I know are alone and take the time to just share a word or prayer, something that can keep us connected,” Harkness, who has attended New Hope church for 10 years, said.

**Shang** helped distribute flyers advertising New Hope’s next food event. “Life’s a journey, you have your ups and downs, but what’s really important is that we all come together,” **Shang** said. “If I’m in a position where I can help, I want to do that.”

New Hope’s next food distribution will be May 16 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

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*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Daytona Beach News-Journal, The: Web Edition Articles (FL)  
April 23, 2020

**Coronavirus: Grocery giveaways coming to Orange City, Deltona**  
Author: Katie Kustura

Two West Volusia entities are going to give groceries away to help those in need keep food on the table amid the coronavirus pandemic.

Starting Monday, the Florida Cardiopulmonary Center in Orange City will hand out groceries to 100 people from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. or until supplies run out.

The facility, located at 915 Harley Strickland Blvd., will distribute the bags on a first-come, first-served basis. A giveaway will take place each day, Monday through Friday, and again during the following week, May 4-8.

Attendees are asked to remain in their vehicle with the windows up and to leave about two car lengths between their own vehicle and the next. Once an attendee pulls up to the pickup area, they should pop the trunk and a volunteer will place the groceries inside.

On Wednesday in Deltona, the nonprofit New Hope Human Services will give away more food than usual, because of donations from **Jane Shang**, the city's former manager, and Second Harvest Food Bank.

The giveaway will take place at New Hope Baptist Church, 2855 Lake Helen Osteen Road, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Attendees should remain in their vehicles as volunteers distribute the food.



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*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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West Volusia Beacon, The (DeLand, FL)  
February 20, 2020

**Jane Shang did a lot of good in Deltona**

Author: MIKE WILLIAMS

Much has been written recently about **Jane Shang**, Deltona’s former city manager. Remember, there are always two sides to every story, and the truth lies in the middle. **Ms. Shang** is not perfect, but she is also not the evil and unethical person characterized by the press.

Very few people know that a city manager of any city is hired for two reasons: one, to manage every facet of the city, and, two, to carry out the vision and the mutually agreed-upon directives of the majority of the city commissioners. The city manager gets the work done, while the commission deals with policy and politics.

**Ms. Shang** is the 11th city manager in Deltona’s 24-year history. The frequent turnover is a mystery, but this is not our concern. What we need to emphasize is the overwhelming success of **Ms. Shang**. She understood the vision of the City Commission, and she was eminently qualified to carry out the mutually agreed-upon wishes of the city leaders.

At least two years before **Ms. Shang** was hired, the City Commission agreed unanimously to transform the City of Deltona into a modern, 21st-century city with businesses and classy restaurants, to increase the labor force so more than 40,000 people do not have to leave to go to other cities to find work, to promote multiculturalism, to provide opportunities for the young people of the city for meaningful activities, and to do many other things that make a city a desirable place to raise families.

According to the City Charter, the commissioners and the mayor need a city manager to tackle these complex issues, a professional specifically qualified for that purpose. And by the way, for those who do not understand modern government, this is why a city has to pay high salaries, because the city manager has ultimate responsibility for running a city and managing hundreds of millions of dollars.

**Ms. Shang** more than earned her salary. During her tenure, Deltona was “A City on the Move.” This slogan was coined during a public community meeting where, at the urging of **Ms. Shang**, Deltona developed its first five-year Strategic Plan, which provided clear direction on the priorities of the city. In almost five years, the city was well into the transformation stage according to that vision; we can say **Ms. Shang** had accomplished more than expected in this short period.

During her tenure:

- crime is down by double digits,
- the city provides supplemental ambulance service,
- the streets are cleaner,

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*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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- the city’s bond rating is high and fiscal reports continue to be rated outstanding by the Government Finance Officers Association,
- the city has adequate reserves for disaster relief,
- roads and sidewalks are being constructed,
- \$12 million has been identified for Deltona through the Transportation Planning Organization,
- parks projects continue to be funded, and the city is positioned to receive \$1 million in ECHO (environmental, cultural, historic and outdoors) funds from Volusia County,
- employee benefits, including health insurance, continue to be outstanding,
- more businesses are coming to Deltona, including a \$160 million hospital and two emergency-care facilities, and
- we’re seeing the growth of an industrial park with its first tenant being Amazon’s 1.4 million-square-foot, \$100 million distribution center.

Further, Deltona finally has an event center where functions can be held, union relations between the firefighters and city management are better than ever, and, culturally, **Ms. Shang**’s beautification and holiday lights programs are noteworthy.

**Ms. Shang** also brought diversity into the hiring practices of Deltona. As many may know, the NAACP was on the verge of filing a lawsuit against the City of Deltona. A lawsuit is off the table, thanks to **Ms. Shang**. These are the major highlights, which do not include the constant contact she had with the City Commission. **Ms. Shang** was adept in making dreams and plans a reality.

**Ms. Shang** was a “game changer,” which — depending on your viewpoint — could be either good or bad. I found **Ms. Shang** to be fair, especially with staff, and looking for ways to bring consensus. She also made hard decisions when she had to.

She loved Deltona and, unbeknownst to many, she financially supported veterans organizations, churches, the CATALYST mentoring program, the Central Florida Pregnancy Center, Healthy Start, Sisters for Life, Rotary, and the Sisters Build Network — organizations focusing on giving the youth and tomorrow’s leaders opportunities.

With her departure, she fell short politically, not due to her abilities as a city manager. Perhaps the real reason will be told. For now, thank you, **Ms. Shang**, for your endless hard work and love for Deltona.

— Williams, of Deltona, is a veteran Realtor and president of the West Volusia Branch, NAACP.

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*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Tribune Content Agency News Service (USA)  
January 31, 2020

**Shang, embattled former Deltona manager, touts achievements**

Author: Katie Kustura, The Daytona Beach News-Journal Tribune Content Agency

DELTONA 2020--DELTONA -- **Jane Shang**, who resigned from her post as city manager on Tuesday, hopes she'll eventually be remembered for what was accomplished during her tenure at the city's helm. **Shang** elaborated on those achievements in a note distributed to city staff. "Hopefully, as time passes, I will be remembered for moving the City forward and making Deltona a better place to live. I have been Deltona's City Manager for almost five years or over 20% of the time Deltona became a City," **Shang** wrote. The former city manager went on to list a number of accomplishments that occurred during her tenure including: a decrease in crime by double digits; supplemental ambulance care; cleaner streets; infrastructure improvements; and economic development, which includes major projects such as Amazon, a hospital and two emergency-care facilities. "Deltona's future is bright and A City on the Move," **Shang** wrote. "I am honored to have been part of Deltona's growth." Members of the commission reached by phone Thursday acknowledged that city staff members were a major part the accomplishments that occurred during **Shang's** tenure, which began June 1, 2015. Commissioner Bob McFall, who voted against the motion to fire **Shang**, said he thinks the city will be fine and that Marc-Antonie Cooper will do well in the interim. "**Jane** put in a lot of good personnel around her," McFall said. Mayor Heidi Herzberg, who made the motion Jan. 21 to fire **Shang**, said the former city manager's experience with transportation helped in securing more funding and raising awareness for some of Deltona's infrastructure needs. Herzberg added that Commissioner Chris Nabicht was instrumental in that effort with his position on the River-to-Sea Transportation Planning Organization. "I think, unfortunately, a lot of **Jane's** issues she brought on herself, and they overshadowed what was going on with the city," the mayor said. Since 2017 the city has received about \$5 million in funding from the TPO which helped with improvements to Howland and Catalina boulevards, Tivoli Drive and more. Nabicht, who didn't respond to requests for comment, resigned from the TPO as well as the Executive Board of the Central Florida Metropolitan Planning Organization Alliance and Volusia County's Tourist Development Council on Jan. 22. Like McFall, Nabicht voted against terminating **Shang**. Commissioner Anita Bradford, who made a motion a year ago to fire **Shang**, said she felt staff was able to accomplish those items for the city despite the micro-managing and a lack of trust. "Her arm's got to be killing her from patting herself on the back," Bradford said regarding **Shang's** statement. "I think the staff has done a wonderful job." Vice Mayor Victor Ramos said he didn't want to comment on the letter. "As of Tuesday night, I've turned a page and I'm looking forward," Ramos said. Resident Dana McCool, president of the nonprofit Deltona Strong, said she's glad the city is moving ahead "instead of staying in a toxic, repetitious cycle." "I admire the things that city staff and Ms. **Shang** were able to accomplish while she was here," McCool said Thursday. "I think the moving forward, the future city manager would take into advisement how important the human connection is in running a city."

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*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Daytona Beach News-Journal, The (FL)  
January 29, 2020

**City manager leaves her post after multiple attempts made to terminate her**  
Author: Katie Kustura

DELTONA — **Jane Shang**, the embattled city manager of Deltona, is out. The City Commission voted unanimously Tuesday night to accept her resignation, but not before listening to residents air their grievances about **Shang**, who didn't attend the meeting, her severance package, her performance and the commission's performance. The commission also unanimously approved making Deputy City Manager Marc-Antonie Cooper the interim city manager. In the document regarding **Shang's** resignation, City Attorney Skip Fowler wrote that **Shang** is entitled to severance benefits and accrued leave as listed in her contract. Fowler said the city's finance director, Tracy C. Hooper, was working on calculating the exact dollar amount, but the information wasn't available Tuesday night as Hooper wasn't at the meeting.

**Shang**, per the document, requested that the commission support a nondisparaging agreement "whereby neither party will disparage the other. The city and Ms. **Shang** agree to attorney fees in the event either breaches this agreement." While not every commissioner addressed that request, none spoke in support of it. Mayor Heidi Herzberg said disparaging was a broad term and would essentially be like placing a gag order on the city and commission. "If you're not guilty, why do you need a gag order? If you have nothing to hide, why do you need a gag order?" Herzberg said. The mayor's comment received a round of applause.

Several residents addressed the commission about the resignation, which some said was overdue, as well as the desire to move forward. "I hope with this resignation we move forward with greeting our community in a different way," resident Elbert Bryan said. "I think everybody in this community wants to come together." Bryan said that while there's been some economic improvement in the city over the past few years, he's concerned about the number of department heads who left during that time, and he doesn't want to lose current city leaders, which he said are some of the best around. Jennifer Chasteen said the vote of no confidence was long overdue. "I felt a few people showed courage on the dais last week," Chasteen said. "There's hope that we can bridge the divide that we have within our city."

The resignation comes one week after Herzberg made a motion to terminate **Shang** over a lack of communication, concerns from multiple city staffers about **Shang's** managerial style and an agreement allowing a firefighter accused of sexual harassment to eventually retire, which the mayor said was the last straw. Herzberg's motion to terminate, which needed a super majority to pass, failed 4-3, but a motion of no confidence, which doesn't require a super majority, received the same vote. **Shang's** tenure with the city was not without its rough patches from the very beginning. **Shang** began working for Deltona on June 1, 2015. Before that she was the deputy city manager in El Paso, Texas. Her contract, which gave her a starting salary of \$150,000 with two scheduled raises, had some commissioners and residents concerned. However, most of the commissioners serving at the time and supported **Shang's** hiring were confident that their new

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manager would ultimately save the city more money than she would cost. One of **Shang**'s first big projects in the largely residential city was beautification, but not everyone cared for the new city manager's assessment, particularly regarding rules about refuse, a matter on which **Shang** said the city had been too lenient with residents. "Who wants to live with trash lying on the streets?" **Shang** said during an August 2015 workshop. That November **Shang** received high marks and her scheduled \$15,000 raise. The concern about a lack of communication from **Shang** isn't a new one. Former commissioner Brian Soukup, who ultimately resigned in large part due to issues with **Shang**, wrote in an op-ed column published in The News-Journal in October 2016 that he questioned whether the information he was receiving from the city manager and then-city attorney Becky Vose was "complete or honest." Soukup resigned in August 2017. "The recent actions of this commission, as well as the continued unprofessional actions of City Manager **Jane Shang**, through the withholding and continuous misrepresentation and manipulating of critical information, have alienated me as an elected official and has essentially disenfranchised the people of my district," Soukup wrote in his resignation letter. A few months before resigning, Soukup and former commissioner Chris Alcantara voted to fire **Shang**, but the motion, like the others that followed, failed. Soukup, who attended the resignation meeting Tuesday, said **Shang** shouldn't get "one red cent." "The way that she treated her employees is how she should be treated," Soukup said.

The former commissioner cited former city employee Steve Narvaez, who worked as the IT director for nearly 10 years before **Shang** fired him after he made a complaint about how the city manager classified concerns he raised about trademark issues if the city was to put on a "Super Bowl Party." In 2018, the charge to terminate **Shang** was largely led by residents after the city manager tried to trespass Patricia Gibson, a resident, from The Center, a city-owned building. After visiting the facility, Gibson contacted the Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation with concerns over The Center having all of the required licensing. Shortly thereafter, a state inspection resulted in four violations, and 11 days after her visit, Gibson was informed she was no longer welcome at the building.

**Shang** withdrew the warning following weeks of back-and-forth between city officials, the county's legal advisors and law enforcement. The trust between the public and some of those working in City Hall would continue to erode during the summer of 2018 when **Shang** directed the city's finance director to file with the Volusia County Sheriff's Office a complaint accusing resident Brandy White of surreptitiously recording a conversation with finance director. The State Attorney's Office declined to prosecute saying they wouldn't be able to prove even a "prima facie" case against White. In December of 2018, after records showed that **Shang** was the subject of a voter fraud complaint, Commissioner Anita Bradford made a motion to suspend **Shang** during the investigation, but the motion failed. The following month, Bradford made a motion to terminate **Shang**, but it also failed. After **Shang** received a deferred prosecution agreement in the voter fraud case, Commissioner Loren King made a motion to fire **Shang**, but only received support from Bradford.

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*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Daytona Beach News-Journal, The (FL)  
January 23, 2020

**Firefighter gets retirement deal**

**Deltona division chief resigns, will receive full pension after sexual harassment complaints**

Author: *Katie Kustura*

In what appears to be an unusual agreement with the city, a division chief with the Deltona Fire Rescue Department accused of committing sexual harassment on multiple occasions will be allowed to retire and collect his full pension benefit come November. Deltona Fire Chief Bill Snyder had recommended that Adam Bengelsdorf, who had 24 years of service at the time the sexual harassment complaints came to light, be allowed to resign. If Bengelsdorf refused to resign, Snyder recommended that he be fired, according to records obtained by The News-Journal.

Instead, Bengelsdorf reached a different agreement with City Manager **Jane Shang** and City Attorney Marsha Segal-George. The agreement was signed on Oct. 25, 2019. Per the agreement, Bengelsdorf, 46, has been suspended without pay for one year, until he retires Nov. 1, 2020. The agreement allows for Bengelsdorf to use accrued paid time off and sick time to carry him through November, giving him a full 25 years of service, the number necessary to collect his pension immediately upon retirement. Had Bengelsdorf been fired, he wouldn't have been able to start collecting his pension until he turns 55. Based on the city's code of ordinances, when he officially retires in November, Bengelsdorf will be able to collect thousands of dollars annually between now and age 55 that he would not have received if he had resigned or been terminated when the allegations against him came to light. The city, including its Firefighter's Pension Plan Board of Trustees, didn't respond to multiple requests asking how much the division chief will receive upon retirement or how much he would receive had he been fired or resigned immediately. But the pension's rules indicate firefighters can receive their full pension at age 55 or when they reach 25 years of service, whichever comes first.

Snyder sent a letter to **Shang** on Oct. 2, 2019, recommending that Bengelsdorf be given the opportunity to resign because of his years of service. "However, if he refuses to resign, then my recommendation is termination," Snyder wrote. City officials wouldn't comment as to whether or not this type of deal was common or if it had ever been offered to any other employee. In a phone interview Wednesday, Mayor Heidi Herzberg said instead of following Snyder's recommendation, Bengelsdorf was basically rewarded. Herzberg added that she wasn't aware of the agreement until The News-Journal inquired about it in late November. The mayor said she heard about the newspaper's inquiry, then asked **Shang** about it and was briefed. "You (**Shang**) undermined your director (Snyder) and you didn't inform your commission until it got hot and heavy," Herzberg said.

Two other commissioners, Anita Bradford and Vice Mayor Victor Ramos, also said they were not aware of the agreement until The News-Journal made its request for records. The agreement authorizes city public information officer Lee Lopez to be the only person who can speak about

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**Jane K. Shang**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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the agreement, and the only statement he can make is “Bengelsdorf is no longer an employee of the City of Deltona.” The agreement also prevents Bengelsdorf from making any disparaging comments about the city. Per the agreement, Bengelsdorf, who had a yearly base salary of about \$58,272, “will not receive city benefits of future including but not limited to longevity pay, vacation accrual nor sick time accrual, all incentives, and city workers compensation salary contribution.” The city will provide health care coverage until his retirement.

The most recent complaint regarding Bengelsdorf was filed on July 25, 2019, regarding a conversation that occurred at a fire station on July 13. Firefighter Anthony Carrasquillo and Lt. Anson Chucci both emailed statements to Deputy Chief Bush Swisher about the incident. During a conversation about relationships, Bengelsdorf said that one of his ex-girlfriends had a 16-year-old daughter with whom Bengelsdorf “wouldn’t mind doing sexual things,” so long as “the mother didn’t find out & or he didn’t get caught,” Chucci wrote in his statement. Immediately after the girl’s age was mentioned, Carrasquillo raised his voice and said, “She is underage,” Carrasquillo and Chucci wrote in their respective statements. The conversation then stopped. “I do not condone or think of pedophilia as a joking matter,” Chucci wrote to Swisher.

In Bengelsdorf’s interview on Aug. 27 with the city’s human resources director, Richard Adams, Swisher and three union representatives, the division chief said he never made any comment about an underage girl and never had a discussion with the firefighters about anyone’s daughters. He also said he’s never had a girlfriend with a daughter that old. Asked if he recalled making any statements describing his sexual relationships with women, Bengelsdorf said he was “just joking around” and “trying to be one of the guys.” In an interview on Sept. 12 with Adams, Swisher and a union representative, Chucci said he believed Bengelsdorf was trying to joke around, but that it wasn’t in good taste. “There should be a level one should draw a line at and that one crossed it,” Chucci said. During the Aug. 27 interview, Bengelsdorf was asked about other complaints of which he was the subject, and he said those comments were also jokes. A female member of the fire department told Swisher that on two occasions Bengelsdorf offered to give her, and suggested she take, a prescription drug to help with anxiety before a test. The woman declined the offer both times, and this was witnessed by other crew members.

Bengelsdorf said he was joking each time he made the offer, and if the female firefighter had said yes, he wouldn’t have given the drug to her. “Although he stated that it was a joke, which differs from the impression of the witnesses, offering medications to an employee is not a joking matter and inappropriate no matter the intent,” Snyder said in his letter to **Shang**.

While working a brush fire on May 17, Bengelsdorf also became angry over something job related and yelled at the same female firefighter in front of crews and civilians, according to records. Bengelsdorf then told her, “That’s why I broke up with you.” Bengelsdorf said in his Aug. 27 interview that he was joking with the firefighter at the brush fire, and “people may have perceived it incorrectly.” Both the firefighter and Bengelsdorf said they never dated. The female firefighter also told Swisher that on Nov. 6, 2018, Bengelsdorf told her he’d masturbated to a video of her performing the National Anthem, according to records. Bengelsdorf said that didn’t happen. Regarding an incident that occurred in 2018 or early 2019, Bengelsdorf said he was

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*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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explaining a medical procedure, but none of the multiple witnesses saw it that way, records show. A woman and her fiancé had stopped by the station to thank the crew who performed CPR on the woman, and Bengelsdorf, per witnesses, made a comment directed toward the woman's fiancé. Engineer Daniel Booth, in his interview with Swisher and union representatives, said Bengelsdorf asked the woman's fiancé: "How does it feel to know another guy put a tube down your fiancée's vocal cords before you did?" Booth then tried to change the subject, and Bengelsdorf repeated the comment, witnesses said, according to records. Bengelsdorf said in his Aug. 27 interview that he was not making a sexual joke, as was the interpretation of all of the witnesses, but was trying to explain the intubation process.

In his interview, Bengelsdorf also said that he "would like to sincerely apologize for any misconceptions or bad publicity to the department or city. He loves working here and loves this FD," records show. In his letter to the city manager, Snyder said there were conversations in May and June of 2019 during which members of Bengelsdorf's crew asked him to stop making unprofessional comments. "These meetings did not seem to stop his behavior," Snyder wrote. Reached by phone, Bengelsdorf said he had no comment.

Since 2003, Bengelsdorf has worked as an adjunct professor at Daytona State College teaching classes as needed in the fire services program, said Chris Thomes, spokesman for DSC. Thomes said DSC has not received any complaints regarding Bengelsdorf, who last taught in spring 2019.



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Daytona Beach News-Journal, The (FL)  
January 13, 2020

**Deltona ends 2019 with a bang thanks to Amazon**  
**City officials say more development expected in 2020**

Author: *Katie Kustura*

DELTONA — Volusia County’s biggest city ended 2019 with the biggest announcement — Amazon is coming to town. And if everything goes according to plan, the new year will eventually see the opening of the 1.4 million-square-foot distribution center. “Some people say ‘when you go fishing, you go for the whale,’” City Manager **Jane Shang** said. “That will be a game-changer.”

The City Commission signed off on Dec. 26, 2019, on an incentive package worth nearly \$2.5 million for the project, which is expected to bring 500 jobs to the area over the next five years and spur additional development in the area. “We believe now that the first domino’s tipped over, it’s just going to help the others fall,” said Tom Tomerlin, the city’s assistant economic development manager. “I think eventually we’re going to get those restaurants coming in,” **Shang** said.

The city also saw success last year in the health care field. AdventHealth’s \$12 million, 12-bed freestanding emergency room opened in December on Howland Boulevard. That success has continued in the new year with Thursday’s grand opening of the 95-bed Halifax Health|UF Health Medical Center of Deltona, a \$152.7 million project. Last year was also marked by significant community involvement.

When the City Commission voted to suspend the recycling program a year ago, Marc-Antonie Cooper, assistant city manager, put together the Recycling Alternative Programs Task Force to find solutions to reduce household waste overall and lessen the community’s impact on the environment. “Sometimes you have to make hard decisions and revamp what you’re used to doing, not only because it’s the fiscally prudent thing to do, but why have a policy if it doesn’t serve its purpose,” Mayor Heidi Herzberg said regarding the recycling decision.

Cooper hopes to present the group’s ideas to the commission in the coming weeks. Another resident-backed effort, one that Rep. David Santiago, R-Deltona, played an important role in, was the formation of the Citizen Water Committee and the commission’s subsequent approval of auditor KPMG to review Deltona Water, the city-owned utility. “Just to be clear, this is the item that we requested the state pay for,” Herzberg said in the October commission meeting during which KPMG was approved. “They declined, so the City of Deltona, through our water utility, is paying for this operational and organizational assessment.”

Projects in Deltona that the state did commit last year to paying toward are the Daytona State College building for \$5.06 million and \$750,000 for improvements to intersections and crosswalks for pedestrians. The city also has been working to update its parks and playgrounds

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since the commission decided in 2016 that such areas must be as inclusive as possible. “To me, that’s huge,” Herzberg said. “Those are things that not every municipality does.” In September, the city dedicated its newest innovative playground, which includes elements for children with limited mobility, at Firefighters’ Memorial Park, 1426 E. Lombardy Drive. At Thornby Park, which already has an inclusive playground, the city is working to improve the nature trails. “We are putting in the ramps and bridges and things that make it much more accessible for someone in a wheelchair or someone who needs extra assistance,” said Jerry Mayes, the city’s economic development and ecological tourism sustainability manager.

In 2019, Deltona became Volusia County’s first official Trail Town, as designated by the state. Mayes said he hopes to present, within the next month or two, plans for the old Deltona Community Center, 980 Lakeshore Drive, that would link the area’s parks and trails. The City Commission continues to work on updating ordinances, such as those regarding animals. At an upcoming meeting, commissioners are expected to finalize the changes they made over the course of multiple workshops with local animal experts to better ensure the welfare of non-human residents.

Last year saw some carryover of the contention surrounding **Shang**, who accepted a deferred prosecution agreement from the State Attorney’s Office after being accused of submitting false voter identification information and willfully voting in an election for which she wasn’t qualified. After entering into the agreement, which included over \$5,000 worth of fees, **Shang** said she considered the matter closed and wanted to move forward.

On Friday at 10 a.m., the city will kick off the celebration of its 25th anniversary at City Hall, 2345 Providence Blvd.

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Daytona Beach News-Journal, The: Web Edition Articles (FL)  
July 19, 2019

**Deltona City Manager Jane Shang, accused of voter fraud, does community service in Lake Helen**

Deltona City Manager **Jane Shang** had a variety of options when it came to ways she could fulfill the community service requirement of her deferred prosecution agreement, stemming from a charge of voter fraud. Critters Exotic Pet Rescue, the Oakdale Cemetery Association and Deltona Victory Chapel are just a few of them. But **Shang**, who manages Volusia County's most populated city, has completed just over half of her required community service, 100 hours, helping Lake Helen, one of the county's least populated cities. Most of **Shang's** time, over 47 hours, has been spent digitizing Lake Helen's meeting minutes from 2000-2012, said Becky Witte, city administrator of Lake Helen. **Shang** accepted the pretrial intervention agreement from the State Attorney's Office in June after admitting to submitting false voter identification information and willfully voting in an election for which she wasn't qualified. In the letter **Shang** was required to submit as part of the agreement, she said she took steps to make her home address confidential due to personal security and privacy risks that can come with her position as a city manager. She listed the address of Deltona City Hall, 2345 Providence Blvd., as her home address, which she said carried over to her voter registration, for which she submitted information when she became city manager in 2015.

During a visit to Lake Helen City Hall on a recent Saturday, Mayor Daisy Raisler was surprised to find **Shang**, who declined to comment for this story, inside, alone, scanning records into the system. Raisler told the commission during the July 11 City Commission meeting that it made her uncomfortable because she feels like a Lake Helen city employee should always be present when a non-employee is working with records, regardless of how old the documents are and what they contain. Witte, who consulted with the city attorney and the Lake Helen police chief before giving Deltona's city manager the tasks, said she let **Shang** into the building and was present much of the time. Witte also said the documents **Shang** was working with were all public records.

Commissioner Rick Basso said he understood why Raisler was uncomfortable. "There's a big difference between leaving somebody alone to pick up trash outside and leaving somebody alone inside your office where all of your records are," Basso said. Commissioner Tom Wilson expressed confidence in Witte's decision. "There's been no evidence that this person has done anything wrong, misappropriated or copied something she shouldn't have," Wilson said. In addition to digitizing records and cleaning out a couple of closets, **Shang** helped with the set up and clean up for the city's Fourth of July festivities, Witte said in a phone interview. While **Shang** finished her work for Lake Helen, the Department of Corrections didn't respond as to whether or not she had completed additional service hours outside of Lake Helen. **Shang's** attorney also declined comment this week.

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*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Tribune Content Agency News Service (USA)  
June 24, 2019

**Deltona still pursuing water study after project cut from Florida budget**

Author: *Katie Kustura, The Daytona Beach News-Journal Tribune Content Agency*

June 24--Despite Gov. Ron DeSantis vetoing \$200,000 from the state budget for a study of Deltona's water department, the city and its state representative aren't going to let the matter sink. "We are disappointed that the funding for the water study is not in the state budget," City Manager **Jane Shang** said Monday. "However, the city is committed to finding funds for the study and working closely with Rep. David Santiago." During the most recent legislative session, Santiago, R-Deltona, requested \$200,000 for the Department of Environmental Protection to conduct a study of Deltona Water. The study would look into customer service (process for bill dispute resolution and process for unclaimed funds such as deposits and over-payments), billing and payment practices (late fees, bill cycle, billing spikes and online payments), operations (equipment maintenance and meter reading) and the administration, per government documents. It would also identify best practices and how to improve operations. Santiago said he looks forward to helping the city select a vendor to conduct a review of the utility. "My goal will be to achieve this in the most transparent method possible," Santiago said. "It is important to ensure residents have the confidence in the process." The matter will be on the agenda for the City Commission's next regular meeting on July 1, **Shang** said. "(Santiago) made a commitment and the city made a commitment and nobody is backing down," **Shang** said. Resident Dana McCool, president of Deltona Strong, the grassroots group leading the charge for an audit of the water department, said that although the organization is disappointed that DeSantis vetoed the item from the budget, it's optimistic about moving forward and forming a committee to oversee the selection of a third-party auditor and the scope of the study. "We sincerely appreciate Rep. Santiago's efforts and continuing concern about the residents and our water issues," McCool said. "We are also very appreciative of the responsibility that the city has taken on in addressing this matter head on." [READ MORE: Volusia-Flagler winners, losers in Florida budget] [READ MORE: Deltona asks state rep to pursue audit of city water] In April 2018, McCool and a couple dozen residents showed up at City Hall to make it known that they would be turning to Tallahassee for help with their concerns about Deltona Water. That move came a month after the city held a water-focused public forum, during which then public works and utilities director Matt Doan told residents to contact the department regarding problems because the city can't act on what it doesn't know. In July 2018, following a forum held by Deltona Strong, Santiago wrote a letter to then mayor John Masiarczyk, encouraging the city to review and consider the concerns and possible solutions brought forth by residents. That September the City Commission unanimously voted to have Santiago begin the process of seeking a state audit of the utility. Funding shouldn't be a deterrent from looking into concerns about Deltona Water, Mayor Heidi Herzberg said in a phone interview Monday. While much remains to be worked out, Herzberg said the plan from the beginning was to find a way to conduct a study of the utility whether or not it was approved in the state budget. "Just because the Legislature didn't fund it, doesn't mean it's not a worthwhile undertaking," Herzberg said. "I think we need to do it."

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Jane K. Shang  
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

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Daytona Beach News-Journal, The (FL)  
June 19, 2019

**Speakers angry about city manager hurl profane insults at city leaders**

Author: *Katie Kustura*

DELTONA — If a public meeting ever needed a parental advisory warning, Monday night's at City Hall should have had one. Explicit language from residents at the lectern addressing city commissioners was frequent, though sometimes hard to hear over occasional chants of "lock her up" and other similar demands. There was even a profanity-laced tirade by phone from someone out of state made during the raucous proceedings for which at least one child was present. The fury was over City Manager **Jane Shang** whose pretrial intervention agreement, if completed, allows her to avoid felony voter fraud charges. That deal has further angered and frustrated her detractors. Tensions reached a new level during the nearly five-hour meeting. Resident Richard Bellach called the commissioners "gestapo" and "pond scum," and called Commissioner Chris Nabicht an "oversized beard" among other personal insults. Bellach also called resident Mike Williams — president of the West Volusia branch of the NAACP and someone who generally speaks in favor of **Shang** and the commission — a "house boy." Via phone, Eric Brandt, of Denver, told Mayor Heidi Herzberg: "You better get (expletive) ready, (expletive), I'm a coming for you." The city had a speaker card with Brandt's name on it, so when the call was made, resident Jeffery Stuck, who told the mayor that the people were ready to file more lawsuits, put Brandt on speakerphone and held it up to the microphone.

Calling in his comments was allowed because there was a speaker card with Brandt's name on it, Lee Lopez, city spokesman, said. What isn't allowed is yielding time to someone who hasn't filled out a speaker card. Brandt, who is sometimes referred to as a First Amendment activist, has gotten some recent notoriety for shocking displays in front of elected leaders in Colorado. Hoping to deter what would ultimately take place, Herzberg went over the operating guidelines before public comment began. "No person shall engage in disorderly or boisterous conduct. Whistling, stamping of feet, booing or making loud, threatening and slanderous utterances and statements is not allowed," Herzberg said, adding that obscene language and personal attacks weren't allowed. "Persons continuing this conduct will be removed from the commission chambers." Though Herzberg gave a few people warnings and used her gavel at times, no one was removed from the meeting, which featured an additional Volusia County sheriff's deputy keeping watch. In a phone interview Tuesday, Herzberg said it was unfortunate the meeting got out of hand, but she wanted to make sure everyone's First Amendment rights were respected. While the mayor always asks speakers to provide their name and address for the record, several residents used fake names, and the commission's Operating Guidelines and Meeting Rules and Procedures doesn't state that a speaker must provide a real name. DeBary resident William Sell came to the meeting to encourage residents to get organized. He carried a poster to encourage the commission to fire **Shang**. He said the issues he's seen on the DeBary council over the years sort of make him an expert on government drama, and if the speakers truly wanted their points to be heard, they need to be professional and courteous. Sell also encouraged **Shang** to be more open to interacting with residents. "I go to dinner with our city manager," Sell said. "There's no reason

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to be afraid of the public, they pay your salary." Monday night's meeting was the second time this year a motion was made, and subsequently failed with a 5-2 vote, to fire **Shang**. The first time the motion was made was during a Jan. 22 meeting. "What would be the reason for us to fire her in a matter that is predetermined by the commission to be a private matter?" Nabicht asked in a phone interview Tuesday. "It wasn't city business." He said **Shang** has done a lot of good work in the city and it's not worth throwing away.

The attempts to suspend or get rid of **Shang** began in December after an anonymous voter fraud complaint was made to the state. During Monday's meeting, Commissioner Loren King took about 25 minutes to go over **Shang**'s criminal case before making the motion, seconded by Commissioner Anita Bradford, to fire the city manager with cause. For the second time this year, King and Bradford voted in favor of terminating **Shang** with the other commissioners opposed. On June 5 the State Attorney's Office released the pretrial intervention agreement reached with **Shang**, who will not be formally charged if she abides by the agreement for the next 12 months. The Florida Department of Law Enforcement found probable cause for four counts of false swearing and two counts of unqualified electors willfully voting. As part of the agreement, **Shang** must pay just over \$5,404 in fees, perform 100 hours of community service and write a letter in which she acknowledges and accepts responsibility for her actions. When a person has no criminal record and hasn't been accused of a violent crime, it's not unusual for this type of agreement to be reached, according to the State Attorney's Office. **Shang** didn't address the matter during the meeting or offer any comment after it was adjourned. Neither did the majority of the commission, save for the official vote.

Commissioners King, Bob McFall, Maritza Avila-Vazquez and Vice Mayor Victor Ramos didn't respond to requests for comment. Reached by phone Tuesday, both Bradford and Nabicht expressed concern over what developers would think if the city manager was removed. "Now if she would've been criminally charged, I would've been the first one to make the motion, but she wasn't criminally charged, and she admitted to making a mistake," Nabicht said. He said that while several comments made by members of the public crossed a line, the commission wants to make sure the public has plenty of opportunities to voice their concerns. Both Nabicht and Bradford said they were glad the commission was able to get to the rest of the business on the agenda amid the tension inside 2345 Providence Blvd. "Amidst what we had to deal with last night, the commission still came together to get through what we had to get through," Bradford said. "I think having a difference of opinion makes the commission look at all the avenues before decisions are made." Because of the number of speaker cards filled out for Monday night's meeting, some of the public comments weren't made until the end of the meeting. Resident Mark Metzger was one of those speakers. Metzger said he didn't agree with the comments about **Shang**'s pretrial agreement being a private, personal matter because it's the taxpayers who finance the city manager's salary among other items. He said while everyone on the dais "has taken enough of a beating, probably, tonight," they've got work to do. "I think everybody needs to go home and really study on their moral compass and as a group get a moral compass," Metzger said. "I think that'd be pretty important for moving forward."

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West Volusia Beacon, The (DeLand, FL)  
June 17, 2019

**Dateline: VETS HONOR CITY MANAGER**

VETS HONOR CITY MANAGER — Flanked by veterans, Deltona City Manager **Jane Shang**, third from right, accepts a plaque thanking her for her support for Guitars for Vets. From left are Chris Princler, Keith Riley, Deltona Mayor Heidi Herzberg, Joe Sgarlata, **Jane Shang**, Phil Loranger and Bernard Thomas. Guitars for Vets helps veterans deal with post-traumatic stress, physical disabilities and other adverse effects of war by offering them guitars and music instruction. Guitars for Vets has about 80 chapters in 40 states. The plaque honors **Shang** for “her steadfast resolution in providing support and a generous donation to Guitars for Veterans, Deltona Chapter.”

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Daytona Beach News-Journal, The (FL)  
June 6, 2019

**Shang accepts deal in fraud case**  
**Deltona city manager accused of voter fraud must pay investigative costs, perform community service**

Author: *Katie Kustura*

Deltona City Manager **Jane Shang** has accepted a pretrial intervention agreement from the State Attorney's Office after being accused of submitting false voter identification information and willfully voting in an election for which she wasn't qualified. In the document released Wednesday by the State Attorney's Office, **Shang**, in addition to the usual conditions of a deferred prosecution agreement, must pay a fee of \$100 for the cost of prosecution, just over \$5,178 to the Florida Department of Law Enforcement for investigative costs, perform 100 hours of community service and submit a letter acknowledging and accepting responsibility of the actions. In total, the year's worth of fees adds up to just over \$5,404. **Shang's** base salary in fiscal year 2017-2018 was \$185,700.

She must also get permission from her pretrial intervention officer before leaving the county, and she may need to submit to a drug test at the officer's direction. "Regarding my voter registration, the State Attorney is not charging me with any criminal offense," **Shang** said Wednesday via email. "For the sake of the public and tax dollars, I have entered into an agreement. I consider this personal matter closed and wish to move forward." In the letter submitted as part of the agreement, **Shang** said she took steps to make her home address and other information confidential in accordance with state law "because the position of city manager sometimes can carry personal security and privacy risks, especially for a woman."

For that reason, she listed the address of Deltona City Hall, 2345 Providence Blvd., as her home address, which she said carried over to her voter registration, for which she submitted information in 2015 when she became city manager. "I acknowledge that was a mistake and oversight on my part, although not done willfully or intentionally," **Shang** wrote. "I mistakenly erred in not complying with the voter identification information and for that, I continue to sincerely apologize for that unintentional mistake and error." She concluded the letter by saying she immediately corrected her address when the issue came to her attention.

Where it started

The case has been with the State Attorney's Office since the last week of February when it received investigative information from the Florida Department of Law Enforcement that said there was probable cause **Shang** violated six counts of Florida voting laws. According to Florida statute 104.011, "A person who willfully submits any false voter registration information commits a felony of the third degree," punishable by up to five years in prison, five years probation and a \$5,000 fine. Per statute 104.15, "Whoever, knowing he or she is not a qualified elector, willfully votes at any election is guilty of a felony of the third degree." An anonymous



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complaint, originally made Dec. 5 to the Florida Division of Elections, stated **Shang** was using the address of City Hall as her home address in her voter registration information. Following an inquiry from The News-Journal five days later, **Shang** made a call to Volusia County Supervisor of Elections Lisa Lewis and updated her address. In the City Commission meeting immediately following the revelation, several residents voiced concern about **Shang**, whom commissioners declined to suspend by a 5-2 vote. During that Dec. 17 meeting, **Shang** apologized and said she'd made a mistake, which she corrected once she realized it.

On Jan. 14, Ashley Davis, deputy general counsel with the Florida Department of State, wrote a letter to State Attorney R.J. Larizza of the 7th Judicial Circuit that said the elections fraud complaint "appears to have merit." The day after receiving the letter, Larizza requested the Florida Department of Law Enforcement investigate the matter. During the next regular City Commission meeting on Jan. 22, Commissioner Anita Bradford made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Loren King, to fire **Shang**. The motion failed 5-2. Records show **Shang**, who resides in District 3, voted in elections in 2016 and 2018, but it wasn't initially clear if she voted in city races while registered in the wrong city district.

In the documents released Wednesday by the State Attorney's Office, **Shang** says she did vote for a District 1 commission seat candidate during the general election in November 2018. She told the investigator that the atmosphere at her polling place was "aggressive" and "unpleasant" as "critics of hers were following her and taking pictures of her at the voting location." Throughout her interview with the Florida Department of Law Enforcement, **Shang** said she should have paid more attention to the documents she was signing throughout the voting process. What now? If **Shang** complies with the conditions of the agreement, in which prosecution is deferred for 12 months, the State Attorney's Office will not file charges in the case, said Spencer Hathaway, spokesman for the State Attorney's Office.

For the community service condition, the Department of Corrections maintains a list of approved nonprofits and organizations with which individuals may complete their service requirement, Hathaway said. Individuals are sometimes permitted to buy out their community service with a donation of \$10 per hour, but that's at the discretion of the Department of Corrections. Commissioner Bradford said she was disappointed in the outcome, but ultimately pleased that the State Attorney's Office took some action. She said she plans at the next regular commission meeting to ask for a workshop so the commission can discuss putting a procedure in place on what should or can be done if a charter officer has been accused of acting unethically.

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Tribune Content Agency News Service (USA)  
May 8, 2019

**Veterans learn guitar, find friendship in Deltona VA clinic**

Author: *Katie Kustura, The News-Journal, Daytona Beach, Fla. Tribune Content Agency*

May 08-- May 8--DELTONA -- Inside the Veterans Affairs outpatient clinic, psychologist Dr. Robin Reed hears joyful noise coming from the other side of the office every Friday at 1 p.m. The group of veterans making the lovely sounds couldn't be more grateful for the opportunity to do so because it helps keep them alive. Since the Deltona chapter of Guitars for Vets formed last October, veterans from West Volusia and parts of Seminole County have been getting together to learn how to play the guitar with others who have shared in the overwhelming experience of wars that left most of them with some form of post-traumatic stress disorder. "The end product, we're learning some music, but that wasn't the thing that got us together," said 68-year-old Phillip Loranger, a Deltona resident and Army veteran who fought in Vietnam, Panama and Desert Storm. "Every one of us in here has an issue, and we've been dealing with the issue by ourselves. Now we're dealing with our (expletive) collectively."

Guitars for Vets is a nonprofit based in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, with most states having at least one chapter. The organization, which uses Yamaha acoustic guitars, was formed in 2007 by guitar instructor Patrick Nettesheim and Vietnam-era veteran Dan Van Buskirk. The goal of the nonprofit, according to its website, is "to share the healing power of music by providing free guitar instruction, a new acoustic guitar and a guitar accessory kit in a structured program run by volunteers, primarily through the Department of Veterans Affairs facilities and community-based medical centers."

Army veteran and Deltona resident Joe Sgarlata said he and two other Vietnam-era veterans -- Chris Princler, who served in the Army, and Paul Bearden, who served in the Air Force and was stationed in the Philippines -- met in a therapy group where they often found themselves talking about guitars and music. Sgarlata, 71, thought some sort of music therapy program would be beneficial. With help from Reed, Sgarlata started Volusia County's second chapter of Guitars for Vets. The first chapter is based in the Port Orange/New Smyrna Beach area.

Studies show the benefits of music therapy include: a decrease in anxiety and depression; reduced muscle tension; improved interpersonal relationships and group cohesiveness; improved ability to recognize and cope with triggers of trauma; and improved self-esteem, according to the American Music Therapy Association. "We all have some medical issue that prevents us from moving forward at everybody else's pace," said 64-year-old Felix Ruiz, a Sanford resident and Air Force veteran who also fought in Vietnam.

The stresses that come from war can take a great toll on survivors. The VA's most recent estimate is that about 20 veterans die by suicide every day. The members of the Deltona chapter of Guitars for Vets, some of whom had prior experience with music, said the group helps them not become a part of that statistic. "Some of us are a little more advanced than other players, and

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we want to take and give back music as a therapy because a lot of us have PTSD," said Princler, 62, after a recent group practice session at Loranger's home. Keith Reilly, 52, an Orange City resident and Marine veteran who fought in Desert Storm, admitted he knew very little about guitars other than what they looked like before joining the group. The veterans shared a laugh when Sgarlata reminded them about the time Reilly confused a capo, a device used to change the playable length of the strings, for a cigarette holder.

Last Friday, the group gathered at the VA clinic in Deltona to put on a mini-concert and show off what they'd learned. They played songs they grew up with that were limited to a few chords. Sgarlata played the harmonica during some of the songs, and Deltona resident and Army veteran Bernard Jones, 72, who fought in Vietnam, played conga drums when he wasn't playing the guitar. The group started with Eagles' "Peaceful Easy Feeling." The rest of the set list included Ben E. King's "Stand by Me," Wayne Cochran's "Last Kiss," Jimmy Buffet's "Margaritaville," The Animals' "House of the Rising Sun," and Santana's "Oye Como Va."

After the concert, the band received rounds of applause from attendees and a personal check for \$1,000 from Deltona City Manager **Jane Shang**.

To thank Reed for her support, the group presented her with a plaque and a guitar signed by each member of the first class. "I hear music, I hear the laughter, I hear the joy, and that brings joy to my heart, knowing that these men have gotten together and built friendships, built skills," Reed said. "To be a sponsor is really an honor."

With another class for beginners starting soon, Sgarlata said he expects the original group will continue to get together to jam and talk about their experiences. "We wanted companionship," Sgarlata said. "There's nothing like seeing somebody who is going through what you're going through or feels the way you do."

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**Jane K. Shang**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Tribune Content Agency News Service (USA)  
April 19, 2019

**Deltona critic puts officials on notice over City Hall recording complaint**

Author: *Katie Kustura, The News-Journal, Daytona Beach, Fla. Tribune Content Agency*

April 19-- Apr. 19--DELTONA -- Resident Brandy White, an often vocal critic of city government, is in the process of serving officials with a notice of claim in connection to a felony complaint that was made against White a year ago. In October 2018, the State Attorney's Office issued a memo stating it wouldn't be able to prove a city official's complaint against White on a charge of intentional interception of oral communication.

Even though the State Attorney's Office declined to prosecute, White claims the complaint made in April 2018 by city finance director Tracy Hooper under the direction of City Manager **Jane Shang** continues to have a negative impact on her life. "This is going to follow me around for 40-plus years," White said in a phone interview Thursday. "I'm going to have to be the one who's embarrassed in having to tell everybody this story and prove that I didn't do anything wrong every time it comes up."

In the complaint filed against White with the Volusia County Sheriff's Office last year, White was accused of using her phone to secretly record a conversation with Hooper, which took place in the public lobby on the second floor of City Hall. The complaint states that "it appeared she placed the cellphone within her purse," but White, who doesn't carry a purse, said she thinks the camera switching from front to rear facing is why it seemed that way. White, who was in the process of adopting a child when the felony complaint was filed, was told by the adoption agency that it could delay or impact the adoption. While the adoption ultimately went through, White worries about her record having a negative effect if she wants to adopt again in the future. White has not filed a lawsuit or retained an attorney.

On Wednesday afternoon White went to City Hall, 2345 Providence Blvd., to serve Hooper, **Shang** and city attorney Marsha Segal-George. White said none of the three women would meet with her, so she waited in the parking lot until they left work for the day. Eventually, White said she saw a deputy escorting Segal-George to her vehicle, and while the attorney said she didn't want the notice, White managed to slip it into Segal-George's vehicle as the attorney was getting in to leave.

When another deputy arrived and later escorted **Shang** to her vehicle, White said **Shang** refused to acknowledge her, so, again, White slipped the notice into the vehicle as the city manager got into her car, which was captured in a Facebook Live video. Before **Shang** left, she reopened and closed her car door, leaving White's notice behind on the ground. In a phone interview Thursday, **Shang** said she didn't know what White wanted when she came to City Hall on Wednesday. She added that White threw something in her car, which made her uncomfortable. "It could be laced with something, who knows?" **Shang** said. **Shang** said White may mail in the notice of claim, which the city manager said she would forward to the city attorney. **Shang** said if White's issue

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*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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is with her, she should contact the City Commission. "If she feels she's been injured, she has every right to file a complaint," **Shang** said. In an unrelated matter, a voter fraud complaint filed against **Shang** in December is under review in the State Attorney's Office, said Spencer Hathaway, a spokesman for the State Attorney. The office received investigative information from the Florida Department of Law Enforcement during the last week in February.

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**Jane K. Shang**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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West Volusia Beacon, The (DeLand, FL)  
April 1, 2019

**Volusia County’s biggest city changes its name**

Author: *AL CURLY; VERY SPECIAL TO THE BEACON*

Deltona has a new identity. By mayoral edict, the name Deltona will be changed to Shangri-la. The bombshell pronouncement came at a news conference in City Hall. “We want to honor our city manager and to get rid of all the baggage that the name Deltona has come to mean over the years. I have just signed an executive order making the name change official,” Mayor Heidi Herzberg announced, adding, “We needed to get rid of the negative and capitalize on the good. Shangri-la does just that.

“Shangri-la is a peaceful place, where people get along with one another, and there is no fighting and quarreling about such petty things as rising taxes, outrageous fees for public-information requests, soaring water rates and run-down neighborhoods. “Just the name Shangri-la gives the city a new start. People and businesses will be scrambling to get here to claim their own piece of paradise.”

City Manager **Jane Shang** voiced no objection. “This is a good thing for Deltona — I mean Shangri-la. Shangri-la is where good things happen. It is a place on the move,” the manager said. The name change is something Herzberg promised in her campaign for mayor, but at no time while seeking votes did she mention the name “Shangri-la.”

“It came to me last night,” she explained. The promise of an absence of ill will in Shangri-la was tested quickly, as a celebratory procession of torches and brightly colored paper lanterns burning in the City Hall courtyard raised objections from the Fire Department. “Do you want to start wildfires and get people hurt?” Fire Marshal Nathan Nabob demanded. “Put out those torches, and don’t let them near those paper lanterns!”

Mayor Herzberg quickly calmed the situation. “You need an attitude adjustment,” she told the fire marshal. “You need to sit down quietly, clear your mind, and drink your green tea. You will feel better.” “I don’t like green tea!” Nabob countered.

“If you persist in your negative ways, you may be kicked out of Shangri-la. We want only happy and loving people here, and you are setting a bad example,” Herzberg said. “Oh, and you are supposed to drink the green tea, not smoke it. Do you understand?” “What was the question?” Nabob asked. “Go sit down,” Herzberg ordered.

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**Jane K. Shang**  
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Tribune Content Agency News Service (USA)  
January 24, 2019

**Deltona commission votes not to fire Shang amid investigation**

Author: *Katie Kustura, The News-Journal, Daytona Beach, Fla. Tribune Content Agency*

Jan. 24--DELTONA -- The City Commission voted 5-2 on Tuesday night against terminating City Manager **Jane Shang** as the Florida Department of Law Enforcement investigates a voter fraud complaint against her. Commissioner Anita Bradford made the motion to fire **Shang**, and it was seconded by Commissioner Loren King. Both commissioners voted in favor of firing **Shang**, but the rest of the commission voted against the motion. "Sometimes we have to make decisions that are not based on friendship, but on our guidelines," said Bradford, who in December made a similar motion to suspend **Shang** after an anonymous complaint that **Shang** had registered City Hall as her home address on her Volusia County voter registration was filed with the state. The motion to suspend also failed 5-2.

Commissioner Robert McFall said he couldn't support Tuesday's motion to fire **Shang** because charges haven't been filed against her. "We're not judges and juries," McFall said. The FDLE opened an investigation on Jan. 15 into whether **Shang** violated state law when she listed her home address as City Hall on her voter registration information. That investigation came at the request of 7th Judicial Circuit State Attorney R.J. Larizza one day after he received a letter from the Florida Department of State, which indicated an anonymous citizen complaint against **Shang** "appears to have merit."

"Division of Elections staff confirmed that Ms. **Shang** was previously registered at City Hall from 2015 to December 10, 2018, when she changed her address to a different, confidential and exempt address," Department of State Deputy General Counsel Ashley Davis wrote to Larizza. "Ms. **Shang** voted in the primary and general elections in the 2016 and 2018 cycles using the City Hall address." The Florida Division of Elections received the complaint Dec. 5. **Shang** listed her residence as 2345 Providence Blvd., where City Hall is located, when she became city manager in 2015. After an inquiry from The News-Journal on Dec. 10, **Shang** called Volusia County Supervisor of Elections Lisa Lewis and changed her address.

At a meeting in December, **Shang** acknowledged using City Hall as her residence address on her voter registration, but said the mistake was not willful. False voter registration and willfully voting when not qualified to do so would violate two state statutes. Violation of each statute is a third-degree felony, punishable by up to five years in prison, five years probation and a \$5,000 fine. Before she made the motion to fire **Shang**, Bradford referred to former commissioners who had been critical of **Shang**. She recalled how those commissioners said they had a hard time getting information and public records, something Bradford had a hard time believing because that hadn't been her experience. "Guess who has a problem getting information now?" Bradford said as she held up a bill she received for a public records request.

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Several citizens weighed in at the sometimes-raucous meeting. Resident Brandy White said the public isn't asking the commission to determine a criminal charge against **Shang**. "You are asking yourself a question of ethics, not of criminal law," White said. "She fits the definition of misconduct in a multitude of ways." White also listed a few managers of other Florida cities, including former Edgewater city manager Tracey Barlow, who were terminated for less than the allegation **Shang** is facing.

In contrast, resident Doug Macdonald said while he certainly doesn't agree with everything **Shang** has done during her tenure, he does think she's the best city manager Deltona's had as far as what she's accomplished for the city. Resident Mike Williams, who brought a large shovel with him to the speaker's podium, said he doesn't know what Bradford's endgame is in talking about firing **Shang**. "At some point in time, you just have to let something go," Williams said. "I brought this shovel so we can dig a hole and bury this because there are bigger things on the horizon for the city of Deltona."

Resident Kathy Bryan disagreed. "We do not bury something that is wrong," Bryan said. "We have to have accountability." During Tuesday night's meeting, which lasted about five hours, the city also voted on a developer's request to change the zoning of 113.4 acres north of Spirit Elementary from RA-11 to a residential planned unit development, which will allow for 259 homes. The request was approved 6-1 with King dissenting. Bradford said Wednesday that she was questioning her vote due to discussion during the meeting about the developer being able to build before the final plat is approved, which staff said isn't typical practice.



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Hometown News: Deland-Lake Helen, Deleon Springs, Pierson (FL)  
November 9, 2018

**Happy Birthday!**

Narciso Rosa celebrated his 100th birthday on Saturday, Oct. 27. Mr. Rosa is active at the Council on Aging's Deltona Senior Center where he enjoys dominoes, socializing and lunch with friends. He was born in San Pedro de Macoris, Dominican Republic, and moved to the U.S. 40 years ago. Friends at the center threw a party to celebrate his birthday on Friday, Oct. 26. Deltona City Manager **Jane Shang**, left, dropped by to wish him a happy birthday. Friends and family, including six children and 12 grandchildren, flew in from all over the world to celebrate.

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Daytona Beach News-Journal, The (FL)  
August 31, 2018

**Complaint: Former IT director sues Deltona**

Author: *Katie Kustura*

Deltona is being sued by its former IT director on the accusation it violated Florida's Public Sector Whistleblower's Act, records show. Steve Narvaez, who worked as the IT director for nearly 10 years, is seeking a jury trial and damages in excess of \$15,000, according to the complaint filed Tuesday.

Narvaez was fired on March 1 after making a complaint to City Manager **Jane Shang** about how she'd classified concerns he'd expressed regarding the city putting on "Super Bowl Party" as having violated his duties, according to the complaint. In an email Narvaez sent to **Shang** eight days before she fired him, Narvaez noted his objections to Deltona's proposing a "Super Bowl Party without securing the proper intellectual property rights," the lawsuit states. "In past years, the NFL has been very aggressive in protecting its federal trademark and going after third-party use of the term and even other words or phrases associated with the term 'Super Bowl,'" according to the complaint. Narvaez said the activity cited in his most recent performance review, which accused him of violating his duties as a professional and team player because he "only brought up reasons not to have the party instead of helping find solutions," was protected by the Whistleblower's Act.

**Shang** said, in the termination letter, the claim that she'd directed him to do something illegal or had broken the law herself "was not only baseless, but incendiary and served no other purpose than to create discord." The lawsuit also states that **Shang** on Feb. 9 called James Hicks, the IT director for Port Orange, and asked how to determine what files and documents Narvaez had access to because she believed Narvaez had leaked the resignation letter of the city's former events manager at The Center. **Shang** also told Hicks, according to the lawsuit, that she was thinking of stripping Narvaez of access and permissions he held as Deltona's IT director, but Hicks said Narvaez couldn't otherwise effectively do his job. Four or five months later, **Shang**, after learning that Hicks agreed to speak with Narvaez's attorney about the Feb. 9 call, contacted Hicks' employer "and demanded that he be punished," the lawsuit states.

Christine Martindale, spokeswoman for Port Orange, said via email that disciplinary action wasn't taken on Hicks "regarding this situation." Lee Lopez, spokesman for Deltona, deferred comment Thursday afternoon to Cindy Townsend, an attorney with Bell and Roper, P.A., the firm representing the city in this case. Townsend couldn't immediately be reached by phone Thursday afternoon.

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Daytona Beach News-Journal, The (FL)  
August 14, 2018

**DELTONA — Residents and the City Commission have seen since**  
Author: *Katie Kustura*

DELTONA — Residents and the City Commission have seen since the beginning of the year some starkly different pictures painted by employees, former and current, on what it's like to work for the city. During a recent commission meeting, City Manager **Jane Shang** introduced the new assistant city manager, Marc-Antonie Cooper, who said he was ecstatic to start and looking forward to working with **Shang**, the commission and residents.

But in the parking lot before that Aug. 6 meeting, a fired former city IT director, Steve Narvaez, addressed a crowd rallying for **Shang's** firing: "If you don't agree with her, you're useless to her. That's not the way to treat people. That's not the way to treat employees. That's not the way to run a city. It's a shame." At least six department directors and managers have departed since the start of the year, and replacements hired by **Shang** are arriving. The City Hall turnover is another wrinkle in what has been a rancorous year in Deltona, Volusia County's most populated city.

The night residents called for her firing, **Shang** also sat next to Commissioner Anita Bradford, who announced she was seeking law-enforcement review of **Shang's** handling of conflicts with two residents. But none of the other commissioners seconded Bradford's motion to suspend **Shang** pending the results of the investigation. Praise for new hires

Ryan Reckley has been named the new parks and recreation director; Lucinda Gaudio, the new events manager at The Center; and Chris Hallett, facilities manager at The Center. Mike Williams, president of the West Volusia branch of the NAACP, said he was delighted with the new hires as he's wanted to see more diversity in Deltona for some time. But the new hires fill vacancies left by the six, which has some residents questioning **Shang's** leadership style.

Those who've left include:

- Chris Bowley, former director of Planning and Development Services;
- Matt Doan, former director of Public Works and Deltona Water;
- Steve Moore, former director of Parks and Recreation;
- Steve Narvaez, former IT director;
- Chris O'Donnell, former events manager for The Center;
- and Inez Nazario-Vega, former facilities manager at The Center.

Moore, and Bowley said they took employment closer to their respective homes to be able to spend more time with their families. Doan did not respond to requests for comment, but city officials say he, too, left for another job. O'Donnell, Narvaez and Nazario-Vega left unhappy. "I am extremely concerned about that," Bradford said. "You always have to look into the reasons for it." The Planning and Development Services department is still in need of a director following Bowley's departure, and, since Doan's departure, former City Manager Dave Denny

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*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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filled in as acting director of Deltona Water and the Public Works department. Dale Baker, who's been serving as the deputy city manager and the director of Building and Enforcement Services, said he plans to retire at the end of the year or January 2019. Commissioner Chris Nabicht said turnover is not unusual in any city government. "People come and go, and we're in a situation right now with the age of our city where we're having a lot of our senior employees retire," Nabicht said.

**Shang** said the city was fortunate to hire Cooper, whose "executive-level experience with major population centers will help drive large-scale, business critical projects to successful completion in Deltona." Reckley, she said, will focus on beautifying the city and seeking "additional recreational activities to implement within our parks and facilities, which will hopefully provide a therapeutic environment for the residents." 'Worst career experience'

Following the departure of Bowley and Doan, **Shang** said via email that both men had contributed greatly to making Deltona a better community and would be missed. "It's not unusual for good managers to be offered new opportunities, especially during a robust economy as we're experiencing," **Shang** said. "Both the commission and I know that Matt and Chris will be successful in this next step in their careers."

But during public comment in the Aug. 6 commission meeting, residents and commissioners heard from Inez Nazario-Vega, the former facilities manager at The Center, who quit after a few months. "I was excited about the prospect of making a difference in the place I love and I call home," Nazario-Vega said. Instead, Nazario-Vega, whose last day was March 30, said her employment by Deltona was "the worst career experience." "It didn't take long to notice that the micro-management style of Ms. **Shang** was going to be in conflict with my job performance," Nazario-Vega said. She said after making a generalized comment about micro-managing on her personal Facebook page in February, she was reprimanded and accused of making disparaging remarks about other staffers, which Nazario-Vega denies. "As a leader, I expected her to engage in a healthy conversation and look for ways to build a viable working relationship for the benefit of The Center," Nazario-Vega said. "Ask yourselves: Why is the city experiencing such a high rate of employee turnover?"

Narvaez's firing. The departure of Narvaez, the IT director for nearly 10 years, earlier this year followed at least a couple of instances where he got into disputes with the city's top brass. According to his last performance review, listed as an example of behavior issues: "When asked to assist in getting the Center ready to have a "Super Bowl Party" it appeared you only brought up reasons not to have the party instead of helping find solutions. Be positive and assist." In a phone interview, Narvaez said he tried to explain how "Super Bowl" was intellectual property and they couldn't just put it on whatever advertising they wanted. "You have classified my concerns as violating my duties as a professional and team player," Narvaez said in an email to **Shang** on Feb. 23. "I consider this protected activity pursuant to Florida's Whistle-blower's Act."

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In the termination letter, **Shang** said the accusation that she had directed him to do something illegal or that she'd broken the law "was not only baseless, but incendiary and served no other purpose than to create discord." "You and others were tasked to 'look into' what it would take to make viewing events happen," the letter states. "Your task was to gather facts, including any costs associated with various broadcasting and movie events." In 2016, Narvaez accused former City Attorney Becky Vose of "theft of city property," when she removed the hard drive from her computer to protect attorney-client privilege, rather than allow IT staff access to the information as they were upgrading her to a new computer. **Shang** weighed in on the dispute, calling Narvaez's words "grossly inappropriate."

Eventually, Vose agreed to allow the information stored on the hard drive to be transferred to the new computer and have the old hard drive destroyed in front of her.

**Shang's 'regret'** After Commissioner Bradford announced her request that the Florida Department of Law Enforcement review **Shang's** actions in the possible misuse of law enforcement and code enforcement in recent matters involving residents and persistent critics Patricia Gibson and Brandy White, a parade of public speakers called for the three-year city manager's firing.

**Shang** followed up with a statement Thursday, attempting to correct some of the comments from that meeting, including public opinions that the city is attempting to force residents to hook up to sewer lines at great expense. **Shang** called this a "falsehood" and argued Deltona is making strides with economic development. "There is substantial good news about Deltona that is not afforded the attention it deserves. That includes the city making significant advances with economic development such as Burger King, Dunkin Donuts, Hardee's, healthcare facilities, O'Reilly Auto (Parts), StorQuest, Veterans Affairs clinic, Wawa and so on," she wrote. The city manager also pledged to work with residents.

"I regret and apologize for the implication that I do not wish to work with the public," **Shang** wrote. "I am committed to finding a way to bridge our differences. I hope that we can agree that all citizens, including public employees, have basic rights that should be protected and respected." Bradford said when she met with a FDLE agent, she shared concerns about retaliation and the possible misuse of law enforcement and code enforcement and if public records requests are being properly filled. FDLE confirmed last week that a complaint regarding Deltona is being reviewed. "I think it's important that we have an outside agency look into this," Bradford said Friday.

**Shang** didn't address Bradford's request for a review in her statement, but she did reference former commissioner Brian Soukup's prior ethics complaint, which was dismissed by the Florida Commission on Ethics. Bradford said the sooner a third party addresses concerns, the sooner Deltona should be able to get back to providing services and advancing commissioners' and residents' goals.

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Daytona Beach News-Journal, The (FL)  
August 14, 2018

**Deltona city manager gets mostly positive ratings from commissioners**

Author: *Katie Kustura*

While multiple Deltona residents have complained about the city manager at recent meetings, members of the City Commission had mostly positive things in evaluations of the job **Jane Shang** is doing. On a scale from 1 to 5 — ranging from poor to excellent — **Shang**'s mean score was just over 3.5, between average and above average. The assessments were completed in early July. Her highest score, a 5, came from Commissioner Mitch Honaker, who opted for an in-person interview with **Shang** instead of writing comments on a general assessment of the city manager's performance and what concerns or constructive suggestions he may have.

In a phone interview Monday, Honaker said he had nothing but positive things to say about the job **Shang** has been doing and that she should “stay the course.” “Everything that was discussed in the strategic plan, she's followed,” Honaker said. He also said **Shang** is to thank when it comes to development in the city, including The Center and Halifax Hospital.

The lowest score, a 2, came from Commissioner Anita Bradford, who has shared during recent commission meetings her concerns about some of **Shang**'s actions. Bradford wrote it seems **Shang** “has her own agenda” and: “I do not feel she is approachable because she will do everything to make it harder for me to get items approved.”

Bradford also wrote about low morale and how many staff members have said micromanaging is an issue. “Staff is walking on pins and needles, and this is not how we move Deltona forward,” Bradford wrote. “A great staff attitude can move mountains.” She also suggested staff- and leadership-building exercises.

Mayor John Masiarczyk, Vice Mayor Heidi Herzberg and Commissioner Robert McFall each gave **Shang** 4s, and Commissioner Victor Ramos gave her a 3. Herzberg wrote that **Shang** “has consistently adhered to the city's strategic plan” and is “readily available seven days a week for questions and issues regarding city issues.”

She wrote that, with the hiring of an assistant city manager, she hopes **Shang** “can concentrate on team building and succession planning within all departments to ensure stability within the city.” Commissioner Chris Nabicht said he didn't fill out an evaluation of **Shang** this year, but said he's got a favorable opinion of the job she's done.

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Tribune Content Agency News Service (USA)  
July 13, 2018

**Deltona trespasses resident whose video led to state violation**

Author: *Katie Kustura, The News-Journal, Daytona Beach, Fla. Tribune Content Agency*

July 13--DELTONA -- Resident Patricia Gibson says the city and the Volusia County Sheriff's Office violated her constitutional rights by trespassing her from a city-owned building -- an action that came only after she had reported her concerns about The Center's licensing. Gibson and other residents contend city officials wanted her trespassed from The Center, Deltona's new events venue, because she openly recorded her interactions with city staff, volunteers and others working the Mother's Day brunch on May 13 during which she asked City Manager **Jane Shang** and others, with her phone in record mode, for proof that The Center and the catering company preparing the food had all of the required licensing.

Gibson, who said she was never shown the proof of the licenses, later shared her concerns with the Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation which conducted a May 18 inspection resulting in four violations, one of which was identified as high-priority. Then on May 24, Gibson was visited by a Volusia County sheriff's deputy, who verbally informed her of a trespass warning from the city stating she could no longer visit The Center. Gibson questioned its legitimacy because Deltona doesn't have an ordinance on trespassing and lacks the means for due process in its municipal code.

Sheriff Mike Chitwood and a legal scholar say the trespass shouldn't have been handled the way it was. As to the reason Gibson's trespass came 11 days after the incident, city spokesman Lee Lopez explained: "Time taken to confirm appropriateness of trespass warning." Gibson and others aren't buying that. "I'm not backing down from anybody," Gibson said. "**(Shang)** needs to go." Two of the three candidates for Deltona mayor have expressed concerns that the city overstepped its bounds by trespassing a resident who questioned officials in a public venue.

Finally, after weeks of back-and-forth between city officials, the county's legal advisors and law enforcement, Deltona City Attorney Skip Fowler said Thursday that **Shang** has withdrawn the warning. "She's decided that it's not worth the time and effort," Fowler said. **Shang** followed with an email to The News-Journal late Thursday afternoon: "As trespass enforcement has been suspended pending the development of a review process, I have decided to withdraw the trespass warning. Ms. Gibson may visit The Center. Both the Sheriff's Office, staff and Ms. Gibson have been notified."

Confronting city officials. With her cellphone in hand, Gibson went to the The Center on May 13 and paid \$18 to attend the brunch. In a video she made, Gibson -- a 49-year-old plumber -- approaches **Shang** and asks where the licenses from the Department of Business and Professional Regulation are posted. "Thank you for the info, we'll look into it. Perhaps you don't mind," **Shang** says as she motions for Gibson to move away. "We will produce it later, but not now. Thank you." Gibson approaches the caterer, asking if the proof of licensing is available and

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also speaks with state Rep. David Santiago, R-Deltona, who was volunteering at the event, and Vice Mayor Heidi Herzberg, a candidate for mayor. Gibson tells Herzberg that she's "not trying to harass her," but asked for some records. "You're not harassing me," Herzberg said before reminding Gibson that records requests need to go through the city clerk.

After a couple of encounters with brunch staffers, Gibson leaves The Center dissatisfied. On the way out, she tells **Shang** she's leaving and that she never was shown the licenses. "If you get a chance, let's see if we can get this together," Gibson tells **Shang**. **Shang** called Sheriff's Office Capt. Paul Kammerer regarding Gibson and a deputy responded, arriving at 11:44 a.m. that day, according to sheriff's records. "She was taping people, which is fine because it's a public facility, but where she crossed the line was she was actually going up to people at their tables and putting her camera in their face while they were eating and asking them questions about The Center," **Shang** told Deputy Corey Charles.

Gibson said in an interview that she didn't bother any patrons and didn't go to The Center to do so. While Gibson posted an edited video on YouTube, she granted The News-Journal's request to view her full footage. While patrons are visible in her video as she walks around, she doesn't approach or speak to them.

11 days later, trespassed. Gibson shared her concerns about The Center's licensing with the state, which conducted an inspection five days after the Mother's Day brunch, finding four violations, one of which was identified as high-priority, records show. The violations, records show, include: establishment operating without a license from the Division of Hotels and Restaurants, no chlorine chemical test kit provided when using chlorine sanitizer at three-compartment sink/warewashing machine, no probe thermometer provided to measure temperature of food products and no handwashing sign provided at hand sink used by food employees. A follow-up inspection on June 18 found that licensing was satisfactory, according to the Department of Business and Professional Regulation.

It's unclear precisely when **Shang** made the request to the Sheriff's Office to have Gibson trespassed, but an email she sent to Kammerer on May 29 indicates it had been the week prior. **Shang** was emailed questions but did not respond directly. Lopez, the city spokesman, who also was emailed the questions, responded. "Confirming our conversation last week, trespass Pat Gibson from The Center," **Shang** said in the email to Kammerer, who replied that Gibson had been verbally trespassed on May 24 when a deputy visited her home.

Gibson said she views the trespass as retaliation for the inspection that resulted in violations. City officials did not respond Thursday when asked whether they issued the trespass as retaliation. Lacking due process.

Gibson -- citing a 2011 case, *Catron v. city of St. Petersburg* -- questioned the lawfulness of **Shang's** request as Deltona doesn't have an ordinance on trespassing and lacks the means for due process in its municipal code. "With a speeding ticket, it shows you how to fight it," Gibson said.



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Darryl Wilson, an associate dean at Stetson University's College of Law, also had concerns. "There's a state law on trespass and if the Sheriff's Office came to visit her, they would be trying to enforce the criminal aspect of trespass, but in order to be convicted of trespass criminally you have to have willfully gone onto the property of some other without authorization," Wilson said. "If she went to an event where she paid an entry fee, then there can't be any trespass there." If the city wants to go forward with the violation, they'll "have to prove that she willfully and intentionally went into the place without authorization or refused to leave the place after being instructed or told it was time to do so. Without that, I don't see how they believe they can make a case out of this," Wilson said. "Something that's city property that's open to the public for a particular purpose can't be subject of a trespass if the person's going there for that particular purpose during the hours that the city has designated."

Fowler, the city attorney, said most cities don't have their own ordinance on trespassing because of the existing state law and because "it's really rare that cities trespass somebody." He said he'll be reviewing an ordinance Sarasota has on trespassing, but putting something in Deltona's code isn't currently at the top of the city's priority list. Chitwood, the sheriff, said the trespass was made after both Deltona's city attorney and the county's attorney said to go through with it. "We're the mechanism," Chitwood said. "The due process falls back on Deltona." Upon learning Deltona's lack a trespassing ordinance, the sheriff said his deputies won't be carrying out more requests like **Shang's**. "Until they fix their ordinance, we really can't trespass anybody," Chitwood said.

Mayoral candidates react. The brunch video is one in a string of controversies in Deltona heading into the Aug. 28 primary, when the mayor's position is up for grabs, as John Masiarczyk has reached the limit of his term. Candidate Santiago Avila Jr. said he's embarrassed because he said the trespassing of Gibson shows city government can't handle criticism. "She was in her legal right to ask questions," Avila said of Gibson. "She didn't do anything illegal." Another candidate, Troy Shimkus, expressed worry that city government was trying to use the Sheriff's Office as its personal, private force. "If nobody came to (Gibson) and said, 'Please stop doing this,' then I don't think they have a leg to stand on," Shimkus said.

Herzberg -- a third candidate who's been more publicly supportive of **Shang** -- said she had no problem with Gibson filming her but that she hasn't really gotten involved with the trespass issue beyond that. Gibson said she's considering pursuing ethics complaints against some of the officials involved. "I've done nothing wrong," Gibson said. "I just want these people to follow the law the way we have to."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Jane K. Shang**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Tribune Content Agency News Service (USA)  
April 18, 2018

**Deltona residents seeking state audit of water department**

Author: *Katie Kustura, The News-Journal, Daytona Beach, Fla. Tribune Content Agency*

April 18--Still feeling like their water-related concerns are going in one ear and out the other, a group of Deltona residents are turning to Tallahassee for help. A couple dozen residents showed up at City Hall one day last week to notify the city of their intent to seek a state audit of Deltona Water. Dana McCool, one of the residents leading the charge, said she's seen what state audits can do. "We know what we're asking for," McCool said. Deltona and its water department have been the subject of scrutiny by multiple residents who say they've received high water bills without explanation. "All of the time, more people are speaking," McCool said. "We're building our case." As part of the process to get a state audit, McCool said residents are working on a petition for which they need at least 15,000 signatures.

City Manager **Jane Shang** and Matt Doan, director of public works and utilities, didn't directly respond Monday to a request for comment. After receiving **Shang's** approval, city spokesman Lee Lopez on Tuesday issued a statement: "The City of Deltona undergoes an independent audit each year which includes all city departments as well as Deltona Water. Annual audits are required to comply with state law, accounting standards and grant regulations."

On the audit for fiscal year 2016-2017, conducted by Purvis, Gray and Company, LLP, the city "received an unmodified, or "clean," opinion on its financial statements," according to the statement. "Additionally, a report on compliance required by the "Rules of the Auditor General" reported no material weaknesses over internal control or noncompliance." Deltona uses a rate consultant to "model and review the Deltona Water rates annually," per the statement. "The analysis is consistent with national and local methodologies and meets the reasonableness standard required by Florida Statutes. Rates include a tiered conservation structure required by the (St. Johns River Water Management District), which was necessary to obtain a consumptive use permit."

During a public forum on water last month, about 70 residents showed up. They were told how to make payments, read their meters and check for leaks. There also were Deltona Water staffers on hand with computers to review statements with concerned customers. Doan said during the forum that residents should reach out, because if the water department doesn't know about the problem it can't act. Whether it was at the forum or via social media, multiple residents have said they've seen spikes in their bills, which they say are unexplained, that return to a more typical number in the next billing cycle.

McCool said she hopes an audit would open the door for civil suits. "People have to have some recourse," McCool said. She said her issue has been that Deltona officials don't seem interested in validating the concerns of residents or listening to them with an open mind. Last month, McCool and Troy Shimkus, who has since filed to run for mayor, began working on a survey to

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Jane K. Shang**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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collect data on residents' experience with Deltona Water. Shimkus, who works with data in his daily job, said accumulating such information could help them figure out if there is a problem and what it is. "It's very difficult to figure out where the complexities or problems might be lying, so I think the audit would have the ability to open things up more than the city has been willing to do so far," Shimkus said. "I think the citizens are really doing what they feel they have to based on a lack of substantial response from the city, but it's not too late for the city to say 'before we go down this road, let's try something else.'" The residents have posted more information about their effort at Deltonastrong.org.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Jane K. Shang**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Daytona Beach News-Journal, The (FL)  
February 6, 2018

**Ex-Deltona events manager cites 'hostility'**

Author: *Katie Kustura*

Citing endless hours, an undercutting assistant and conditions that made him once think “about driving off a bridge,” the resignation letter from the former events manager of Deltona’s recently opened community center paints a picture of exhaustion. Until Monday, city officials refused to make public Chris O’Donnell’s letter, claiming it was exempt from Florida public records laws because of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act.

In the letter to City Manager **Jane Shang**, dated Jan. 11, O’Donnell acknowledged that he and **Shang** “have not seen eye to eye all of the time” in the management of The Center, for which O’Donnell was sorry. “I, in no way wanted to ever cause you grief in making the decision to hire me,” O’Donnell, who finished work the week of the Jan. 29, wrote. He said he realized after a phone conversation the previous day that he “was becoming an obstacle going forward.”

In the second week of January, O’Donnell estimated he’d work more than 80 hours. “I do not have the stamina to keep this pace up and I really do not want to put these kind of hours in when I am not appreciated,” O’Donnell wrote. “When a job starts making me ill and no longer is enjoyable, then it is very hard to continue to sell and be enthusiastic about what you are doing,” O’Donnell wrote, adding that he was worn down both physically and mentally.

He said it was obvious **Shang** liked his assistant, Inez Nazario-Vega, who also serves as president of the Volusia Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. O’Donnell claims Nazario-Vega would change decisions he’d made without telling him and didn’t want to work on weekends. He also said she would tell him of her dislike for working with him while they were setting up for an event. Nazario-Vega couldn’t immediately be reached Monday.

The relationships with **Shang** and Nazario-Vega weren’t the only factors, O’Donnell’s letter states. On June 12, in a City Commission discussion about The Center, former Deltona Commissioner Brian Soukup said he did not believe O’Donnell was the right person for the job, meeting minutes show. “I have worked through the most hostile conditions, from commissioners wanting me fired the first month I was here, and to all of the negative comments I have endured over the past 11 months,” O’Donnell wrote. He said what he thought was a “dream job” had become a “dream nightmare.”

The morning of Jan. 11 he decided “instead of driving off of a bridge, I was going to pick myself up and call what I have done a real accomplishment, and move on to something new.” O’Donnell ended the letter by saying he wouldn’t jeopardize his health and happiness for any job, and the job he’d left in Texas wanted him “to work insane hours and do it all alone.” “I make my decision now to leave because of even crazier hours, and a system I no longer have the energy to fight with.” Following Monday night’s City Commission meeting, **Shang** said O’Donnell’s letter

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speaks for itself. She also said the city has advertised the events manager position, and a city staffer will help in the interim. The Center, a 30,000-square-foot building at 1640 Dr. Martin Luther King Blvd., opened to the public for the first time Dec. 30. It's designed to host weddings, parties, meetings, community events and school dances, with a part of the space reserved for Volusia County's Council on Aging.

Mayor John Masiarczyk said O'Donnell had taken on a daunting task in his position with The Center. "I think he had a lot on his plate and a lot of stress on him, and he did an excellent job while he was there," Masiarczyk said. The city's attorney, Marsha Segal-George, wrote that O'Donnell did not want the information shared and because it concerned a "sensitive health issue," the letter was exempt under a public-record law protecting participation in an employee assistance program.

In a Friday email to **Shang**, Segal-George wrote: "Protection of his resignation letter by the city under (HIPAA) is limited to his employment with the city. Mr. O'Donnell no longer works for the city and that severs the (HIPAA) connection and the privacy rule is no longer effective. ... The document is now a public record." The city released the letter to News-Journal Editor Pat Rice on Monday.

O'Donnell said the city didn't ask his permission to release the resignation letter. "They just said they were going to release either Friday afternoon or Monday. It is what it is, and I can't discuss it," he said, adding that now the public will know why he left, though he doesn't think the reasons for his departure will come as a surprise.

"I think everybody understands the problems in Deltona, and that's all I can say," O'Donnell said.

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**Jane K. Shang**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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West Volusia Beacon, The (DeLand, FL)  
December 20, 2017

**State panel clears two Deltona city officials**

Author: *AL EVERSON al@beacononlinenews.com*

The Florida Commission on Ethics has ruled in favor of Deltona City Manager **Jane Shang** and former City Attorney Becky Vose, in a controversy more than a year old. The Ethics Commission Dec. 13 concluded there is “no probable cause to believe” **Shang** acted improperly by allowing Vose to remove a hard drive from a city-owned laptop computer. The panel also determined there was no attempt to “assist or cover up the city attorney’s use” of the laptop for her firm’s other private legal work.

Vose had said she took the hard drive out of the computer to protect confidential information, and the Ethics Commission concluded she had not “misused” the laptop for her personal or for her law firm’s benefit. Two city commissioners had complained in December 2016 about the removal of the hard drive from the city-issued computer.

**Shang** issued a written statement on her vindication. “I never doubted my decision making and the appropriate performance of my duties as City Manager, I continue to look forward to working with the Commission and to making Deltona a better place to live,” her official comment reads.

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**Jane K. Shang**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Daytona Beach News-Journal, The (FL)  
August 21, 2017

**Deltona commissioner resigns, citing 'unprofessional' manager**

Author: *Katie Kustura*

DELTONA — Brian Soukup resigned from the Deltona City Commission Monday, citing "principle" and concerns about the direction other leaders are forging. "The recent actions of this commission, as well as the continued unprofessional actions of City Manager **Jane Shang**, through the withholding and continuous misrepresentation and manipulating of critical information, have alienated me as an elected official and has essentially disenfranchised the people of my district," Soukup wrote in his letter. "These actions ... have essentially created an environment that steadfastly denies the free and full participation of at least some of the elected commissioners. Our citizens have been made to feel unwelcome and are often met with hostility and deliberate intimidation as they try to speak during public comment." Soukup, who represented District 5 since 2014, made his resignation effective immediately. He was not at Monday's commission meeting.

Commissioners have 30 days to appoint a replacement until the end of his term in November 2018. Several residents spoke in support of Soukup's decision during the public comments section of Monday's commission meeting, but at least one commissioner, Anita Bradford, questioned the wisdom of resigning. "You don't quit and turn your back and walk away," Bradford said. "If you really feel there's something going on, then you're going to stand up." Bradford said she doesn't always agree with **Shang**, who Soukup targets in his letter, but she doesn't hold a grudge because that impedes progress and that's not what she was elected to do. "You're a city commissioner. Figure out a way to make this work. That's what you're supposed to do," Bradford said. "We're not going to always get along with everybody."

**Shang's** response. Between an agenda review meeting and the start of the 6:30 p.m. commission meeting, **Shang** said she would not take questions, but instead said she would email a statement in response. It pointed to favorable financial and economic development conditions in Deltona, but did not address Soukup's specific complaints. **Shang** said: "The commission will not be the same without Commissioner Soukup. Commissioner Soukup's absence will be noticeable. I will continue to work with all commissioners to move Deltona forward as always." After Soukup's letter of resignation was read into the record during the commission meeting, as he requested, several residents stood and applauded.

Santiago Avila Jr., who's looking to be Deltona's next mayor when John Masiarczyk's term expires next year, brought a sign that read "#TeamSantiago Standing With Soukup." After the clerk finished taking attendance, Masiarczyk, saying he felt compelled to do so following Soukup's resignation, recited the "Serenity Prayer." During a meeting recess, Masiarczyk said he was shocked by Soukup's announcement. "It's just unfortunate it happened this way because Brian came in with a lot of enthusiasm and a lot of good ideas," Masiarczyk said. "Other things got in the way and he couldn't accomplish what he really felt, and I can

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understand how he felt, and I can wish him nothing but the best." Commissioner Heidi Herzberg said she was shocked and saddened by Soukup's announcement because while she may not agree with him all of the time, she still likes him as a person. "I don't think his heart is in it anymore. I think his heart is in the school and sports, and he's really good with that," Herzberg said. "Everyone has to do what's best for them." By newspaper deadline time Monday, the meeting was continuing.

Frustrations mount. Last October, Soukup wrote an opinion piece for The News-Journal complaining that he had learned only through public records requests and digging that 50 percent of Deltona employees were being paid above their grades, and that the staff subsequently received 3-percent, across-the-board raises. He has also raised concerns about a proposed civility ordinance that failed to pass and the staff's failure to disclose information faster about the extent of damage to the city's sewers in 2014 and 2015.

Soukup was one of two commissioners who voted in May to fire **Shang**, the city manager the last two years in Deltona. The effort failed when four commissioners voted to support **Shang**. Additional concerns he cited in his resignation letter included the inability of public officials to obtain public records "without significant cost," commissioners' decision to bar fellow commissioners from placing items for discussion on the agenda without majority approval and the commission's policy change to allow "only positive and short comments during commissioner comment time." By phone Monday, Soukup said the straw that broke the camel's back was when a moratorium on changing water rates was lifted in his absence.

Soukup said he'll continue to be an advocate for programs for children and bringing a vocational school to Deltona, but as long as **Shang** and certain other officials are still in office, Soukup said he has no plans to represent the city again. "What I'm hoping is that the city's residents get more involved," Soukup said. His resignation energized a group of residents who have often expressed skepticism of **Shang**, such as Avila, the 2018 mayoral candidate. Soukup was always willing to speak on behalf of his constituents and endured bullying by others on the dais, Avila said. "I ask and I implore the residents of District 5 to put in their applications to help replace Soukup," Avila said.

Resident Brandy White said issues including those Soukup cited in his resignation letter should be investigated by an outside agency. Longtime resident Linda White wrote on Facebook she was "blown away" by Soukup's resignation. "How much time and care he took to reach out to us. How vulnerable and open he was with us. That is no small thing," she wrote. "And perhaps the first time we have ever truly known that we were loved and cared for by an elected official."



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**Jane K. Shang**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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West Volusia Beacon, The (DeLand, FL)  
May 10, 2017

**Deltona civic center slowly becoming reality**  
**Deltona officials tout civic center for events big and small**

Author: *AL EVERSON al@beacononlinenews.com*

Building it with the expectation they will come — that is what Deltona is doing to bolster and solidify its intention to be an “in” place for business meetings, small conventions, entertainment, and celebrating life’s mileposts. “As a city government, we listened to the community. They wanted a community center,” said City Manager **Jane Shang**. “It’s happening.”

The Center at Deltona, now under construction at 1640 Dr. Martin Luther King Blvd., in Howland Crossings, will enclose about 30,000 square feet of space. That interior space of the \$10 million facility will be divided into a ballroom, meeting rooms, conference rooms, and a gathering place for senior citizens. The ballroom may be subdivided into smaller spaces. The Center at Deltona is supposed to open in December.

So what may be booked at The Center? A wide array of happenings, city officials say. “Sales meetings, school banquets, weddings, bridal showers, celebration of life lunches, dinner shows with live entertainment on Friday nights, Sunday brunches starting at once a month, conferences, proms, ceremonies, baby showers, seminars, graduations, receptions, quinceaneras and holiday parties,” according to a listing of suggested events suitable at The Center given to the City Commission. There will also be a kitchen ideal for catered events.

Use of The Center at Deltona will come at prices supporters say are affordable. Center Events Manager Chris O’Donnell said the facilities will be desirable and in demand. “There’s no competition in Deltona. You’ve got to spread out, and the closest is the Sanborn Center [in DeLand], or maybe the DeBary country clubs,” he added. O’Donnell projects \$970,000 in annual sales income or bookings at The Center at Deltona after it opens. No events have been booked in advance thus far.

The city borrowed to build The Center, and the debt service will be \$405,000 per year. The annual operating cost may be \$565,700, Deltona Public Information Director Lee Lopez said. The Center at Deltona will bring, in addition to O’Donnell, about a dozen new jobs to Deltona, including two receptionists, four setup personnel, at least four bartenders, and an assistant manager. O’Donnell said The Center’s staff will be hired during the fall.

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*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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West Volusia Beacon, The (DeLand, FL)  
May 4, 2017

**Attempt to fire Deltona manager fails**

Author: *AL EVERSON al@beacononlinenews.com*

Deltona City Manager **Jane Shang** survived an effort to oust her. Two city commissioners' pent-up frustrations — especially regarding the hiring of Chris O'Donnell as events manager for the city's new community center and the proposal to acquire a liquor license for the center — were not enough to force **Shang** from the job she has held almost two years. "I move to terminate **Jane Shang** as city manager immediately," Commissioner Christopher Alcantara said May 1, as the City Commission meeting neared adjournment. The City Commission subsequently voted 4-2 to retain **Shang**.

Alcantara's motion got a quick second from Commissioner Brian Soukup, who has been critical of **Shang's** administration for months. Soukup voiced a litany of complaints about The Center at Deltona and **Shang's** oversight of the project before Alcantara spoke. "Now, this is a business venture," Soukup said. "We have no business plan for this." Saying he opposes the city government's obtaining a liquor license for alcohol sales at the community center, Soukup said the decision to serve alcohol came about without **Shang** asking the City Commission's blessing. "Did she go rogue?" he continued. Soukup said he doubts an estimate that \$470,000 a year can be made from selling alcohol at The Center.

Further, if alcoholic beverages are sold there, the city will be competing with a private business nearby. "The city is going to take a liquor license," Soukup said. "There is a bar 500 feet away." Soukup also noted The Center lacks the requisite commercial zoning for selling alcoholic beverages. He ended his discourse with a call to terminate O'Donnell and halt construction of The Center "immediately," pending a request by Deltona for an ECHO grant from Volusia County to cover part of the \$10 million building cost. The Center is supposed to be completed and ready to open before the end of this year. ECHO is a voter-approved property tax to fund projects that have environmental, cultural, historic or outdoor-recreational purposes. Alcantara spoke in a similar vein. "I don't think the government should be selling liquor," he said. "I don't want us to sell alcohol."

Alcantara alleged **Shang** had failed to follow up on a business-recruitment lead he had passed along to her, saying the company had established itself in Orange City, instead. As well as attacking **Shang** for "failing to do a feasibility study" of The Center, and charging her with "poor decision-making," Alcantara also alleged **Shang** had once referred to a Deltona woman as "Hispanic trash." **Shang** was mostly silent as her critics spoke. Asked after the meeting for her reaction to the vote to oust her, **Shang** gave a terse reply: "The commission spoke," she told The Beacon, before turning away.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Jane K. Shang**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Mayor John Masiarczyk, Vice Mayor Chris Nabicht, and Commissioners Heidi Herzberg and Mitch Honaker formed the majority opposing **Shang's** dismissal. Alcantara and Soukup voted for the motion. Commissioner Anita Bradford was absent because of a death in her family. Masiarczyk later said he, too, opposes the city's acquisition of a liquor license for The Center because of the liability the city would incur. Rather, if alcohol is to be offered at the facility, the commission may be better served by contracting with a hospitality provider, the mayor said.

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*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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ABNewswire (USA)  
March 18, 2017

**DELTONA CITY MANAGER JANE SHANG RECEIVES CITIZEN OF THE YEAR HONOR**

DELTONA, FL - 18 Mar, 2017 - Deltona City Manager **Jane Shang** was recognized for her work with the City by the Deltona Dreamkeepers during the 2017 Dr. Martin Luther King Weekend. Ms. **Shang** received the Citizen of the Year Award, at the January 14 the Annual Breakfast Celebration, for her outstanding work and contributions to the community in 2016.

Additionally, the Volusia League of Cities selected Ms. **Jane Shang** to receive the group's 2016 City Manager of the Year Award. The League of Cities determines the recipient based upon outstanding leadership that makes their city and Volusia County a better place to live.

Ms. **Shang** was hired as the City Manager in June 2015, and launched the City's beautification campaign, encouraging residents to improve their property by landscaping and following the City's trash ordinances.

Additionally, Ms. **Shang** has been instrumental in the progress of the City's new Community Center, with the ground-breaking scheduled for January 26 th, and a planned ribbon-cutting in December 2017.

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**Jane K. Shang**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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West Volusia Beacon, The (DeLand, FL)  
January 4, 2017

**Deltona drowning in public-records requests**

Author: *AL EVERSON al@beacononlinenews.com*

Public-records requests are mushrooming in Deltona, and officials are straining under the load, according to City Manager **Jane Shang**.

Henceforth, city officials requesting public information will have to pay for it, and so will anyone else whose requests exceed 15 minutes of staff time. State law permits local governments to charge an hourly rate for public-records requests equal to the hourly wage of an employee of the lowest pay grade working in the agency handling the request.

**Shang** told the City Commission Dec. 29 that the city administration spent between 150 and 200 hours in September responding to requests for public information, but that the December volume had reached 2,030 hours. The spike in demands for public records is causing staffers to work overtime.

The City Commission decided to begin charging those asking for public records, if the demands may be honored only by extensive research and review of the documents in question. Many of the recent public-records requests came from newly elected City Commissioner Christopher Alcantara, who has been delving into city contracts with private businesses.

Alcantara had made one request that, **Shang** said, would have cost more than \$19,000 to fulfill, but he later withdrew his request because of that expense. Alcantara made other requests, for which, he said, he was told there would be no charge because of his status as an elected official.

The City Commission had convened in special session Dec. 29 to discuss operating procedures for its members. Commissioners spent more than four hours airing their grievances and personality conflicts. "It was good to get all of this out. Now we know what each other is thinking," Mayor John Masiarczyk said, when asked what the meeting had accomplished.

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**Jane K. Shang**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Daytona Beach News-Journal, The (FL)  
December 11, 2016

**Deltona city attorney's hard drive at center of controversy**

Author: *Austin Fuller*

DELTONA - In a city hall rife with tension, Deltona's most recent controversy involves the removal of a computer hard drive. City Attorney Becky Vose's decision to temporarily remove the hard drive - in order to protect confidential attorney-client information, she said - has set off a flurry of emails and objections among a regular cast of commissioners who have clashed with Vose and City Manager **Jane Shang**. An outside legal opinion that Vose "acted most appropriately" only added to the latest discord.

Commissioner Brian Soukup has taken umbrage in recent months with **Shang** over a payout of unusual sick and vacation time to a promoted firefighter and the handling of an issue with the city's sewer system. He has also called for Vose's resignation over a proposed civility ordinance that could have limited public officials' criticisms. Soukup is one of at least two city commissioners who are calling for a special meeting to discuss the hard drive incident, and the city manager has called out one of her employees over emails he sent on the matter. The issue is expected to come up at the commission's regular meeting at 6:30 p.m. Monday at City Hall.

**WHAT HAPPENED**

Deltona's latest imbroglio started when an information technology employee for the city asked Vose for her computer's password so that it could be replaced with a newer model, the attorney wrote in an email to commissioners explaining her actions. Vose said she was told if she didn't provide the password, it could be changed and her computer could be accessed. Vose cited a Florida Bar opinion that obligates lawyers to safeguard confidential attorney-client materials and sought permission from **Shang** to remove the hard drive, her email states. "I have been carrying it around with me since then in my purse/briefcase, in a manner similar with what I would do with a city laptop, if one were assigned to me," she wrote.

The hard drive was returned to the computer after information technology staff told Vose they would transfer the hard drive's contents to the new computer's hard drive and destroy the old one in front of her, Vose wrote. In a statement provided to The News-Journal, Vose wrote protecting the city is her "utmost responsibility as their attorney." "There was no other recourse to take after a city employee said he was going to remotely access confidential attorney/client documents and strategy for ongoing litigation," the statement reads. City commissioners Christopher Alcantara and Soukup see it differently. "We are the client," Alcantara said of the city. "She's protecting client information from the client? That doesn't make any sense."

**OUTSIDE LEGAL OPINION**

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Jane K. Shang**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Vose obtained a legal opinion on the matter from Lonnie Groot, a Lake Mary-based attorney who has served numerous Central Florida governments including Daytona Beach Shores. Groot wrote that Vose "acted most appropriately" and went "far beyond" what was required by the city charter and other laws pertaining to attorney ethical requirements. Alcantara and Soukup were not satisfied with Vose's decision to seek an outside opinion. "I feel it necessary that the City Commission discuss hiring separate and outside counsel - that is not under the control of the City Attorney or you - to investigate this matter and to provide us with legal advice," Soukup wrote in an email to **Shang** and Vose. Mayor John Masiarczyk said he respects Groot's opinion and knowledge of the law. "I have no evidence of any wrongdoing," he said.

**IT MANAGER EMAILS**

Information technology manager Steven Narvaez weighed in with emails in November to Deputy City Manager Dale Baker. "She took it upon herself to remove the hard drive," he wrote on Nov. 17. "I told her I was very disappointed (and) quite concerned by her action as it amounts to theft of city property." **Shang** shared Narvaez's emails with commissioners along with a sharp rebuke and criticism of her employee, calling his emails "grossly inappropriate." "This situation is particularly troubling since it was the actions of one of Mr. Narvaez's staff who provoked the situation," the manager wrote.

Local activist Jamison Jessup, who is not an attorney but provides qualified representation before Florida agencies, has also emailed The News-Journal that he will be representing Narvaez in complaints with state agencies of unlawful retaliation. "In fact, he believes that she (**Shang**) has not only retaliated against him; but, has made false accusations about him," Jessup wrote.

**WHAT'S NEXT?**

Soukup has emailed the manager and attorney requesting a special meeting on the matter. Alcantara also wants to see a special meeting, though he plans to bring the issue up at Monday's regular commission meeting, too. Masiarczyk said that a special meeting can be called at the direction of the mayor or the majority of the seven-member City Commission.

Commissioner Heidi Herzberg, meanwhile, said the hard drive matter has been completely and clearly explained. She said the city manager and attorney have been attacked and the city has a history of turnover in those positions. "I don't see any issues here. I just don't," Herzberg said. "I don't understand this intense hatred and wanting to have the removal of the city attorney and the city manager."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Jane K. Shang**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Tribune Content Agency News Service (USA)  
November 26, 2016

**More details emerge on Deltona sewer issue**

Author: *Austin Fuller, The News-Journal, Daytona Beach, Fla. Tribune Content Agency*

Nov. 26--DELTONA -- City officials have divulged more about damage caused to the sewer system in 2014 and 2015, but not all city commissioners are satisfied they have the full story. The city's acting public works director, Matt Doan, said in a recent interview that chemicals dumped into the system at Volusia County schools were probably not the cause of minor explosions at a city pump station, but other concerns about the chemicals remain. School officials have taken umbrage with the city's handling of the matter, saying they have not received complaints anywhere else they dispose of cleaning fluids. Meanwhile, two city commissioners raised concerns at a recent meeting, sparking a brief debate, but other commissioners shut that down. Following is what The News-Journal has learned after a couple weeks of requests for a sit-down interview with top city staff.

COMMUNICATION ISSUES

The problem was made public by Commissioner Brian Soukup in October after he learned about potential contaminants entering the city's wastewater system and that minor explosions had taken place. Soukup was upset that he had not learned about the matter from City Manager **Jane Shang** and top staff. In an interview with The News-Journal, Doan said it is less likely the chemicals were the cause of the explosions. "It is more likely it's more traditional vapors from wastewater," he said. He added: "It's not 100 percent." Regular wastewater puts off methane, which is flammable, he said. After the October commission meeting, members of the public came to the erroneous conclusion that there were problems with the city's drinking water, and the city issued a press release to correct the misconception. The release noted "ongoing coordination" between the Volusia County school district and the city regarding discharge to the sewer system, and that in 2014 and 2015, contained, minor explosions took place at the time chemicals entered the sewer. The release was challenged by school district officials, with its general counsel, Mike Dyer, calling it "reckless and irresponsible." "We reported the facts," Doan responded. "We weren't trying to imply anything other than reporting the facts. The commission meeting had a lot of misinformation, and we didn't want to go in there and say something like 'Well, there were no chemicals.'" **Shang**, in a written statement, also addressed Soukup's complaints about communication, saying the district's disposal of waste into the sewer system was listed 12 times in eight weekly reports by the city attorney. "Had there been concerns involving public health, safety, or welfare issues relating to the 2016 events, those issues would have immediately been brought to the attention of the City Commission by the City Manager," **Shang** wrote.

EFFECTS ON SEWERS



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City staff is concerned, Doan explained, about the effect the chemicals could have on microorganisms that are part of the city's sewer treatment process. He said the chemicals either "slow down their activity or they kill them off." Daniel Hall, an environmental specialist with the state Department of Environmental Protection, said it is possible the chemicals could have this effect on the city's sewer system, but he could not say for sure because it could vary based on the diluted amount of the chemical that would reach the plant. Carolyn Ansay, outside counsel for the school district, said the chemicals are going into the drains at the recommended dilution rate. Greg Akin, the district's chief operating officer, added the same process is being used throughout Volusia County and the only concern is in Deltona. DeLand Public Works Director Demetris Pressley confirmed his city is not having any issues. Additionally, the school district has asked its vendor to conduct testing to ensure the proper dilution rates, Akin said. "We're just being cautious," Dyer added. A follow-up email from district officials added the district has worked with the city on its concerns. "Since those concerns are unwarranted, the District considers the matter closed," it states.

#### COMMISSIONERS DEBATE

About three weeks after the issue surfaced publicly, Deltona staff released a timeline detailing the problem. But outgoing Commissioner Diane Smith, who has since been replaced by Anita Bradford, still had questions after the information was provided, "If I had just sat down and read that timeline I would have been very concerned," she said at an agenda review meeting Nov. 7. That night at the regular commission meeting, Smith inquired about the costs to the city. Commissioner Soukup -- who has previously accused **Shang** of lying by omission -- also made a new accusation against her at the agenda review meeting. He said there was a read receipt for an email showing **Shang** knew the issue was coming up at the October meeting, but when asked during that meeting, did not indicate that she did. "We were lied to right there on the record," he said. City Attorney Becky Vose and other commissioners defended **Shang**. "I was in the office at that time," Commissioner Heidi Herzberg said of when **Shang** was alleged to have read the email. Vice Mayor Chris Nabicht was concerned about the effect the debate was having on the city's ability to bring in businesses. "We are risking millions and millions of dollars of future economic development in this city by these allegations," he said. "Bring the charges, put them out there on the table, let her have her day in court, but investigate it. If there's substance to it, it will come out."

#### WHAT'S NEXT

Soukup told The News-Journal he still has issues about the incidents, but if he is the only commissioner that does, he cannot move it forward by himself. "I'll have to move on," he said. Newly elected Commissioner Christopher Alcantara said he still has questions about the matter. "It was a big deal when the public knew nothing about it ... but now that the public knows about it it's no longer a big deal and it doesn't make any sense," he said. Mayor John Masiarczyk said he still sees the issue as something to be handled by staff. "It's still a staff-directed issue," he said. "It hasn't reached a level where we need to make any policy changes."

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Hometown News: Deltona, Orange City, Debarry (FL)  
September 30, 2016

**Deltona keeping all code officer positions in budget**

Author: *Erika Webb ewebb@hometownnewsol.com*

In the midst of a citywide beautification campaign, Deltona commissioners have decided not to eliminate two code enforcement positions. The City Commission voted unanimously Sept. 19 to adopt a final budget of about \$1.56 million. Before adopting a tentative budget at a meeting Sept. 6, discussion turned to the possibility of eliminating two code enforcement positions, a move City Manager **Jane Shang** did not want. Deltona code enforcement employs 12 officers, two supervisors and one solid waste coordinator, according to the city spokesman Lee Lopez. At a budget workshop Aug. 11, the commission directed staff to look at cutting two code officers, “possibly reducing the level of service on the weekends and separating the duties of animal control and code,” according to a memo issued Aug. 29 by deputy city manager Dale Baker to Ms. **Shang**.

In the memo Mr. Baker noted displaced officers would not be able to be put in new positions. “They either do not meet the minimum qualifications or they would be required to take a 31 percent pay cut,” he explained. Of 10,552 code enforcement cases opened this year, only 290 (less than 3 percent) resulted in the issuance of citations or scheduled appearance before the special magistrate, according to the memo. From Jan. 1 to Aug. 29, Mr. Baker noted, the city has opened on average 34 new cases every Sunday, compared to 47 new cases on other days of the week. “The number of Sunday calls indicates the community expects service seven days per week,” he wrote, noting, “Many other communities expect service from Monday-Saturday.” In addition to responding to calls, officers, this year, have been tasked with unlogged activities, such as distributing educational flyers and scheduling bulk trash pickups for citizens. “This protocol deflates the actual amount of work performed by Code Enforcement,” the deputy city manager wrote. “Generally, an officer has a workload of approximately 75 cases at any given time.” He noted that during the time period officers disseminated information on Deltona’s “In the Bin” program and talked with citizens about solid waste issues and newly enacted policies, “no cases were opened.”

“Officers are now spending approximately 25 percent of their time on solid waste issues,” Mr. Baker wrote. He explained code enforcement officers are vital to strategic goals, such as public safety, under which fall the city’s beautification and demolition programs. A reduction in force conflicts with the city’s strategic plan to, among other aims, “strengthen code enforcement” and “review the need for additional staff,” he stated. Other points in the memo included the potential for more complaints to result from splitting the code enforcement department into six code and six animal control officers. Mr. Baker illustrated: “Officer goes out for an animal issue and observes a code violation. Code officer now goes out; citizen complains we are harassing them.” It would not be efficient to send two people to the same address, he concluded. Such a separation would result in half of the officers being certified and up to date in code and the other half, animal control. Presently, all are certified and versed in both. “This action will result in a staffing

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level we had in 1998,” Mr. Baker cautioned, “one animal control officer was on vacation and the other was in Daytona at the humane society. No officer within the city limits.” A reduction in force and service would result in more officers working on the same days, creating a need for four vehicles, at a cost of about \$120,000, Mr. Baker explained. In the Sept. 6 meeting Vice Mayor Chris Nabicht acknowledged he was the “catalyst” for eliminating the positions and splitting the code enforcement duties.

“I met with the manager and I will concede and agree with her ...,” Vice Mayor Nabicht said, explaining Ms. **Shang** agreed to provide the “means to track what animal control is doing.” “I will support her request to maintain the level of service,” the vice mayor said.

According to Mr. Baker’s memo the code enforcement department will refocus its efforts, using education as a means to achieve compliance and will attend neighborhood watch and other public outreach meetings in order to improve public perception of the department. A comprehensive tracking system will reflect all calls received and the “actual” amount of work performed. Staff will provide an annual report identifying workload, return calls/follow-up and case closure. Of the workload 25 percent will be proactive rather than reactive, according to the plan.

Mr. Baker also identified priority issues to be addressed under the city’s beautification program, including: blight and dilapidated structures; debris, grass, hoarding and trash; green swimming pools (to address Zika virus and mosquitoes; parking and inoperative vehicles; trap-neuter-return program and domestic animals and notifying both the tenant and landlord or landowner of code violations.

Commissioner Mitch Honaker said there have been plenty of Sundays when he and his neighbors have had animal issues. “We needed code out there,” he said, adding he disagrees with the idea of splitting the department. “That’s just ridiculous, sending two people out to one house,” Commissioner Honaker said. However, he added, he will not support adding more officers. “No more in the future,” Commissioner Honaker said. “If we can’t manage with what we have, shame on us.”

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Daytona Beach News-Journal, The (FL)  
September 20, 2016

**Deltona commissioners call out colleague over criticism in firefighter promotion**

Author: *Austin Fuller*

DELTONA – The tables were turned on Deltona City Commissioner Brian Soukup late Monday night after he questioned City Manager **Jane Shang**'s integrity and handling of a firefighter's promotion. Soukup's questions arose at last week's commission meeting following **Shang**'s promotion of William Swisher to a deputy fire chief position. As part of that promotion, Swisher received a "one-time cash out" of unused sick time and vacation time, a payout of more than \$93,000. Soukup took issue with the percentage of sick time paid to Swisher, as well as a conversation he had with **Shang** in which he felt the city manager had lied to him "through omission." On Monday, at the end of a busy meeting that went past midnight, other commissioners directed their criticism at Soukup. "Why shouldn't it be a bash Soukup?" said Vice Mayor Chris Nabicht, a former deputy fire chief and fire marshal for the city. "He has no trouble with going off the cuff and bashing these good men and women of this department and ... this woman over here (**Shang**) with no justification, none whatsoever. You're out of line, Soukup."

Mayor John Masiarczyk also questioned Soukup's comments. "You let your emotions overload your discussion and it got out of hand," Masiarczyk said. The payout Swisher received as part of his promotion was 75 percent of the value of his unused time: \$25,546 for his sick time and \$67,873 for his vacation time. Soukup questioned the percentage because the union contract calls for a 50 percent payout of unused sick time for those who had been with the city for 20 years, and a 75 percent payout for those whose tenure reached past the 25 year mark. The promoted firefighter had been with the city for 23 years. "We went above the union contract," Soukup said. "We broke the union contract." He added this set a precedent for the city paying out more than it had to. However, in a letter to the commission, City Attorney Becky Vose wrote the section Soukup referred to is only for employees who are terminated and does not apply to employees promoted out of the bargaining agreement. James H. Sullivan III, an attorney for the union, also wrote a letter saying the city isn't restricted by the bargaining agreement for a non-bargaining position. Also last week, Soukup accused **Shang** of lying by omission because the payout was higher than he believed. **Shang** responded there is nothing more important to her than honesty and integrity. "I did not lie to you," she said. "I did not recall the exact amount." Soukup fired back: "You don't remember a \$93,000 check that you write a firefighter? Are you kidding me?" On Monday, Soukup noted other issues he had with the city manager, including concerns he had about the handling of a compensation study. "My whole point of Monday night last week was to show that our city manager, who I trusted ... is doing things that I believe are not in the best interest of the city," he said. **Shang**, whom the commission selected as manager in April of last year, was recently recognized by the Volusia League of Cities with the city manager of the year award. But her time so far has not been free of controversy. On the most heated issue so far -- the city's new trash rules -- Soukup and Shang were on the same side.

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*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Daytona Beach News-Journal (FL)  
December 27, 2015

**Deltona tells residents to tidy up their trash or else**

Author: *Mark Harper; mark.harper@news-jrnl.com*

DELTONA — City Manager **Jane Shang** is urging changes and stricter enforcement to trash pickup rules after showing city commissioners a slideshow of littered Deltona yards. During a recent City Commission meeting, **Shang** displayed roadside photos — torn cardboard boxes, piles of old furniture, even a toilet — and narrated: "Here we have a situation where there was so much trash, they can't put all the trash in the Waste Pro container so they put it out any way they can. Homes where rather than putting their belongings inside, they put it right on their front porch. Anything and everything." She then asked commissioners to proceed with plans to educate the public on what's allowed and what's not, followed by amending the ordinance governing those rules. But something went awry at that Dec. 14 meeting. City commissioners debated some of the details. Commissioner Brian Soukup said residents should be able to use more than just their official Waste Pro containers. Vice Mayor Chris Nabicht and Mayor John Masiarczyk agreed **Shang's** presentation was done without sufficient public notice and predicted some residents will be upset with some of the proposed new rules. Yet all say they are on board with the goal: Cleaning up the city.

**BEAUTIFYING NEIGHBORHOODS**

Since taking over as city manager in June, **Shang** has — among other things — led an effort to make Deltona more visually appealing. She had staff improve the landscaping around the gateway entrance signs and other city properties, and last week watched as Deltona inaugurated a holiday lighting event, bathing City Hall in blue and white lights with a large "20" sign to celebrate the 20th anniversary of incorporation on Dec. 31. The effort earned recognition at a recent Florida Planning and Zoning Association meeting, **Shang** said. But the next phase is asking residents to buy in. That started with a November visioning session where there was consensus that city beautification should be a focus. "I believe Deltona is at a crossroads," she said. "We need to clean up the trash and need more code enforcement."

She's hired an additional code-enforcement officer to help with trash ordinance violations. And she came up with a series of three recommendations:

- First, all residents must use only the 96-gallon wheeled trash bins provided by contractor Waste Pro of Florida — not other bins or trash bags. Residents can purchase a second bin from Waste Pro for \$32 a year and are also provided recycling bins. "The 96-gallon container should be more than sufficient," she said.
- Residents must call ahead to report pickup of bulk waste — materials such as furniture or larger items that won't fit in the 96-gallon can.
- They would face new limits on the amount of yard waste that can be set out each week.

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*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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A News-Journal review of the 2012 contract between the city and Waste Pro, obtained through a public-records request, shows it doesn't require customers to use the Waste Pro bins or call ahead to have bulk trash picked up.

But **Shang** said she does not believe the contract needs to be modified. She said the city can instead tweak its trash ordinance. The details of those language changes, and public hearings on the ordinance are yet to come. But the Waste Pro-provided bins were a bone of contention during negotiations, when some commissioners insisted residents be allowed to put out personal trash cans and bags separate from the company totes. The contract states: "Service shall be limited to the collection of a 96-gallon solid waste container or the equivalent capacity in containers provided by customers." **Shang** notes the limit — "equivalent capacity" — and said Deltona has not enforced its own rules in recent years, contributing to the problems. In an interview last week, she said limiting waste to the 96-gallon can is reasonable, as is asking residents to call ahead for bigger trash pickups. "It's just like for example if you have a dinner party for 30 people, wouldn't you make reservations at a restaurant?" she said.

#### DEBATE OVER DETAILS

Some commissioners said they outright support **Shang's** proposals. "I support this completely," said Nancy Schleicher, who said she would only ask that residents get amnesty for going over during the holidays and once a year for a spring cleaning. Heidi Herzberg said she regularly sees violations of the city's rules. "I'm all for cleaning up the city," she said. "At our visioning session, every table made it clear they want the city cleaned up."

But Vice Mayor Chris Nabicht and Mayor John Masiarczyk expressed concerns that residents were told one thing when the contract was signed — that they could use their own containers — and now will be asked to use just the Waste Pro bin. "I am not at all against the beautification effort," Nabicht said. But he said the Waste Pro contract faced criticism from residents when it was negotiated, rather than put through a bidding process. "We are going to take an extreme amount of heat up here from the public when this comes out," he said. "Get ready for the phone calls." In an interview, he expressed other concerns, including that limits on the type of trash receptacles used and the requirement for some to purchase a second Waste Pro bin. "I don't care how you dress it up. That is a tax increase," he said.

Nabicht also wants unlimited yard waste pickup, saying that many times when residents trim trees or clear brush, they accumulate more than the limits **Shang** was proposing. Masiarczyk said there will need to be much more public involvement in the rewriting of rules, and a massive education campaign to promote recycling and use of the Waste Pro bins. "Most of the pictures (in **Shang's** presentation) were people that were sloppy," he said, adding that more code enforcement is appropriate in those instances. **Shang** said as the ordinance is rewritten and approved, it will have two public hearings, in addition to the discussion she started this month.

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*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Daytona Beach News-Journal (FL)  
November 30, 2015

**6 months in, Deltona city manager gets high marks, \$15,000 raise**

Author: *Mark Harper; mark.harper@news-jrnl.com*

In her first six months as city manager, **Jane Shang** has brought progress to Deltona, which, in turn, brought praise from her bosses, the City Commission. **Shang** has engaged Deltona in a beautification program, forwarded plans to construct a community center, arranged a community visioning session and begun evaluating her own staff. In an interview, Mayor John Masiarczyk said **Shang** is "doing great." He and the other six commissioners have given **Shang** an above-average evaluation. On Tuesday, as part of her contract, she gets a 10 percent raise. Her starting salary was \$150,000, but it jumps to \$165,000 after six months, and \$175,000 after the first year. Also as part of that contract, commissioners are required to evaluate her by Oct. 6 each year. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being excellent, **Shang** averaged 4.3.

**Shang** said she has been fortunate. "I came at a time where everyone, I think, was looking for change, a new direction for the city," she said. "It's a great city, but we can be more." Some of the bigger goals — branding Deltona, attracting jobs and increasing property values — must first start with narrowing the focus. The visioning session — a series of two meetings, one for residents, the other for commissioners — gave **Shang** and her staff nine priorities, and she has begun to make sure the staff shares those prerogatives. She's also looking at organizational structure. "I'm a firm believer you don't make change just to make change. You need a period of time to do evaluation and analysis," **Shang** said. "Six months really isn't a long time."

The mayor said it was difficult to go into much depth on her evaluation this year because it came so early in her tenure. "We don't observe her day-to-day," Masiarczyk said. "We observe the end result." But three commissioners rated **Shang** excellent: Heidi Herzberg, Nancy Schleicher and Brian Soukup. Schleicher praised **Shang's** "open and transparent style," her communication and leadership in the beautification effort. Herzberg said **Shang** had addressed staff and commissioners with "direct professionalism," has shown a willingness to listen and worked to build consensus, taking historical background into account. "She has moved projects forward that have been idling for months and years, such as a visioning session, beautification projects, sports field lighting and the construction of a new community center," Herzberg wrote. "My only concern is that Ms. **Shang** not burn herself out as her first quarter here has been intense." Soukup shared no comments on the written evaluation.

Vice Mayor Chris Nabicht, who gave **Shang** an average grade, Nabicht, said he is confident **Shang** is the right leader and is moving the city "in a positive direction." But he said **Shang** needs to continue getting to know the community and strengthening relationships. "She needs to take a strong look at her staff and grow those that will help move Deltona forward. Customer service must become our number one priority with regard to the quality traits our employees embrace," Nabicht said. Commissioner Mitch Honaker rated her above average and said she is "building a cohesive, functioning team" in a city that has in years past been called dysfunctional

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**Jane K. Shang**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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and challenged by internal strife. "After she finishes her evaluation of staff, establishing her core team and improving employee morale, she needs to make a few changes and improvements that make a 'wow' statement to residents and businesses, so they know she hears them and things are changing for the better," he said. Commissioner Diane Smith, whose evaluation did not include a numerical score, called **Shang** responsive to commissioners' concerns and praised her action on beautification, improving trash collection and moving forward with plans to build a community center. Smith shared several specific goals for **Shang**: Building a strategic plan and aligning the budget with that plan; doing a 360-degree evaluation of every department; and continued efforts at "complete transparency."



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**Jane K. Shang**  
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Daytona Beach News-Journal (FL)  
November 7, 2015

**Deltona commissioners prioritize image, collaboration**

Author: *Mark Harper*

DELTONA — City commissioners used the better part of a Saturday visioning workshop attempting to narrow a focus that has sometimes been so wide, little got done. After hearing from more than 50 Deltona residents at a visioning workshop three weeks earlier, commissioners set an agenda of nine priorities from an original list of 26 goals. First-year City Manager **Jane Shang** said she gets a lot of ideas from individual commissioners but without a sense of priority. "We all want a lot of things to happen," **Shang** said. "We all have this whole list — it's never a short list — but when it's that long you are overwhelmed and you end up actually doing nothing. What we really need to do is shorten that list, do a reality check."

The shorter list will be:

- Coordinate and collaborate better with other governments.
- Develop a Deltona brand and improved image.
- Start a program to identify, write and manage grants.
- Analyze city and county properties and determine their best uses.
- Update the city's economic development plan.
- Strengthen code enforcement.
- Pursue permission for city fire department to transport medical patients.
- Create a utility development plan to improve water, sewer, natural gas and information technology services.

Many of those goals were written with residents' ideas in mind. Commissioner Chris Nabicht said improving utilities will, in the long haul, serve several goals, including attracting new businesses such as restaurants to areas near Interstate 4 and across town at State Road 415. "They envisioned the commercial being on the perimeter of Deltona and residential staying in the center," Nabicht said. "If that's part of our strategic plan, we need to make sure our utilities are large enough to support that. We have good commercial property that doesn't have adequate water supply for fire protection and consumption, and the sewers may or may not be in those areas." Adding natural gas lines to strategic areas of the city might help lure elusive sit-down restaurants to Deltona, he added.

Another commissioner, Brian Soukup, noting that fully one-quarter of Deltona's residents are age 18 or under, urged more of an emphasis on improving parks and events for families and young people. The city is already exploring development of a civic center and the purchase of land that could house a future park or sports complex. Vice Mayor Nancy Schleicher said improving the city's image is the best way to earn respect from Volusia County and other governments. "Until we improve our identity, until we improve our look, our focus, our potential, until we improve that, we're not going to get there," she said.

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**Shang** expressed optimism because a lot of what residents expressed is in sync with plans that have already been discussed by city commissioners. "We're implementing some of the vision right now," **Shang** said. "That doesn't always happen. It seems like we're going in the same direction, which is really nice." The exercise left off some priorities, which will instead be listed in a report as "other objectives." One example: hiring a social-services coordinator.

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Hometown News: Deltona, Orange City, DeBary (FL)  
July 10, 2015

**New city manager ‘Creates change for the positive’**

Author: *Joellen Wolfson; For Hometown News*

**Jane Shang**, Deltona’s new city manager, is the perfect example of her motto of creating “positive change” in the community. Ms. **Shang** grew up in Attleboro, Mass., a suburb of Boston. Her father, who is first generation Chinese, owned a laundry where she worked after school. “We were the only Chinese family in Attleboro,” Ms. **Shang** said. Her father encouraged her to further her education, and she decided upon a law degree after witnessing the city take over her father’s business during the revitalization movement of the 1980s. Even though Mr. **Shang** had just paid off a mortgage and was willing to adapt to the new needs and policies of the area, the city refused to allow him to continue his business.

Making good on her promise to her father, Ms. **Shang** graduated from Brown University with a law degree in 1980 and obtained accreditation for Congress for New Urbanization. She began working as a corporation and contracts attorney for the City of Boston and the Charlestown Navy Yard. Working with the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority, Ms. **Shang** successfully defended it against lawsuits that would stop the construction of infrastructure needed to clean up Boston harbor. She also served as assistant director for the Boston Transit Authority and director of Boston’s Logan Airport.

Ms. **Shang** migrated to Florida in 2004 to work as director of engineering and development for the City of Tampa. “I had a long-distance relationship with someone in Sarasota,” she said. “Whoever got the job first would be the one to move.” In 2008, Ms. **Shang**’s skills in negotiating financial agreements and coordinating various agencies to work together in harmony led her to a position as deputy city manager for El Paso, Texas. Since El Paso is a border town next to Juarez, Mexico, it boasts three land ports of entry. “I saw the position as an opportunity to grow my portfolio (and get involved) with international commerce,” she said.

Her finely honed skills as a financial negotiator and a coordinator of various municipal agencies were instrumental in being able to obtain \$145M of federal funding under the New Starts Program. The funds were strategically used to bring the Sun Metro bus system in El Paso from “a near meltdown to the Outstanding Transit Agency of the Year.” While Ms. **Shang** worked at upgrading El Paso’s transit system, she also had a huge impact on improving transit drivers’ health and working conditions. “Every entity has a role,” she said. “You have to recognize what that role is and strengthen everyone by seeing globally and (working with) organizational behavior. I look at how various entities fit into the bigger picture.”

With “30 percent of the population in El Paso diabetic and/or overweight,” she oversaw the construction of solar powered break rooms for the drivers with not only the usual restrooms and showers, but also a wellness facility and exercise room. “The ultimate compliment I received was a picture of the drivers at Thanksgiving showing me the (healthier) foods they were eating,”

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she chuckled. “Customer service is internal (employee satisfaction) as well as external, involving community relations.” Along with “moving the community of El Paso forward” with economic and transportation development, Ms. **Shang** also worked to incorporate public arts by local and national artists through a \$1 billion city improvement program, “which will transform the landscape of the city.” When Ms. **Shang** was appointed city manager earlier in June, she beat out nine other candidates, and was the only female considered.

Her philosophy of “thinking globally and partnering with other agencies” has served her well in her previous city government positions. Stating that “not one entity can do it all”, Ms. **Shang**’s goals for the community of Deltona include retail development and “tying in housing, lighting and landscaping so businesses will want to step up to the plate, also.” Ms. **Shang** noted, “I want to create a more livable and more convenient community (for Deltona). Forty thousand cars exit Deltona daily to jobs in Orlando or Daytona. All of the time spent on the road, amount of gas used, and the impact on roadways does not make any sense. It also does not create a sense of community. At the very least, I want people to feel good about their city.”

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Daytona Beach News-Journal (FL)  
June 13, 2015

**Deltona debuts new meeting format**

DELTONA — The City Commission will try a new approach to its meetings, starting Monday. Commissioners will hold their regular meeting at 6:30 p.m., as usual. But an hour before, they will start with an agenda conference, a meeting at which new City Manager **Jane Shang** and her staff will go over the agenda and attempt to answer questions in advance of the regular meeting. “The public can attend, but we would refrain from public comment until the actual commission meeting,” **Shang** said, adding it’s been done in other cities and she thinks it might be a way to streamline the regular meetings. The City Commission agreed to try it; the agenda review meeting will be held in City Hall, 2345 Providence Blvd., at 5:30 p.m.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Jane K. Shang**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Daytona Beach News-Journal (FL)  
June 1, 2015

**Deltona’s new city manager starts job, looks forward to challenges**

Author: *Mark Harper; mark.harper@news-jrnl.com*

DELTONA — New City Manager **Jane Shang** has — like many Americans — moved south from her home state of Massachusetts.

Facts

Name: **Jane Shang**

Age: 56

New job: Deltona city manager

Prior job: Deputy city manager, El Paso, Texas

Born in: Massachusetts

Education: Bachelor of arts in organizational behavior/business, Brown University; juris doctorate, Suffolk Law School

Enjoys: Cooking, keeping fit through weightlifting, Zumba, jazzercise, spinning, osteofit and tennis

After four years in Tampa, then more than six in El Paso, Texas, **Shang** was asked about the pullback to the Sunshine State. “Rather than saying Florida, let’s say the pull is Deltona,” **Shang** said during an interview Monday, her first day. “Deltona, to me, has great potential. The will of the mayor and City Commission, the community and the business association to make Deltona a better place to live and work is the pull. I share that vision.” Deltona, Volusia County’s most-populous city with nearly 87,000 residents, faces many challenges, starting with a lack of commercial businesses.

**Shang** didn’t hesitate in answering a question about how the city’s progress might best be measured in coming months and years. “Economic development. Job creation in Deltona,” she said. **Shang**, who was raised in Massachusetts by parents who owned a laundry, said she believed in education and earned an Ivy League degree in organizational behavior/business from Brown University, then a law degree. She worked as an attorney and manager on big projects, including the cleanup of Boston Harbor, the Big Dig rerouting of Interstate 93 through an underground tunnel and the response to Sept. 11, 2001, at Logan International Airport in Boston. That background impressed commissioners, who welcomed her during their meeting Monday night. “I’m excited. I’m thrilled to have you here,” Commissioner Chris Nabicht said. “Volusia County, here we come. We’re going to hit it hard. We’re gonna hit it fast and you’re going to see great things out of this lady. ... She’s going to do great things for us.”

**Shang**, who was selected from three candidates during an April 25 interview, has a starting salary of \$150,000. “I’ve always lived by three principles: Do the right thing, be fair and make things better than you found them,” she said. “Those have always been the guiding principles in my life. I’ve always made things better than where I’ve found them.”

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**Jane K. Shang**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Daytona Beach News-Journal (FL)  
May 12, 2015

**Deltona residents air concerns about new manager's contract**

Author: *Mark Harper; mark.harper@news-jrnl.com*

DELTONA — Concerns about the new city manager's contract spurred Mayor John Masiarczyk to call for a special meeting Monday night to air grievances and get questions answered. **Jane Shang**, who starts as city manager on June 1, will be paid \$150,000 to start, and has two scheduled raises. She'll get \$15,000 more on Dec. 1, then another \$10,000 raise after one year. She will be evaluated every year in October. Some commissioners – and members of the public – said her salary is too much for Deltona, where the household median income averages \$47,000 a year. "She doesn't want any of this hanging over her head," City Attorney Becky Vose said. "She is going to be a very busy lady when she starts. She doesn't want any baggage."

Commissioners heard more from the public Monday than they did on May 4, when they voted 5-2 to ratify the agreement with **Shang**, the former El Paso deputy city manager. But nothing much changed. The mayor and commissioners who supported the contract May 4 reiterated their support. **Shang** is a singular talent who will ultimately save Deltona more money than she will cost, they said, and they didn't want to dawdle and risk losing her to another job. Her contract was placed on that meeting's agenda some three hours before the meeting, and Commissioner Diane Smith complained of having too little time to adequately review it.

When Masiarczyk asked for public comment on the proposed contract that night, no one spoke. On Monday, former commissioners Zenaida Denizac and Webster Barnaby were among residents who raised concerns. "I think the public must be informed at all times," Denizac said. "We need to govern in the sunshine and I have the right to come to a commission meeting and speak." Barnaby criticized commissioners for having Masiarczyk and Vose handle contract negotiations with **Shang**, rather than the search firm.

Commissioners Heidi Herzberg and Chris Nabicht agreed on that point, but Herzberg noted that Deltona has historically appointed one commissioner or the mayor to negotiate. Larry Kent, a DeBary resident who owns businesses in Deltona and regularly attends city meetings, praised commissioners for their choice. Her price tag will be worth every penny, he predicted. "I cannot be more confident you chose the right person going forward," Kent said. "If we made a mistake, we can terminate. That's what it comes down to."

When Herzberg made a symbolic motion to again support **Shang's** contract Monday, the vote was the same, 5-2, with commissioners Smith and Brian Soukup voting no.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches  
Jane K. Shang  
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

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Daytona Beach News-Journal (FL)  
April 25, 2015

**Deltona chooses new manager**

Author: *Mark Harper; mark.harper@news-jrnl.com*

DELTONA — **Jane Shang** will be the next city manager, pending the signing of a contract. The City Commission selected **Shang** — who’s been an attorney, a director in the transportation field and an assistant city manager — from three finalists after a day of meetings and interviews Saturday. Because she has never before been a city manager, she very nearly had been eliminated during the first round of consideration, but eventually won commissioners over with her pleasant demeanor. “I see a bright opportunity for us in her,” Mayor John Masiarczyk said. “I think she’ll be recognized as a standout, as someone new and fresh.”

**Shang** pointed to her resume, which demonstrates experience in law, construction, finance, transportation and management. “I have that very diverse background, as city managers do,” she said. Most recently, for five years, she worked as deputy city manager of El Paso, Texas, a city about seven times the size of Deltona, leaving in 2014. **Shang** explained she had gotten into a clash with her boss, the city manager, when she answered a City Council question about the cost of a ballpark. “I was asked a question during a council meeting. I answered honestly, and it contradicted her and it embarrassed her,” **Shang** said. She was placed on administrative leave, given a severance package and ultimately the manager left and **Shang**’s position was eliminated.

Before she left El Paso, **Shang** helped the city obtain \$145 million in federal funding for a bus rapid-transit program and another \$10 million to promote smart-growth development at an abandoned mall. Her career included roles in the cleanup of Boston Harbor; advancing the “Big Dig,” a major tunnel project in Boston; and working with airlines through the crises that followed the Sept. 11 attacks. From 2004 to 2008, she worked in Florida as director of engineering and development for HART, the Hillsborough County transit system.

**Shang** said Deltona needs to focus on building its infrastructure and growing up as a city — with more jobs and commercial development. “I’d like, as city manager, to go out and work with the community, every constituent of the community, to convince them to come on board, to come together as a team,” she said. It took commissioners two rounds of voting Saturday. In the first, each selected his or her top choice. **Shang** received four votes, Patrick Salerno of Miami received two and Michael Brillhart, Barnstable County, Massachusetts, administrator, got one. **Shang** needed five of seven commissioners’ votes to be selected.

It became clear the four who supported **Shang** initially were Mayor John Masiarczyk, Vice Mayor Nancy Schleicher and Commissioners Chris Nabicht and Heidi Herzberg. Then Commissioner Mitch Honaker said **Shang** was a close second on his ballot, and that he would vote in her favor on the second round. After more discussion, Brian Soukup and Diane Smith — who had expressed reservations about her — voted for her, making it a 7-0 vote. Smith, who initially supported Salerno, said she loves **Shang**’s personality. “I’m just not sure she has the



**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Jane K. Shang**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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leadership skills yet,” Smith said. “Are we patient enough to allow her to develop those? I love the fact that she looks at (Deltona) as a blank canvas.” Schleicher said she liked **Shang**’s body language at a morning meet-and-greet with the public. “That told me a lot. She interacted nicely with everybody,” Schleicher said. Nabicht said Chang is “an organized and critical thinker ... probably the most significant skill a city manager” needs. He said everyone laughed when he asked her what she puts on her hot dog, ketchup or mustard. She responded by laughing and saying neither, that she doesn’t eat hot dogs “unless it is a turkey dog.” Nabicht, known to enjoy an occasional hot dog, said he appreciated her answer.

“**Shang** has got a personality that comes across as welcoming. We talked about branding this community. We talked about being open for business. That is the impression I feel from her ... welcoming.”

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Jane K. Shang**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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**ADDITIONAL NOTES REGARDING**  
**JANE SHANG**

Provided by Rick Conner of Colin Baenziger & Associates  
February 2015

You may possibly find news stories regarding Ms. Shang's departure from the City of El Paso, Texas. I personally worked for the City of El Paso several years ago, and know the just-recently-retired former City Manager (Joyce Wilson, Jane's boss there) quite well, as I do the politics of the community. I trust Joyce implicitly and spoke to her at length about the situation. It should come as no surprise that she believes the stories did not correctly or fully relate the facts of the situation and many of the statements about it may have been made for political reasons.

According to Joyce, Jane is an honest person with strong moral principles, and that combined with her desire to keep everyone informed of the details led to her being unpopular with some City Council members. In order to allow Jane to become vested in the retirement system in El Paso, she and the City Manager (who was getting ready to retire) approached the Council with the idea of Jane voluntarily resigning, but staying on the payroll using vacation and sick leave long enough to complete the vesting period. The sitting Council was comfortable with the idea, but some did not return after the elections.

The core takeaway is that in Joyce's opinion, Jane did an excellent job, was smart, efficient, very hard working, and honest.

You should certainly take the matter into account when considering her as a candidate, but we recommend you do so with a broader view than the news articles would suggest.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Jane K. Shang**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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ABC 7 KVIA  
July 22, 2014

**El Paso Deputy City Manager Shang says politics, being truthful are why she's on administrative leave**

Author: Staff Report

El Paso Deputy City Manager **Jane Shang** tells a little bit why she's been put on administrative leave. **Shang** visited Des Moines, Iowa this week where she is one of four candidates for the city's vacant city manager position.

The Des Moines Register asked why **Shang** took a 10-month paid administrative leave option in El Paso. "There are some political issues...I will always be honest and be truthful. I'll tell people what I think whether you want to hear it or not. And sometimes people don't want to hear it and people take some action," **Shang** told the newspaper.

Former El Paso city manager Joyce Wilson told the Des Moines Register that **Shang** was not removed for cause but due to politics and "relationship issues" with some City Council members. City of El Paso officials won't disclose why **Shang** has been placed on administrative leave, saying only it is a "personnel matter."

According to an investigation by our news partners at El Paso Inc., **Shang** went on a European vacation at the end of April and returned to find out outgoing city manager Joyce Wilson had placed her on leave with pay through December.

After that, **Shang** is expected to exhaust her vacation, which would take her to April 2015. **Shang's** annual salary is \$175,000, the Inc. Reported. As deputy city manager of the city's Mobility Portfolio in El Paso, **Shang** oversees the departments of transportation, international bridges, mass transit, engineering & construction management, general services and coordinates with the Public Service Board.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches  
Jane K. Shang  
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

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El Paso Times (TX)  
July 16, 2014

**El Paso City Council: City releases documents on Deputy City Manager Jane Shang's paid leave**

Author: Cindy Ramirez

Documents show former City Manager Joyce Wilson authorized that a deputy city manager be paid for seven months administrative leave in lieu of six months of severance pay — possibly qualifying her for a slightly higher pension.

The seven months' paid leave exceeded what Deputy City Manager **Jane Shang** would be entitled to under the severance provision of her original offer letter, according to a May 19 email from the City Attorney's Office to the Human Resources director. "However, this is a decision within the city manager's discretion," Assistant City Attorney Elizabeth M. Ruhmann tells Human Resources Director Linda Ball Thomas in the email. **Shang** could not be reached for comment, and Wilson did not return calls.

Feeling pressure by the media and some council members on the issue, the city on Tuesday released some documents summarizing the exit strategy set up for **Shang**, including the email. "Yes, I put it on (the agenda) to put a little pressure for answers. I think we got satisfactory answers," said city Rep. Dr. Michiel Noe. He added that a discussion on possibly limiting a city manager's powers toward the end of an employment contract may come up during a future council meeting.

The documents state that Wilson in late April proposed a an exit strategy for **Shang**, who is on paid administrative leave from June 1 through Dec. 31, and then vacation leave through April 2015. She had been assigned to an unidentified "special project" from May 19 to May 31, and her duties overseeing several departments were farmed out to other deputy city managers. **Shang** had been criticized for her work on several major transportation projects, though the reason for her being put on leave remains unknown as it's considered a personnel issue.

**Shang** was first employed in April 2008, and her offer letter included a clause that the city would pay six months severance at termination as well as a separate 401K account if she were terminated. **Shang** is not considered to have been fired, Thomas said. Under her employee classification, **Shang** is considered to have resigned, she said.

The documents show there were three changes to **Shang's** offer letter between April 28 to the final agreement signed May 19 to account for paid leave and vacation time as well as her city pension. A pension payout is determined by years of service, age and which payoff option is chosen by the participant. Under the final agreement, **Shang** continues to be paid her nearly \$175,000 annual salary, health insurance, life insurance and holidays, as well as her \$350 a month car allowance.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Jane K. Shang**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Severance clauses are typical in many contracts for top administrators — including the contract council recently unanimously approved for City Manager Tomas "Tommy" Gonzalez. His five-year contract includes a severance clause that would pay him up to a year's pay if he were terminated without good cause. The city would not pay if he voluntarily resigns. The documents related to **Shang** were released after Noe posted an item on Tuesday's agenda calling for an explanation of her employment changes as well as for a discussion of the powers of a city manager. That also followed an Open Records Requests from the El Paso Times and other media for records of **Shang's** employment changes.

During an agenda review meeting Monday, Noe asked that the item be deleted from the agenda. He said his questions had been answered and was satisfied that there was no wrongdoing when it came to **Shang's** paid leave after talking with Wilson, Gonzalez and Human Resources staff. On Tuesday, just as the item was about to be deleted, city Rep. Eddie Holguin said he still had unanswered questions. Council entered into executive session, and then reconvened and voted to delete the item from the agenda. City staff then provided the media with a copy of a memo from Human Resources, through Gonzalez, to the mayor and council outlining the timeline of the changes.

Noe said that he still hopes to discuss — in a more thought-out process — the powers of a city manager within a certain window of leaving the job. "I don't want to strip all powers of a city manager, but want to consider having some protection so that major changes to contracts or other major projects are not made by a city manager as they're walking out the door," Noe told the El Paso Times.

The powers of the city manager are outlined in the City Charter, and includes authority to "take all personnel actions regarding employees" except as provided by law or in the charter. The charter also states the council shall deal with city employees who are subject to the direction and supervision of the city manager solely through the city manager and that council can neither control or demand the appointment or removal of any city employee. The council "may express its views and fully and freely discuss with the city manager anything pertaining to appointment and removal of such employees," the charter states. The charter can only be changed by voters in an election every two years. The last charter election was in 2013.

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**Jane K. Shang**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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El Paso Times (TX)  
December 4, 2013

**El Paso City Council approves bridge-toll hikes**

Author: Cindy Ramirez

Despite skepticism from some city representatives, the City Council on Tuesday approved an agreement to pay for overtime salaries of U.S. Customs and Border Protection agents to increase staffing at the ports of entry and reduce wait times.

"Obviously you wish the federal government could have afforded the extra staff," city Rep. Cortney Niland said, praising the agreement as a way to improve trade, boost the economy and improve wait times at the bridges for shoppers, merchants and families who frequently use the ports of entry. "But the return on our investment is exponential."

In a 5-2 vote, the council approved increasing the southbound crossing toll at the Stanton Street and Ysleta ports of entry by 50 cents to pay overtime salaries of CBP officers who will staff the northbound lanes during peak crossing times. The money will be used for added staffing on the Paso Del Norte and Ysleta ports. City Reps. Eddie Holguin and Carl Robinson voted against the toll increase and the agreement with the agency. City Rep. Michiel Noe was out sick Tuesday.

With the change, tolls for passenger vehicles will increase to \$3 and commercial vehicles will pay \$4 starting Jan. 26. The tolls for pedestrians will not increase. The additional toll, expected to raise about \$2.5 million a year, will be used to pay for the overtime, which is estimated to cost about \$1.5 million a year. The surplus is going into a fund to be used only on CBP overtime costs in the future or on other projects that improve the bridges and cut crossing times, **said Jane Shang**, deputy city manager for transportation and public works.

Rolando Pablos, CEO of the Borderplex Alliance, a binational economic development organization, called the pilot project "an excellent idea." "It addresses facilitating trade and travel," Pablos said. "This is a big issue we've been working to improve for years." Pablos questioned if the toll would be reduced if the program proves unsuccessful.

Pablos is also on the board of the Border Trade Alliance, which was instrumental in helping create and pass the legislation that allows the partnership program. "We need to give it a shot," he said.

Holguin, Robinson and city Rep. Lily Limcn said they were skeptical of the program, which allows local governments or businesses to fund overtime pay for CBP staffing. The federal legislation was approved earlier this year, and the city of El Paso was one of five organizations selected to participate in the five-year pilot program. The city's goal to reduce wait times for private vehicles from about 30 minutes to 12 to 15 minutes, measuring that wait from about 330 feet from the northbound checkpoint of the Ysleta and Paso del Norte bridges. That's about 16 cars deep, city officials said. The goal for commercial trucks is a waiting time of 19 minutes or

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**Jane K. Shang**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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less. Limcn questioned the gauging methods, and said she didn't believe waiting times overall would be reduced and that some people would not pay the extra 50 cents and use the other bridges instead. She said she voted in favor of the agreement only after city staff agreed to survey maquiladoras and other industries about whether the program is being effective.

"Crossing time is not going to decrease," Limcn said, arguing that measuring crossing times from the quarter-point of the bridge would not translate into faster crossing times for the cars at the end of the line. Holguin argued the same point, but said that the agreement was also a "bad deal all the way around." "We're setting a bad precedent starting to pay federal employees," Holguin said. He added that he believed the federal government would cut the budget and staffing at the bridges in future years if it felt cities like El Paso would pick up the tab. Robinson also expressed that concern and said the city should not pay for services the federal government should provide. City Rep. Emma Acosta said she had doubts about the program's metrics, but hoped it would succeed and show the federal government that the national and local economies can benefit from increased staffing at the bridges. Mayor Oscar Leeser praised the program, saying the past City Council had been aggressively working on ways to increase staffing and improve crossing times for at least two years. U.S. Rep. Beto O'Rourke, D-El Paso, a former city representative, worked with other state and federal lawmakers on the legislation known as the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act of 2013.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Jane K. Shang**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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El Paso Times (TX)  
July 13, 2013

**El Paso nearly completes planning for trolleys**

Author: Aaron Bracamontes

The city of El Paso has almost completed its part of the bargain to bring back the trolley streetcars to Downtown; now it's the state's move. The city has spent more than \$4.5 million on designing the trolley system, planning the routes, figuring out the cost of refurbishing the streetcars and doing an environmental study on the area. Officials are not worried that the proposed trolley system has not received funding from the Texas Department of Transportation, said Deputy City Manager **Jane Shang**.

In order to apply for money from TXDOT's Texas Transportation Commission, the city must have plans and designs ready, **Shang** said. It is a regular part of the process she said. "Usually, money is available on a short-term notice," **Shang** said. "If cities want the money, they have to do the prep work to position themselves to get in the queue." The "prep work" is about 90 to 95 percent done, **Shang** said. "If there is an opportunity for funding, for example, the \$90 million in funds, we would have to present plans," **Shang** said. "Usually the communities that have those plans ready are the ones that get the money."

Last year, city officials said commission Chairman Ted Houghton committed to give \$90 million for the trolleys to El Paso after it performed a preliminary study and applied for the money. Houghton could not be reached for comment, but a spokeswoman for TxDOT said the commission has taken no action to approve or deny a trolley system in El Paso.

**Shang** said the completed study is valid for more than two years. "There has not been a specific date set to receive the money," **Shang** said. "But we believe it should be soon." The city first must approve applying for the funds and later approve accepting that money from the Texas Transportation Commission.



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**Jane K. Shang**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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El Paso Times (TX)  
May 23, 2010

**\$59,268 for travel: City officials say 91 trips necessary, done economically**

Author: Gustavo Reveles Acosta

EL PASO -- Taxpayers paid \$60,000 in the past 15 months to send top city government officials on trips that spanned both coasts. A study of travel records by the El Paso Times found that the six highest-paid executives in city government and the city's 10 elected officials took a collective 91 trips. A total of \$59,268 in public money was spent on the trips. The figures were from January 2009 to the end of April of this year.

City officials said that the amount was not extravagant and that all of the trips were beneficial to taxpayers. "We've cut travel. I think the figure for this year is actually low for a city our size," Mayor John Cook said. "We have made a conscious effort to be frugal, but these trips are all work-related, and they are to the benefit of the city." Cook and other city officials said the city's travel costs are conservative when compared with the travel costs of other governments. Last month, a Times report showed that Diana Natalicio, president of UTEP, on her own spent \$42,124 for travel during the 2009 fiscal year. Her trips included visits to the Asian countries of Bhutan and Jordan.

Documents obtained by the Texas Public Information Act show that Public Service Board President and CEO Ed Archuleta traveled the most of city officials during the last 15 months. He took 28 trips at a cost of \$16,132. Cook was second on the list. He took 22 trips that cost \$12,332. Both Cook and Archuleta said the trips they took, especially those to Austin and Washington, D.C., were critical in securing millions of dollars for various projects.

According to Archuleta, his travels during the past 12 years brought the utility about \$90 million in grants. "There's not a lot of money out there that's available for us, and going in person to hustle for those funds makes a big difference," he said. "I don't like to travel. I'd rather be at home. But these trips help out." Of the 91 trips the city officials took since January 2009, 29 were to Austin and 13 were to Washington, D.C. Other destinations included Las Vegas, San Antonio, Dallas and Albuquerque.

The only trips abroad taken during that time were by City Manager Joyce Wilson. But her travel to Montreal and to Cancun, Mexico, was paid by the associations that requested her presence at conferences. Most of the travel for the council and staff was to conferences and workshops. Archuleta said many of his trips were meant to familiarize himself with new regulations on the management of water, sewage water, reclaimed water and stormwater. City representatives and transportation officials said they, too, have traveled to learn more about mass transit.

**Jane Shang**, deputy city manager for mobility, traveled with council members Steve Ortega and Susie Byrd to Kansas City, Mo., and Los Angeles to study bus rapid transit systems. Ortega and Byrd also traveled to Portland, Ore., to attend a summit on new urbanism and transportation.

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**Shang**, who oversees transportation projects for the city, is the executive staff member who traveled the most. She took seven trips starting in the spring of 2009. Byrd said money spent on travel enhanced her understanding of transportation issues. "Many times you are limited by the information that is available locally," Byrd said. "Frankly, I think I have made better decisions about the future of our city because of the information I gathered in some of these trips."

Several elected officials limited their travel. City Council members Eddie Holguin, Rachel Quintana, Carl Robinson, Emma Acosta, Ann Morgan Lilly and former City Rep. Melina Castro took one to three trips in the past 15 months. Deputy City Managers Bill Studer and Pat Aauto each took one trip. Aauto's trip was reimbursed to the city by a grant from the federal government. Two of the people for whom the Times sought travel records -- city Rep. Beto O'Rourke and Deputy City Manager Deborah Hamlyn -- charged no money to the city for official trips since January 2009.

O'Rourke said he limits his travel because he does not like to be away from his family, but he said he had been scheduled to take trips to Los Angeles and Kansas City with **Shang**, Ortega and Byrd. "I had to cancel at the last minute and nothing was charged to the city," he said. "I know that we have to be very sensitive about travel given the economic times, so I try to travel sparingly. "That doesn't mean, though, that the trips taken by the council and staff were wasteful," he said. "I think there is a lot of good that came out of those trips."

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**Jane K. Shang**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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El Paso Times (TX)  
April 11, 2010

**Keeping up with growth: Rapid-transit project will require expanded yard for buses**

Author: Gustavo Reveles Acosta

EL PASO -- Sun Metro will need a new maintenance center for its fleet if it wants to expand the transit system any further. Officials last week announced that a \$28 million to \$30 million center is needed to sustain the planned addition of a bus-rapid transit fleet that will bring larger- than-normal buses. "Our current facility is maxed out. We have no more room for growth there," said **Jane Shang**, the deputy city manager for mobility. "We can't roll out a single more bus out of that facility. We need to move." No funding has been secured yet, but the city is already planning to build a new Sun Metro operations center, which would fuel, clean, fix and store buses for the growing system.

**Shang** said the city is working to secure federal transit funds, and studies are also looking at local funding options that could require the sale of bonds that would be paid off by the taxpayers. No concrete plans are set, but the most likely location for the new center will be along Montana Avenue on the East Side on property that belongs to the El Paso International Airport. Other locations that were looked at include vacant lots on the far Northeast and Lower Valley, as well as the old Farah site that is now being developed into a shopping center. "Montana is perfect because it's not too far east or west," **Shang** said. "We want to be centrally located so that we don't have a lot of downtime with our buses and they get to their designated route as quickly as possible." Sun Metro uses 120 buses on a daily basis, most of which leave the maintenance facility before 6 a.m.

As the City Council moves toward the creation of a bus rapid transit system, at least four new articulated buses -- buses that measure 60 feet in length -- could be added to the fleet. **Shang** said those buses would not fit in the space available to Sun Metro at the San Francisco Street facility now being used. A new center would require at least 25 acres to properly accommodate any growth in the Sun Metro system, officials said. **Shang** could not say how big the San Francisco facility is but did say it is nowhere near 25 acres.

Some Sun Metro riders said they have noticed a change in the bus system. "I like what they're doing now. The bus station here Downtown is very nice and so is the one they're planning in the Lower Valley," said Ysleta resident Josefina Urquidi. "I think the buses are more on time now, too. Whatever they're doing, it's working."

**Shang** said Sun Metro is expected to grow in ridership, despite national trends of transit systems dwindling. Last year, Sun Metro had an annual ridership of 12.9 million trips. This year, the count is expected to be 13.6 million.

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**Jane K. Shang**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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El Paso Times (TX)  
January 8, 2010

**Pilot meter plan would let you pay for parking with card, cell phone**

Author: Gustavo Reveles Acosta

EL PASO -- Paying for a parking meter could soon be as easy as a swipe of a credit card or sending a text message. A pilot meter program that could begin this year would allow drivers to use credit and debit cards or even their cellular phone to pay for parking. The City Council's transportation committee on Thursday endorsed the program and sent it to the entire council for a vote.

If the council approves the program in about a month, about \$30,000 in new equipment will be bought and installed in two Downtown blocks for testing. City officials hope the use of credit cards and cellular phones will increase parking-meter revenue by up to 30 percent. If this proves possible, the high-tech devices will be bought to replace coin-only meters. "Right now, to park at a meter you have to use quarters, and there is a loss of revenue when you have people who don't have them," said Said Larbi-Cherif, the director of the city's international bridges department, which is in charge of parking meters. "And while there is a fee for each credit card or debit transaction that we process, we believe the increased in revenue more than makes up for the fees we would have to pay." If the council approves the pilot program, the city would actually test two meter systems. The first one, known as pay by space, would use one machine to monitor up to 12 parking spaces. Users of this meter walk up to the machine, which looks like a cash teller, and pay their fees. The second system is more traditional, in which a meter is placed in front of each parking space. Both would be linked to a central system that would allow enforcement officers to more easily identify cars parked at expired meters.

City Rep. Rachel Quintana, a member of the transportation committee, said she liked the idea of more modern and easier-to-use meters, but was worried that the price tag on the new machines could translate into higher parking fees. "We are already at 75 cents an hour, and I don't think we should be going any higher than that," she said. "I worry that if we do, we would discourage people from coming Downtown or from parking in our meters." That concern was shared by Downtown commuter Shane Gross. "I would be willing to pay a little bit more for parking for the convenience of using a debit card," he said. "No one carries cash nowadays, and having a meter that only takes quarters is a big pain."

City Rep. Beto O'Rourke, who heads the committee, asked Larbi-Cherif to come up with a plan for the full council that would not require an increase in parking fees. The committee also asked **Jane Shang**, the deputy city manager for mobility, to deliver an updated Downtown parking plan that could potentially expand the use of meters to streets near the University of Texas at El Paso.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Jane K. Shang**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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El Paso Times (TX)  
August 23, 2009

**New bus transfer station comes with altered routes**

Author: Gustavo Reveles Acosta

EL PASO -- Nearly 30 Sun Metro routes will be changed when the new Downtown transfer center on Santa Fe Street opens. Sun Metro officials said most of the changes would be minimal -- including dropped stops and changes in names or route numbers.

But 12 routes will see significant alterations, which include the creation of the city's second SMART route. Two routes will be canceled.

"This is the beginning of a lot changes that we feel are going to be positive," said **Jane Shang**, a deputy city manager. As more transfer centers open, connections in the bus system will improve, she said.

The Downtown hub, officially known as the Bert Williams Downtown Santa Fe Transfer Center, is the first of four new Sun Metro stations to open. It will feature equipment that will allow riders to see in real time where their bus is and when it will arrive.

Other amenities will include restrooms, food shops and wireless Internet. "It sounds very nice, especially since we have had to put up with this mess for a long time," said Central El Paso resident Rogelio Guzman. "I'm looking forward to it."

The city shifted Sun Metro's Downtown hub from San Jacinto Plaza to Franklin Avenue near the Main Library while it waited for the permanent transfer center to open. The city is in the middle of a \$22 million construction program that will add new Sun Metro transfer centers to the West Side, Lower Valley and Northeast and to the area around the University of Texas at El Paso.

After all the transfer centers open, **Shang** said, the public transportation system will become more accessible for all types of riders. "We're hoping to become a world-class system that will attract traditional users and choice riders," she said. "We want El Paso to be able to take the bus to work with no worries. We feel we are getting there."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Jane K. Shang**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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El Paso Times (TX)  
March 3, 2009

**Downtown bus hub under construction**

Author: Gustavo Reveles Acosta

EL PASO --Construction of an \$8 million Downtown transfer center for Sun Metro bus riders began Monday and should be completed in September. The center at Fourth Avenue and Santa Fe Street will replace a makeshift transfer area near the El Paso Museum of History.

"Transit finally has a home," said Deputy City Manager **Jane Shang**. "This is a start of a transformation of our system for direct and convenient routes for our passengers." At 6,000 square feet, the Downtown center will have space for 17 bus bays and include two covered waiting areas with vending machines, benches, restrooms and water fountains. Additional amenities will include automated ticket kiosks and free wireless Internet service.

Other plans call for leasing space for a restaurant and retail shops. Room also is to be available for public art and parking. The city is using nearly \$7 million in federal transit money to pay for most of the project. The City Council authorized borrowing through bonds to pay for the local share of \$1 million. "It's great that they're giving bus users a nice place to transfer because we have been overlooked for many years," said Blanca Sanchez, who uses Sun Metro every day.

The city is building three other bus terminals this year. One will be on Glory Road near the University of Texas at El Paso, another on Remcon Circle on the West Side, and the third at Alameda Avenue and Zaragoza Road in the Lower Valley.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Jane K. Shang**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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El Paso Times (TX)  
January 16, 2009

**Eliot Shapleigh pushes city rail-based transit plan**

Author: Gustavo Reveles Acosta

EL PASO -- As Mexico and New Mexico border areas move forward with shifting most of their railroad traffic west to Santa Teresa, Texas state Sen. Eliot Shapleigh is urging the city of El Paso to purchase the freed-up tracks and establish a rail-based mass-transit system. But city transit officials said during an informal work session Thursday that the scope of the project goes beyond the city limits, and that a regional entity like the Metropolitan Planning Organization or the Mass Transit Authority should spearhead it.

"The city has a lot on its plate. I want to be aggressive in securing projects like this one, but also cognizant of our (the city's) ability to move projects forward," said **Jane Shang**, a deputy city manager. "We have to ask ourselves if this is something the city should be looking at, or should it be a regional project." The proposed project would use the railroad tracks that Union Pacific and Burlington Northern Santa Fe trains already use in El Paso for trolleylike mass transit.

Shapleigh's vision would create an international transit system, by using the abandoned Ferromex tracks in Juárez and connecting them to El Paso via the black bridge across the Rio Grande near Downtown El Paso. And it's because of the international aspect of the project that he thinks the city of El Paso -- and not any regional entity -- should be its sponsor.

"Let's not get drowned by the 'Let Mickey Do It' syndrome. It's going to take the city with the mayor and the council to do it," Shapleigh said. "If you don't have the political power in the front to do this -- the sway of the mayor's office -- I don't think we could do it." Shapleigh made the presentation Thursday during what was supposed to be a meeting of City Council's Transportation Legislative Review Committee.

Because three of the five members of the committee -- West-Central city Rep. Susie Byrd, Northeast city Rep. Melina Castro and East Side city Rep. Rachel Quintana -- didn't show up and no quorum could be reached, the presentation was made informally and without official discussion to the two members present, Eastridge/Mid-Valley city Rep. Steve Ortega and South-West city Rep. Beto O'Rourke. "The senator seems to be right. The city stands the best chance of getting this project off the ground," O'Rourke said.

On Thursday, one of the first projects signaling the move of railroad activity away from Downtown El Paso and Juárez and to the Santa Teresa area west of El Paso was completed. The Verde Santa Teresa Intermodal Park, a 1,200-acre master-planned rail-served industrial park, includes 4,283 feet of new railroad tracks.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Jane K. Shang**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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El Paso Times (TX)  
November 26, 2008

**Sun Metro terminals will cost \$22M**

Author: Gustavo Reveles Acosta

During a bus tour of the sites of future and current construction, Deputy City Manager **Jane Shang** said the money could probably come from certificates of obligation -- a form of bonds that don't require voter approval -- and that the council could take a vote on them soon.

"By 2010 we will have four new bus terminals for Sun Metro ... that's a very aggressive capital improvement program," said **Shang**, who handles mobility for the city. "This council has made transportation a priority, and we are at a crucial point in reaching some of these goals."

Tuesday's bus tour took most of the city representatives to the future sites of the Downtown Transit Terminal near Santa Fe Street and Paisano Drive; the Glory Road Terminal near UTEP; the Westside Terminal on Remcon Circle; the Northgate Terminal near Dyer Street and Diana Drive; and the Mission Valley Terminal at Alameda Avenue and Zaragoza Road. These projects have opening dates that range from mid-2009 to late 2010. Sun Metro has about 4 million passenger rides a month, a spokeswoman said.

East Side city Rep. Rachel Quintana said the tour helped her understand the projects better, but she also said she had reservations about the funding city administrators might seek. "Right now, with the information I have, I can't say that I support (certificates of obligation) for these projects," she said. "I would like to see this be included in a future bond election. If it is not (included), then I would like to know why not."

The bus tour also included rides through what is to be Sun Metro's fast-paced route from the area near the Paso del Norte Bridge to the University of Texas at El Paso and back, as well as an express route from the future Glory Road station to the West Side. Both routes would take less than 15 minutes per ride, which Sun Metro officials said is the goal in trying to attract new express-service riders.



**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Jane K. Shang**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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McClatchy-Tribune Regional News (USA)  
November 19, 2008

**Not giving bus seat to elderly, disabled will result in fine**

Author: Gustavo Reveles Acosta

Nov. 19 EL PASO Practicing bad manners by refusing to give up your Sun Metro seat to an elderly or disabled person could get you in trouble, and not just with Mom. Starting this week, the police could become involved, too. The City Council on Tuesday voted 7-0 to adopt a new ordinance that makes it a Class C misdemeanor for an able-bodied person younger than 65 to deny a seat to elderly or disabled passengers in specifically marked areas of each Sun Metro bus.

Violators of the new ordinance could be fined up to \$500. "I know this sounds silly, but there are a lot of inconsiderate people riding the bus every day," said Lori Vugteveen, a Sun Metro passenger who uses a wheelchair. "Many times, I have seen a driver ask someone to move for an older lady or for someone in a wheelchair, and that person won't do it." Sun Metro officials said that they didn't have specific figures on the numbers of complaints they received about this problem, but that based on customer service calls, they could tell this was a "significant problem."

Buses already have areas identified for seniors and the disabled, but until Tuesday, bus drivers didn't have the authority to do much more than to ask people sitting in those areas to move. Under the new ordinance, though, drivers will be required to ask violators to move if the seat is needed. If that person refuses to move, the driver is instructed to call the police. "I just can't believe that this is such a big problem. ... I can't believe there are people who wouldn't stand up and give their seat to an old lady," said Robert Grado, a UTEP student who rides the bus to school every day. "This is just an issue of being brought up right by your mom."

Members of the City Council were equally incredulous. "If you don't know to give up your seat to an elderly or disabled person on the bus, then you're an idiot," said South-West city Rep. Beto O'Rourke. Signs announcing the new ordinance are expected to start going up on buses this week, and officials of Sun Metro said they would have an outreach program to inform passengers of the changes. The council asked Sun Metro to add more training for bus drivers about the change, especially about identifying a passenger as elderly or disabled.

Sun Metro provides frequent senior and disabled riders with identification cards used for discounted rates, but the council said drivers shouldn't demand to see the cards when determining whether the new ordinance needs to be used. "El Paso is a great place," said **Jane Shang**, deputy city manager for mobility. "We just want to make sure this is so for everyone in this city."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Jane K. Shang**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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El Paso Times (TX)  
June 13, 2008

**Temporary bus hub draws riders' ire**

Author: Aileen B. Flores

It's become a struggle for West Side resident George Hare to catch a bus at the temporary Downtown Sun Metro hub at Oregon Street and Franklin Avenue. And, according to Hare, 69, the terminal is creating a hardship for many riders. "The bus service is getting worse," he said. "The buses don't have signs, and people have to wait under the heat in a place without water fountains and public restrooms available." Julie Baldwin, Engineering Services spokeswoman, said this week that additional canopies, benches and water fountains would be installed along Franklin "in the next couple of months." She said the public restrooms at the Main Library also were available for Sun Metro customers. "It's too easy for the city officials to put the water fountains, but they don't seem to care," said Loretta Clark, a regular Sun Metro rider, who complained about the temporary terminal location. Susana De Leon, a Montana Vista resident, said the distances she and her two children have to walk around Downtown are getting longer. De Leon now walks at least three blocks more to church than she used to, she said. "We can still walk under the heat, but there are a lot of elderly trying to get to the terminal," she said in Spanish. Sun Metro officials said that in an effort to improve service and safety, Franklin Avenue would be restricted to bus traffic from Santa Fe Street to Oregon Street, and a small section of El Paso Street would also be used by Sun Metro starting Sunday. However, a security guard at the temporary Downtown Sun Metro hub, Javier Romero, said the San Jacinto Plaza was a safer place for the riders. Said Sun Metro spokeswoman Cynthia Grajeda, "We understand the actual location is not the best location, but we're trying to help the people. We are proposing the Union Plaza as a permanent site."

In April, the council voted to build a new hub for Sun Metro in the Union Plaza area near the Judson F. Williams Convention Center. The Sun Metro terminal was moved from San Jacinto Plaza to the area around the intersection of Franklin and Oregon in an attempt to improve service. Baldwin said the \$2.4 million Union Plaza project should be completed sometime next year. But Grajeda said Thursday that the project was "on hold for the moment," and Mayor John Cook said officials were still looking at other options for the site of the new Sun Metro terminal, such as the Union Depot at 700 San Francisco. "We haven't brought the idea to the Mass Transit Board, but there is a possibility," Cook said.

West-Central city Rep. Susie Byrd said the conversations about moving the Sun Metro hub could be the result of the city's recent hiring of **Jane Shang** as the new deputy city manager for mobility. "Although the plans were already approved by council, she did say she wanted to revise them and see if there were any recommendations she could make," Byrd said. "A move to Union Depot could be one of the things that are being talked about, although the final decision would have to come to council." City Manager Joyce Wilson she expected the council to decide by July whether to reaffirm its original decision or move the hub.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Jane K. Shang**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Tampa Tribune, The (FL)  
August 13, 2004

**Council Wants Bucs To Tackle Noise Issue**

Author: JOSE' PATIÑO GIRONA

TAMPA — The Tampa City Council wants the Tampa Bay Buccaneers to present a more specific plan on how they will control noise and accommodate public transportation at the proposed practice facilities at the former Tampa Bay Center.

After a lively discussion at the first public hearing Thursday, the city council voted to continue the hearing at 1 p.m. Sept. 2. City council members asked if the Buccaneers had completed a noise abatement plan. A team representative said they had not. "I think there is more work to do," Councilwoman Rose Ferlita said. "Your homework is not done. It's too bad everybody still has some issues." John Grandoff III, an attorney for the Buccaneers, said the team has not proposed a noise abatement plan because it isn't required until closer to construction.

Councilman John Dingfelder suggested the Buccaneers could place walls on the south and east sides of the 25-acre development at Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard and MacDill Avenue. The team plans to build a practice facility and business offices there. Dingfelder also suggested they place the loudspeakers used for practices facing the northwest to reduce noise aimed at the neighborhood. Grandoff said the team had considered a wall along MacDill Avenue but was concerned traffic noise would bounce off the wall and carry to St. Joseph's Hospital, across the street from the practice field.

In another issue, HARTline officials were concerned about the fate of a bus stop on the south side of the property that serves about 4,000 people a day. The bus stop isn't on the practice facility site, so the Buccaneers suggested keeping it where it is. But HARTline representatives said they could be moved from place to place when future development comes up.

They would prefer a permanent location at Himes and Ohio avenues, said **Jane Shang**, HARTline director of engineering and development. "We need to have a game plan because we can't build a facility overnight," **Shang** said. "We need a permanent home for the passengers."

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Research Compiled by:      Cara Slade and Lynelle Klein  
   Colin Baenziger & Associates

COLIN BAENZIGER  ASSOCIATES

EXECUTIVE RECRUITING

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*Section 13*

*Leonard “Len” B. Sossamon*

*Lake Worth Beach City Manager  
Candidate Report*

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*Cover Letter and Resume*

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Leonard B. Sossamon  
5601 Springs Avenue, Myrtle Beach, South Carolina 29577  
Telephone (704) 796-8889 Email: jordnbrn@aol.com

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June 4, 2021

Mr. Colin Baenziger  
Colin Baenziger & Associates  
2055 South Atlantic Avenue, Suite 504  
Daytona Beach Shores, Florida 32118

Dear Mr. Baenziger:

Please accept this correspondence as my expression of interest in the position of City Manager for the City of Lake Worth Beach, Florida. I believe I have the seasoned experience the Mayor and City Commission are seeking in an effective manager to provide enthusiastic leadership into the future. My resume is forwarded for your consideration.

My specific skill set aligns very well with the expressed needs of the Mayor and City Commission. I am a forward-thinking, strategic leader and an involved manager with successes in management, financial affairs, economic development and redevelopment projects. I have managed multiple large-scale infrastructure projects simultaneously with proven success. To do so, a manager must be organized with capabilities of excellent communication skills and an achievement orientation.

My broad-based experience includes managing a county and a city located in the Tampa-St. Petersburg, Florida MSA, a county located in the Columbia, South Carolina MSA, and a rapidly growing city in the Charlotte-Concord-Gastonia, North Carolina MSA. I have extensive expertise with economic development and have negotiated multiple deals for my respective cities and counties. Examples include bringing the 1,000,000 square foot Concord Mills Super Regional Mall to the City of Concord, along with 4,000 plus hotel rooms and annexation of the Charlotte Motor Speedway. Both are in the top five tourist destinations of the Carolinas.

My successful redevelopment and historic preservation projects include two downtown commercial districts (Concord, NC and Newberry, SC) and an aging industrial park in Newberry, SC. During my tenure as Port Richey's Interim City Manager, I resurrected the waterfront overlay district and canal dredging projects.

Early in my career I recognized the value of building good management teams, developing solid growth plans and prospects, and collaboration. After creating a great management team in Concord, NC we collaborated with the State and Federal Governments to build the Concord Regional Airport. We used 80% Federal funding, 18% State funding and 2% Concord funding. This successful project now contributes one billion dollars annually to the North Carolina economy. Another similar success in this area is the

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redevelopment of the Brooksville Tampa Bay Regional Airport and Industrial Complex in Hernando County.

The intriguing challenge for Lake Worth Beach, beyond management of day-to-day activities and infrastructure, is in the realm of redevelopment which will not adversely affect the City's existing historic downtown and its vibrant ethnic and economic base of true diversity. My successful efforts in this area include growing the City of Concord and Newberry County with industrial and commercial parks. In both, the historic/arts downtown districts were able to maintain their integrity with growth focused in other locales within the city and county.

I would welcome a meeting with the Mayor and City Commission to discuss my qualifications and commitment to public service. Thank you for taking the time to review my resume. I can be reached at (704) 796-8889.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Leonard B. Sossamon".

Leonard B. Sossamon

Attachment



**LEONARD B. SOSSAMON**

5601 Springs Avenue, Myrtle Beach, SC 29577

Home (704) 786-4271

Email: jordnbrn@aol.com

Cell (704) 796-8889

**SUMMARY**

More than thirty years of local government experience with expertise in the following areas:

- Operations and Project Management
- Strategic Planning and Operations Analysis
- Organizational Change and Development
- Financial Operations and Budget
- Economic Development
- Community Development
- Media Relations
- Customer Service

An innovative leader with demonstrated organizational, analytical and communication skills. Experienced in managing change and specializing in turnarounds. Achievement oriented with foresight. A dedicated team player who can work independently within the organizational framework.

**RELEVANT LOCAL GOVERNMENT EXPERIENCE**

**Interim City Manager, Port Richey, Florida**

**2020-2021**

Since June 2020, I have served as the Interim City Manager with all the duties and responsibilities of the City’s Charter. During this period, I worked with the City’s various departments to prepare the FY2020-21 budget. I developed an innovative solution to Port Richey’s capital project funding needs while providing for adequate funding and continuity to the City’s Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA). Most recently I have concentrated on resurrecting Port Richey’s waterfront overlay district physical improvements and canal dredging program.

**Jordan Brown Management Corporation, Concord, North Carolina**

**2019-Present**

During this time, I have developed contracts via my management company and my real estate and construction companies. I consult with Prima Luce Energy Systems of North Carolina and Taber Consulting of Tennessee. The former is a new energy development company, while the latter is a multi-use development company. Most recently, I negotiated a contract to serve as the Interim City Manager for the City of Port Richey, Florida.

**County Administrator, Hernando County, Florida**

**2012 – 2019**

Hernando County is a county with a population of 188,500 covering 589 square miles. It is located approximately 40 miles north of Tampa on Florida’s Gulf of Mexico coast. The county seat is Brooksville with a population of 7,500, so the county is responsible for serving the remaining population with all usual county and municipal services. This includes water and sewer services to over 60,000 households. It also includes providing contractual solid waste collection services to county residents and operation of the

county's landfill and recycling efforts. Also, the County Administrator is responsible for operating a full-service fire and rescue department of about 300 full time firefighters, first responders, and EMTs.

From 2015 through 2018, the Economic Development team managed over 500,000 square feet of new manufacturing space in Hernando County. This includes new companies recruited to come build in Hernando County, as well as expansions. These efforts produced over 500 new jobs and the retention of over 350 jobs. Major expansion projects included Barrette Outdoor Living/AlumiGuard, Flagstone Pavers, Airofog USA LLC, Surge Suppression LLC, Composite Motors, Premier Pharmacy Labs, and Monster Transmissions. New businesses recruited include e-TeleQuote Insurance, Inc., Successful Acquisitions and Baker Parts. Also, ICTC and NCIS elevators expanded creating new jobs. In 2018, we completed negotiations for a new 200,000 square foot cold storage facility for a gain of 60 new jobs. It is known as Frigitek Cold Storage and will be located at the county owned and operated Brooksville Tampa Bay Regional Airport and Technology Center. Throughout this time period, we managed 18 to 25 active projects per year. Hernando County's incentive package for new and expanding businesses totaled \$1.5 million and produced a new tax base of over \$50 million. These funds are paid to the company over 5 – 7 calendar years.

Within less than six months on the job, Hernando County was struck by several tropical storms and hurricanes. I quickly discovered the county had no bonafide Stormwater Management Plan. In a series of meetings with the County Engineer and the Public Works Director, we compiled the appropriate best available data from past events and secured BOCC approval for development of a stormwater plan based on Best Management Practices (BMPs). To date, the county has accomplished 80% of the BMP goals (7 individual projects). It continues to acquire land for designated retention areas (DRAs) and now employs a stormwater engineer.

#### Duties and Responsibilities of County Administrator:

- Chief executive officer of a county government with 800 employees in the General Fund, Fire and Rescue, Utilities and Solid Waste, Transportation and Public Works. This also includes emergency management, economic development, planning and land use, parks and recreation, health, social services, human resources, veteran affairs, and stormwater.
- Preparation and administration of the county's operating and capital improvements budget.
- Implementation of Board of Commissioners policies and directives.
- Media representation of the county on television and radio.
- Administration of day-to-day operations as well as long range planning and strategic planning.

#### Achievements:

- Personally authored/developed Hernando County's first Strategic Plan, along with measurement matrix for progress.
- Spearheaded development of county's first long range road paving and redevelopment plan. Took county from paving only two miles of lime rock roads per year to over twenty miles per year.

- Responsible for development of county's first Stormwater and Flood Management Plan.
- Restructured County's economic development recruitment process and retention efforts to successfully attract new manufacturing companies and to retain existing companies.

**County Administrator, Newberry SC****2004 – 2006**

Newberry is a county with a population of 45,000 covering approximately 700 square miles. It is located adjacent to the Columbia, South Carolina metro area. I-26 traverses the county from Columbia on the east, to Greenville-Spartanburg on the west. This location provides the county with the transportation access to metro airports and seaports necessary to be a major manufacturing center. Also, having borders on Lake Murray and Lake Greenwood has made Newberry County a tourist destination and a desirable retirement community. Both sectors are continually developing.

**Duties and Responsibilities as County Administrator:**

- Chief executive officer of a county government with over 400 employees and \$30 million budget. Oversight responsibility for the following functions: roads, stormwater planning, zoning, economic development, parks and recreation, social services, law enforcement, jails and court facilities, finance, general services and personnel.
- Preparation and administration of County's operating and capital budget.
- Implementation of Council directed policy.
- Media representation of the County including appearances on television and radio, interviews with the print media and preparation of press releases.
- Administration of day-to-day operations as well as long range issues.

**Achievements:**

- Restored financial integrity to county owned nursing home and assisted living center by refinancing their bonded indebtedness. Reduced the term of 30 years and rate of 8.875% to 22 years with a 4.625% rate which saved the County \$10,000,000 over the life of the bonds.
- Received the Bond Buyer's 2005 Deal of the Year, and the 2006 J. Mitchell Graham Award from the South Carolina Association of Counties for the above efforts. Due to use of Special Purpose Revenue bonds not using tax dollars. It was recognized as innovative, creative and replicable. I replicated the deal within six months to refinance the bonds of the county owned hospital thereby saving another \$3,000,000 over the life of the bonds.
- Structured acquisition of two new industrial parks for the county comprising over 500 acres. Initially recruited two new industries creating over 200 new jobs and over \$50 million in new tax base.
- Recruited Caterpillar to open plant in one of the county owned industrial parks. The new plant was over 600,000 square feet. Initially, over 150 new jobs were created to build generators. More jobs were promised.

- Renovated County’s historic courthouse. Project was over \$2 million and took about two years to complete. Included restoring historic attributes and expanding and finishing the basement for new office space and reconstructing the second-floor court room.

**City Manager, City of Concord, NC**

**1985 – 1998**

**Planning and Community Development Director**

**1980 – 1985**

Concord is a city with a population of 89,891 covering approximately 60 square miles. It is located in Cabarrus County, North Carolina which is centrally located in a multi-county metropolitan area with a population of almost 2 million. The population of Concord, as well as the metropolitan area is well diversified. Concord is home to Charlotte Motor Speedway, while the metropolitan area is a national financial center. Concord is a progressive city with a hometown feel visited by millions of tourists each year.

Duties and Responsibilities as City Manager:

- Chief executive officer of a municipal government with 700 employees and \$100 million budget. Oversight responsibility for the following functions: police, roads, stormwater drainage, water, sewer and electric utility, parks, recreation, planning, zoning, finance, general services, personnel, fire and aviation.
- Implementation of Council directed policy. Administration of the city’s day-to-day operations as well as identification and resolution of long range issues. Oversight of the plans to expand the city’s geographic size, population, and industrial/commercial base per the City Council’s adopted goals and objectives.
- 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 appearances on television and radio, 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.

Achievements:

- Restored morale and built a high performance management team by restructuring and developing existing staff. Eliminated a semi-autonomous utility commission to become more responsive to residents’ needs per City Council. Morale was improved dramatically by bringing these employees under the city’s performance pay plan, and the Council and staff were able to better respond to citizens since we had direct control. Complaints dropped by over 50% within six months.
- Instituted an annual customer satisfaction survey to measure the effectiveness of city services. Integrated the survey into the budget and the performance monitoring process.

- Revamped budget and financial systems. Won the Government Finance Officers' Association's Distinguished Budget Award for twelve consecutive years.
- Restored financial integrity to the water and sewer utility fund. By eliminating the semi-autonomous utility commission, I was able to bring all such operations and budgets under the City Council and City Manager. This allowed us to expand the water and sewer systems to virtually serve the entire county and to triple the size of the electric system. Throughout these efforts, we were able to maintain level utility rates for all three systems.
- Replaced general obligation bonds with revenue bonds to expand the city's water, sewer and electric systems. This was in concert with the City Council's directives to grow the city by statutory annexation. My plans enabled me to meet the Council's expectations to grow the city without raising taxes, from 8 square miles with 16,000 people, to 50 square miles with 50,000 people in about 12 years. My long range plans are still being used by Concord.
- Oversight of planning, financing and development of Concord Regional Airport and Municipal Golf Course. Constructed the \$27 million airport in less than 3 years and the \$8 million golf course simultaneously.
- Recruitment of Concord Mills and oversight of its planning. Concord Mills is a super-regional shopping center with over 1 million square feet under roof. It is now the number one tourist attraction in North Carolina with the Charlotte Motor Speedway in the top six. When I started the planning for this development, there were no hotels located at this I-85 exit, now there are over 1,000 hotel rooms and over 2 million square feet of retail.
- Privatized solid waste collection and landfill operations. Negotiated contract with BFI that resulted in the city not having to pay tipping fees for the life of the landfill for solid waste originating in the city which hosted their private landfill. This saves Concord over \$2 million per year. Initiated city's recycling program.
- Directed efforts to rebuild city's electric system after hurricanes and ice storms. After one hurricane, 90% of city's customers were without power and I led around the clock restoration efforts via mutual aid with other electric cities.

**Planning and Community Development Director, Roanoke Rapids, NC  
Roanoke Chowan Regional Housing Authority and Redevelopment Commission**

**1977 – 1980**

**Duties and Responsibilities:**

- Oversight of planning, economic development, community development and public housing for Halifax, Northampton and Hertford Counties.
- Preparation of project budgets, grants and programs.
- Management of daily operations and long-range planning.

**Achievements:**

- Awarded second Urban Development Action Grant (UDAG) program in North Carolina. This hotel project was the first UDAG project completed in North Carolina. UDAG was a federal program for economic and community development.
- Secured over \$2 million dollars in community and economic development programs per year, as well as over \$4 million for public and senior housing per year.

**OTHER PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

**Jordan Brown Management Corporation**

**2006 – 2012**

Private consulting business I owned and operated.

**Alliance Development Group, LLC, Charlotte, NC**

**2006 – 2012**

ADG specializes in developing single tenant income producing properties. Serving as Chief Operating Officer/Executive Vice-President, I was responsible for project oversight and development. Projects include Quaker Steak and Lube restaurants, Walgreens, Goodyear Auto Centers.

**Hunter and Brown, Inc., Concord, NC**

**1998 – 2003**

Hunter and Brown was a firm co-founded by me. It specialized in the redevelopment of downtown properties and commercial parks. As a firm, we redeveloped over 100,000 square feet of mixed-use space for our company. We also consulted with other developers and municipal governments on development projects. We leased and managed commercial properties for ourselves and other companies.

**EDUCATION**

University of North Carolina, Charlotte

MA Urban Geography

Emphasis on city and county planning and economic development.

University of North Carolina, Charlotte

Bachelor of Arts

Majored in Political Science, minored in Sociology and Psychology. Served as justice on Student Body Court.

North Carolina Institute of Government

Certificate

Received Municipal Administration Certificate.

South Carolina Executive Institute

Certificate

Received certificate from this multi-campus/multi-discipline program which focuses on problem solving.

**PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS**

ICMA member since 1985

Cabarrus Bank & Trust – Board of Directors (Retired)

Concord Downtown Development Corporation – 2008 President and 2007-10 Board of Directors

Pasco Hernando State College Foundation Board

Brooksville Ridge Kiwanis Club Board of Directors, 2018 Recipient of Kiwanian of the Year

Advisory Committee for Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University Brooksville Agricultural & Environmental Research Station (BAERS)

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*Candidate Introduction*

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**Leonard B. Sossamon**

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**EDUCATION**

Master of Arts, Urban Geography, University of North Carolina Charlotte Bachelor of Arts  
Political Science, University of North Carolina Charlotte Certificate in Municipal  
Administration, University of North Carolina  
Chapel Hill Institute of Government  
Executive Institute Graduate, South Carolina Budget and Control Board

**EXPERIENCE**

Jordan Brown Management Corporation, Concord, North Carolina	Present
Interim City Manager, Port Richey, Florida	2020 – 2021
County Administrator, Hernando County, Florida	2012 – 2019
Jordan Brown Management Corporation, Concord, North Carolina	2006 – 2012
Alliance Development Group, Charlotte, North Carolina	2006 – 2012
County Administrator, Newberry County, South Carolina	2004 – 2006
Hunter and Brown, Inc., Concord, North Carolina	1998 – 2003
City Manager, Concord, North Carolina	1985 – 1998
Planning and Community Development Director, Concord, North Carolina	1980 – 1985
Planning and Community Development Director, Roanoke Rapids, NC	1977 – 1980

**BACKGROUND**

Since serving as Interim City Manager for Port Richey, Florida, I have focused my attention on other city and county management opportunities. This has also allowed me the time to review my real estate and other business interests. I served the City of Port Richey as Interim City Manager from June 2020 through January 2021. The previous city manager retired, and the city had been without a Finance Director and Human Resources Director for 19 months. Work on the FY 2020- 2021 Budget had not been started, giving me 6 weeks to develop a balanced budget to present to City Council per State Law and the City's Charter. I then concentrated on resurrecting the City Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA), the defunct channel dredging project and jump started the Waterfront Overlay District (WOO) improvement projects. The FY 20-21 Budget for Port Richey is \$22 million, and the City has 58 employees.

While serving as Hernando County Administrator, I am proud to have led its economic development efforts for over three years. We recruited ten new industrial companies to build in the County's business parks. More than five hundred jobs were brought to the County with salaries averaging over 125% of the County's median wages. These recruitments added much needed growth to the County's tax base. New businesses include e-TeleQuote Insurance, Successful

**Leonard B. Sossamon**

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Acquisitions, Baker Parts and Airofog USA. Expansion projects include Barrett Outdoor Living/Alumi-Guard, Flagstone Pavers, Surge Suppression, Composite Motors, Premier Pharmacy Labs and Monster Transmissions.

The General Fund budget for Hernando County is \$100 million and the total budget comprises \$449.5 million. Major projects include wastewater plant expansion at the County's airport, roadway (approximately 30 miles) and storm water (10 - 12 miles) projects. The population of the County is 188,500, and there are 850 employees under the responsibility of the County Administrator reporting through twelve directors.

Port Richey's three most significant issues were and are:

- Adequate funding for the CRA, General Fund and Enterprise Funds. Historically, the City has not made sustainable and consistent wise decisions. An unstable City Council, Mayor and Senior Management resulted in many questionable actions. The former Mayor remains in jail, awaiting trial.
- Updating and replacing substandard and decaying infrastructure such as water and sewer lines, sewer lift stations and stormwater apparatus.
- Expanding and upgrading the City's fire station and fire equipment.

The three most significant issues facing my prior employer, Hernando County were and are:

- Revenue growth. As a bedroom community of Tampa-St Petersburg, the County's population growth has been significant, but the ad valorem tax revenues have not kept pace. This places growing pressure on the General Fund. This problem will become more acute and be exacerbated by the Covid-19 Virus, and the recovery. If this situation creates a depression, Hernando County's home building industry and small retail and hospitality economy will suffer and severely impact property and sales tax revenues.
- Wastewater plant expansions. As more and more subdivisions are developed, the County's regional wastewater plants must be expanded to handle the increased flows.
- Arterial roadways. Several large scale residential and commercial centers have been approved during the past two years. As each is built out, east-west commuting has gotten difficult, leading to citizen complaints and demands for improvements.

**GENERAL MANAGEMENT STYLE AND EXPERIENCE**

I am interested in being Lake Worth Beach's next City Manager since it has needs that I see as opportunities. Some of my strong suits are strategic planning, comprehensive planning, infrastructure replacements and operational efficiencies. I have extensive experience in development and redevelopment projects, some of which have been public-private partnership projects. I am well versed in emergency management and have guided Port Richey through the challenges of Covid-19. I have oversight experience and expansion experience with a municipal

**Leonard B. Sossamon**

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electric system. I have also developed and had oversight of a municipal golf course and regional airport.

While serving as City Manager for Concord, North Carolina, the City Council decided to abolish the semi-autonomous Board of Light and Water Commissioners. This required a Municipal Charter change needing North Carolina General Assembly approval. After the City Council authorized the Charter Amendments by Ordinance, I represented the City at the General Assembly and was successful in obtaining State approval. I then worked diligently to create three new City departments and their respective directors. This involved nearly 400 employees creating City water, sewer and electric departments.

Early in my tenure as County Administrator for Hernando County, Florida I had to merge the Spring Hill Fire and Rescue District's 300 plus employees and organization into Hernando County's Fire and Rescue Department. Governor Scott had just disbanded the bankrupt Spring Hill District. I was successful in merging the personnel and operations of the defunct district into the Hernando County operations.

While working as a City Manager or as a County Administrator, I have always worked to improve the relationships between my jurisdiction and all others. It is another example of my belief and philosophy of team building and regionalism.

Infrastructure renovation, replacement and expansion have been some of my strong points. My successful projects include roads, streets, storm water, utilities, an airport and a golf course. Two of my more unusual successes involved the issuance of Special Purpose Revenue Bonds to refinance the existing debt on the nursing home, independent and assisted living centers, and hospital owned by Newberry County, South Carolina. In addition to saving the County over \$10 million, it provided the avenue to make significant improvements to each facility.

My management style is marked by adaptability and resiliency which includes leading by example. While similar, all cities and counties do have differences. A good manager will observe, evaluate and adapt strategies with the leadership staff in order to move the organization forward. No one person has all the answers, so collaboration is a key to success. Using this approach helped me successfully put together a team which acquired the land, designed and built the Concord Regional Airport in thirty-three months.

Open, approachable, caring and a good listener are just a few words my staff would use to describe me. Employees at all levels of the organization have always felt comfortable talking with me whether in my office, or out in the community. Many of my immediate, administrative staff would say that I am tireless and flexible. The public will agree that I have a sincere interest in their well- being and customer service.

Most of my elected officials would say that I am energetic in body and mind, and that I am a knowledgeable and extremely capable manager. They would say my financial acumen is strong

### Leonard B. Sossamon

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and innovative at the same time. As an example, while City Manager in Concord, North Carolina, I came up with an idea to reissue general obligation debt as allowed by state law. I was informed I could only reissue the principle that we had paid off the previous year. We challenged the issue in court and won the right to also include interest retired. Several local governments thanked me for being creative and setting a precedent. During my tenure in Hernando County, I spearheaded 3 upgrades to the County's bond rating.

I feel my greatest strength is my ability to build consensus through collaboration and cooperation. For decades in Hernando County, only money generated by the airport was used for its infrastructure needs, and that money was not enough to expand the roadways to support new economic development on the airport grounds. After some research, I learned the roads and streets located within the airport's 2,400 acres had not been dedicated as public county roadways.

Building a team from the County's Legal, Airport, Public Works, Utilities and Finance Departments (the last of which is part of the County Clerk's Office), necessary rights of ways were identified and properly recorded as public. The result is general transportation trust and gas tax funds are now used to build new and upgrade existing roads on the airport grounds. We could also then use utility funds to expand the utility system and development on the airport grounds became viable to enhance economic development efforts which expanded the tax base and grew job opportunities.

Through patience and perseverance, I was able to convince a large holding company from the Washington, D.C. area to build a 200,000 square foot, cold storage facility in Hernando County. When completed, it will add \$35 million to the tax base and employ over 100 people.

My most prevalent weakness was in trusting and giving leadership staff second and third chances to achieve our desired outcomes. I have recognized this "flaw" and now work to be more diligent in evaluating and accepting the capabilities and limitations of the person.

When my staff and I developed the Hernando County Strategic Plan, we decided on several metrics for measuring our progress and success. One was the number of miles of roads paved or resurfaced every year. Another was the number of jobs recruited and retained each year, as well as the amount of new and expanded manufacturing space developed.

I have two achievements (so far) which I consider to be among my biggest and most effective. With health care costs rising for the employees of companies including cities and counties, I decided to go on offense. With my human resources staff in Hernando County, we explored options and settled on developing a County Wellness Center. It proved to save the County and its employees hundreds of thousands of dollars yearly. All constitutional officer employees and employees of the City of Brooksville also joined the Wellness Program. My other biggest achievement is the previously mentioned development of the Concord Regional Airport. I was successful in putting together a great team of Concord staff and consultants to complete the

### Leonard B. Sossamon

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project in less than three years. This airport's annual contribution to the North Carolina economy is over \$1 billion dollars.

My first failure was in economic development. Our local Cabarrus County Chamber Executive and I were recruiting a large Japanese electronics company. It would have meant over 1,000 new jobs and a significant tax base. After a couple months of showing sites and making presentations, the company chose another county. We were devastated because we knew we had the best site and location. I learned to not take it personally and that I cannot always win. From that point forward, we were successful recruiting firms like Pass & Seymour, Oiles America, Sysco Foods, and FedEx. Also, I recruited the Mills Corporation to build the Concord Mills Mall which encompasses 1 million square feet of retail space under roof.

Yes, I have had to fire people. I never enjoy the process but realize that it sometimes is the only answer to a situation. I do it with compassion and never in anger.

Challenges facing the next Lake Worth Beach City Manager will include guiding the City through the Covid-19 recovery and the additional strains of the virus. Another challenge will be managing growth from redevelopments while helping the City maintain its identity and outstanding quality of life. I am well versed in the areas of economic development in both redevelopment and new development. I have rebuilt electric systems after hurricanes and have managed major water and sewer system expansion and upgrades. My experience also includes developing affordable housing and coastal management.

I have a reputation of looking for ways to improve operations and finances. Tightening up contracts or rebidding contracts to secure better pricing is a way to ensure the City will receive the biggest bang for the buck. I have successfully refinanced debt and redirected revenues. I did this several times in Hernando County, and I was able to save Newberry County, South Carolina at least \$10 million by refinancing its debt on its nursing home, assisted and independent living facilities. I replicated the savings by refinancing the County owned hospital's bonds. This innovative approach won the County several major awards including the Bond Buyers Deal of the Year.

During the first six months, my efforts will include:

- Meeting with staff, elected officials, citizen groups, and where appropriate county/state officials to assess City operations, concerns, positions and dynamics;
- Formulating the appropriate strategic direction based on the City Council's goals and objectives;
- Assessing the City's financial strength and projecting future revenue trends;
- Developing redevelopment strategies and action plans for growing the City's economic base;

**Leonard B. Sossamon**

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- Reviews of current performance measures, and where necessary, developing additional measures that will be used to determine if staff and I are meeting the goals of the organization and City Council, and exceeding the expectations of the citizens.

Working well and extensively with the media is one of my strong points. It is always best to ensure accurate, quality coverage for the citizens we serve. I have had regular meetings with the local press and made appearances on television and radio talk shows to discuss my city or county's progress, particularly in terms of economic development initiatives and recruitments.

While serving Hernando County as County Administrator, I worked closely with the Board of County Commissioners and the County's Public Information Officer to effectively use social media to deliver the County's message. We used Facebook and other platforms including "Survey Monkey".

Most, if not all, public sector managers have detractors. I have had my share. That said, there is nothing true in my background that would embarrass the City.

In my leisure time, my wife and I enjoy traveling. We also cook and bake together. While I was responsible for developing a golf course for Concord, NC, I do not play well or often; but I do enjoy it. My wife and I love long walks on the beach, and the beach music associated with a dance style (Shag) still popular with the Carolina coastal area.

**SIX ADJECTIVES OR PHRASES I WOULD USE TO DESCRIBE MYSELF**

- Ethical
- Innovative
- Proactive
- Diligent
- Accessible
- Enthusiastic

**REASON FOR DEPARTING CURRENT POSITION**

I was employed as Interim Manager for the City of Port Richey for an initial six-month period. My contract was extended by City Council for another month, until their new manager could relocate. The permanent manager started on January 19, 2021.

My contract in Hernando County was terminated after the most recent election due to political motives. The County has a long history of using reserves from the General Fund to balance the budget. After 20 years of this practice, and despite repeated warnings from me and other prior County Administrators, the General Fund Reserves have been severely depleted. It was

**Leonard B. Sossamon**

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convenient for them to accuse me of not informing the Commissioners of the situation. In actuality, the local newspaper (Tampa Bay Times) recorded at least ten times over the past two years when I did so during Board meetings. Since my dismissal, several citizens have played recordings from those BOCC meetings during public comments demonstrating I had warned the Commission repeatedly.

**CURRENT/MOST RECENT SALARY**

My final, annual salary at Hernando County was \$219,400. My salary in Port Richey as Interim City Manager was \$90.00 per hour for a 40-hour week.

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*CB&A Background Checks*

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**Background Check Summary for  
LEONARD B. SOSSAMON**

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**Criminal Records Checks:**

Nationwide Criminal Records Search	No Records Found
County	
Pasco County, FL	No Records Found
Horry County, SC	No Records Found
Hernando County, FL	No Records Found
Cabarrus County, NC	No Records Found
Davidson County, NC	No Records Found
Mecklenburg County, NC	No Records Found
Newberry County, SC	No Records Found
State	
Florida	No Records Found
North Carolina	No Records Found
South Carolina	No Records Found

**Civil Records Checks:**

County	
Pasco County, FL	No Records Found
Horry County, SC	No Records Found
Hernando County, FL	No Records Found
Cabarrus County, NC	No Records Found
Davidson County, NC	No Records Found
Mecklenburg County, NC	No Records Found
Newberry County, SC	No Records Found
Federal	
Florida	No Records Found
North Carolina	1990 – Civil Rights, Other lawsuit filed against the City of Concord, NC including Mr. Sossamon in his capacity as City Manager <b><i>Disposition:</i></b> November 1993, Case Dismissed in favor of City  <i>*See Next Page for Candidate Explanation of Records Found</i>
South Carolina	No Records Found

**Motor Vehicle**

Florida	No Records Found
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**Background Check Summary for  
LEONARD B. SOSSAMON**

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<b>Credit</b>	Excellent
<b>Personal Bankruptcy</b>	No Records Found
<b>Sex Offender Registry</b>	Not Listed
<b>Education</b>	Confirmed
<b>Employment</b>	Confirmed
<b>Social Media</b>	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.

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During my tenure as City Manager for the City of Concord, North Carolina, an employee who was dismissed filed a lawsuit against the City, the department head responsible for the dismissal, the City Council, and me as the City Manager. The lawsuit alleged that the former employee was not afforded proper “due process”. The former employee had the suit dismissed by the Court and we were all cleared of any alleged wrongful actions.

Please advise if you have further questions.

Sincerely,

Leonard B. Sossamon

**Background Check Summary for  
LEONARD B. SOSSAMON  
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  Cabernet Holdings, LLC
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?  
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. 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  Untwue Blogs - Lenny The Lion
10. Please provide a list of any lawsuits in which you are or have been a party either as plaintiff or defendant.

Attested to: Leonard B. Sossamon  
Signature of Applicant

Please email this form via PDF DOCUMENT to [Lynelle@cb-asso.com](mailto:Lynelle@cb-asso.com) or via fax to (561) 621-5965 no later than 5:00 PM PST 06/28/2021.  
(Note: Please be sure to sign the form with your actual signature if you are sending Fax or PDF Document)

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*CB&A Reference Notes*

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**Reference Notes**  
**Leonard “Len” B. Sossamon**

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**Will Dittmer – Vice Mayor, City of Port Richey, FL 727-421-0314**

Mr. Dittmer has known Mr. Sossamon since June of 2020. They interviewed several managers for the position and Mr. Sossamon really surprised them. Most interims are just seat warmers, but he jumped into the job and they are really happy with his performance.

Because Mr. Sossamon can see many different perspectives, he has good advice. Finding solutions and making good decisions is one of his strong suits. He maintains the organization at a high level and has guided the City through some past difficulties very well.

The most common feedback that they hear from residents about Mr. Sossamon is both surprise and appreciation that he answered his phone when they called. He was very responsive and willing to answer questions and talk about the issues. He was as involved in the community as was possible given the pandemic.

Through personal communication and the agenda Mr. Sossamon kept the elected officials consistently updated. The staff really liked working for him. The organization had several vacancies when he was hired, and they were approaching budget season. In a very short amount of time, he put a budget together that was quite impressive. He was timely in completing assignments in general and he never showed any sign of stress.

They went through a service to find Mr. Sossamon, who did a good job of vetting the candidates. Mr. Dittmer is not aware of any controversies related to Mr. Sossamon.

Mr. Dittmer voted to keep Mr. Sossamon on permanently even though he was not really eligible. Mr. Dittmer would hire Mr. Sossamon in an instant and has thoroughly enjoyed working with him. Mr. Sossamon is a good professional.

**Words or phrases used to describe Len Sossamon:**

- Diligent,
- Forward looking,
- Puts in the hours,
- Loyal,
- Cares about the community, and
- Sees the big picture.

**Strengths:** Organization, repertoire with management staff – everyone appreciates him, good communicator.

**Weaknesses:** None identified.

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**Reference Notes**  
**Leonard “Len” B. Sossamon**

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**Jenny Sorrell – Councilmember, City of Port Richey, FL 314-703-4816**

Ms. Sorrell has known Mr. Sossamon since 2020. Ms. Sorrell was incredibly pleased with Mr. Sossamon’s job performance. He kept the Council informed and thoroughly answered every question that she asked him. When he did not know the answer off hand, he quickly researched and provided the information.

Mr. Sossamon was very innovative, and he made good decisions. He was always present in community meetings when he needed to be. From what Ms. Sorrell heard, he communicated very well with the public.

Being customer service oriented, Mr. Sossamon cares about the residents. He demonstrated a good knowledge of the finances and also the wisdom to hire a finance team to take care of items that he did not have as much knowledge in. He has moved the City forward during his tenure, he was very attentive and effectively addressed the issues.

City management is controversial. Mr. Sossamon has most likely been involved in controversies through the course of his work, but Ms. Sorrell is not aware of any details. Ms. Sorrell has not seen anything in Mr. Sossamon’s background or conduct that she is alarmed about. She heard a few comments that some felt he was standoffish, but she does not agree with this assessment. She views him as quieter and more observant, not standoffish.

Ms. Sorrell would absolutely hire Mr. Sossamon and has enjoyed every minute working with him. She had hoped to finish out her term with him as the manager. He works with everybody well and resolved the issues. He stepped into a very difficult situation and did a truly impressive job.

**Words or phrases used to describe Len Sossamon:**

- Soft spoken,
- Attentive,
- Competent, and
- Trustworthy.

**Strengths:** Very soft and calming personality, attentive, good listener, decisive without any issues, excellent leader.

**Weaknesses:** He trusts people to know how to do their job better than they do, and as such finds himself in a little difficulty at times.

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**Reference Notes**  
**Leonard “Len” B. Sossamon**

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**Cyrus Robinson – Police Chief, City of Port Richey, FL 727-835-0970**

Mr. Robinson has known of Mr. Sossamon since 2010 or 2011. Mr. Robinson worked at Hernando County but was not at a high enough level to have much interaction with Mr. Sossamon as the County Manager. They worked together more closely in Port Richey when Mr. Sossamon was the interim City Manager. As such, Mr. Robinson can only speak of Mr. Sossamon’s time in Port Richey. Mr. Sossamon’s performance was good. He is people and detail oriented.

When given a task by City Council, Mr. Sossamon works on it immediately, he does not let it sit. One would never know that he was the interim manager, he hit the ground running and behaved as if he were the permanent manager, he was not a placeholder. He is very timely in completing tasks and he has never been stressed out or appeared angry.

While Mr. Sossamon does make good decisions, he is a nice person with a great deal of empathy. Port Richey held community meetings as well as Council meetings every other week which occurred with social distancing and while wearing masks. Mr. Sossamon attended them all. He also attended meetings for other organizations and advisory boards. He was out in the community. With the public he was the epitome of a southern gentleman. He was cordial and polite. After the meetings he spoke to citizens. He was very responsive when they called and even the Councilmembers mentioned that it was a pleasant change from the last administrator. He actually picked up the phone when called. He was also very good about keeping the Council informed.

Because Mr. Robinson had an extensive background and experience in law enforcement, Mr. Sossamon allowed him to make decisions for the department. Mr. Sossamon was hands off unless he saw something or wanted to suggest an idea for Mr. Robinson to consider. Mr. Robinson kept Mr. Sossamon aware of any changes he was going to make. They both understood that the organization had some long standing problems and they needed to resolve these issues before they could implement any new programs.

They were hired during a tumultuous time when the budget process was starting, the city was preparing to negotiate a union contract and were already under an audit. Mr. Sossamon enlisted the help of the former Hernando County Finance Director and they put a budget together in six weeks. They did not have time to do a few minor items, but the time constraints were ridiculous. He had to meet with the department heads to figure out where to make cuts. The budget was approved, but it was quite the undertaking for someone so new to the organization.

While some controversy involving Mr. Sossamon was documented from Hernando County, you cannot believe everything that you read in the papers. Nothing in his background or conduct would concern a reasonable person.

Mr. Robinson would hire Mr. Sossamon and had hoped he would have been hired as the permanent City Manager in Port Richey.

**Reference Notes  
Leonard “Len” B. Sossamon**

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**Words or phrases used to describe Len Sossamon:**

- Detail oriented,
- Personable,
- Polite,
- Good use of time management, and
- Works well under pressure.

**Strengths:** Quick to complete tasks, hit the ground running, treated the interim position as if it were a permanent position.

**Weaknesses:** They both came from outside the organization and did not know who to trust. He may have been influenced by the wrong people, but it is not a weakness as much as a matter of circumstances.

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**Jim Mathieu – City Attorney, City of Port Richey, FL 727-844-5000 215-514-8098**

Mr. Mathieu has known Mr. Sossamon since 2020 when he was hired as the interim City Manager. Mr. Mathieu and Mr. Sossamon are both hired by the Council and are therefore peers. Mr. Sossamon’s job performance has been excellent.

Mr. Sossamon’s decisions are well thought out. He maintains an organization at a high level, he is not a change agent. He has been out in the community as much as is appropriate for an interim manager. The residents love him, he did very well in working with the public.

Mr. Sossamon has worked with staff to address resident complaints and policy issues concerning development. He worked with Mr. Mathieu when he had legal questions or concerns. Mr. Mathieu is a part time attorney.

Being responsive, Mr. Sossamon is very easy to get ahold of. He has good financial skills. He is excellent in tense situations, he always remains very poised in a very stressful job. He was overqualified to work in Port Richey as he has worked for much larger organizations.

Everything in Port Richey is controversial but Mr. Sossamon has handled it well. Mr. Mathieu ran extensive checks into Mr. Sossamon’s background, per the Council’s request. Mr. Mathieu spoke to the County Attorney in Hernando as well as others and everyone spoke highly of Mr. Sossamon.

Mr. Mathieu would hire Mr. Sossamon, he is a good manager. They hired him to hold down a fort that had issues, and Mr. Sossamon has done that very well. He has guided them through the issues.



**Reference Notes  
Leonard “Len” B. Sossamon**

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**Words or phrases used to describe Len Sossamon:**

- Poised,
- Mature,
- Deliberate,
- Well thought out, and
- Professional.

**Strengths:** Consummate professional, very poised.

**Weaknesses:** He has a thick drawl and is sometimes hard to understand. Also, while he knows technology well and can do it, he is not as quick with it as a 20 year old is.

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**Becky Wood – Human Resources Manager, City of Port Richey, FL 727-835-1269**

Ms. Wood has worked with Mr. Sossamon since June of 2020. Mr. Sossamon stepped in as the interim City Manager and performed better than they expected. Normally interims hold the seat, he came in headfirst and got things moving for them.

Mr. Sossamon hired a new Fire Chief and made a great selection. His decisions in general are good. He has worked very well with the public, he has personally gone out into the City to check on issues and situations. He is customer service oriented.

Mr. Sossamon kept everyone informed and he was also good about answering questions. He rallied employees around the vision of the Council. During the audit, he pulled the staff together and kept everyone up to date with information.

Mr. Sossamon has good financial skills and was incredibly responsive. He handled stressful situations very well. He remained calm and resolved issues in a way to prevent these issues from reoccurring in the future.

Mr. Sossamon has not been involved in anything personally or professionally controversial. Ms. Wood does not believe that anyone in Port Richey would disagree with the statements in this reference.

Ms. Wood would hire Mr. Sossamon, he is a good manager. He keeps everything in line, while making work very enjoyable. He ensures that employees are doing their job and that everything is accurate.

Reference Notes  
Leonard “Len” B. Sossamon

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**Words or phrases used to describe Len Sossamon:**

- Responsible,
- Very respectful,
- Strict when needed,
- Friendly, and
- Personable.

**Strengths:** Listens to all sides, explains information well without talking down to others.

**Weaknesses:** None identified.

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**Wayne Dukes – Commissioner, Hernando County, FL 352-263-8353**

Mr. Dukes was the Chairman when Mr. Sossamon was hired and helped negotiate his contract. However, all of the Commissioners liked Mr. Sossamon. He has a robust background compared to others because he had been in the private sector and also served as an elected official. He completely involved himself in the community. He attended chamber and volunteer events. Everyone who knew him liked him for the most part. The few people who did not care for him wanted to control the Commission. Mr. Sossamon earned every one of the outstanding marks that Mr. Dukes gave him in his performance reviews.

In 2012 the federal government wanted to give \$22 billion dollars to five states. The Governor of Florida dealt with the money but wanted a member from each County to be in a Consortium. Mr. Sossamon joined the consortium in 2012. He is very smart and has a deep understanding because of his background.

If Mr. Dukes had his way, Mr. Sossamon would still be the County Manager in Hernando. He brought a great deal to the County. They had a close relationship, talked frequently, and attended events together. Mr. Sossamon is solid and sound, an outstanding administrator.

Hernando County will be hard pressed to find an Administrator of Mr. Sossamon’s caliber to replace him. He brought so much to the organization. Even when disciplining employees, he dealt with people in a way where they did not leave feeling bad about themselves. When he gave staff instructions, they knew they needed to do it and he did not have to tell them twice.

The person they had in charge of Economic Development (ED) did not have the right background and was not getting anything done. Mr. Sossamon tried to mentor him, but he did not want to grow and so he resigned. They looked at a few candidates but none of the Commissioners liked them. The Commission asked Mr. Sossamon to take on the ED responsibilities for half the salary of the previous Director. For years he ran economic development while being the Administrator. The former ED Director had a secretary but never

**Reference Notes**  
**Leonard “Len” B. Sossamon**

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gave her the chance to use her skillset or grow. The first thing Mr. Sossamon did when he took over was to allow her to grow. Because of his efforts, she can now be an Economic development Director anywhere.

Hernando County has a good Human Resource Director and Mr. Sossamon worked well with them. He never picked sides or favorites and he lets employees do their job which was appreciated by the staff. Because of his diverse background he came up with ideas that no one had ever thought of before.

Mr. Sossamon keeps others informed and never wants the Board to be surprised. He worked well with people who have different personalities. When someone is combative with him, his voice changes a little but that is it. He is a true southern gentleman. A community with 4,000 houses and a huge golf course would not work with the Utilities Director and escorted him off the property. Mr. Dukes asked Mr. Sossamon to go with him. They spent a few hours in the community and by the end they agreed with the County. His personality warms up even those who are combative.

The County shared a building with the Courthouse but needed more room. Mr. Sossamon gave them multiple solutions but the Commissioners were not able to make a decision and move forward. He is a problem solver and sees what is coming next.

Hernando was still struggling from the economic downturn and they were in over their head. Mr. Sossamon brought them multiple solutions but none of the Commissioners listened. Hernando County has constitutional offices like the Sheriff's office which receives 52% of the budget. The Sheriff is very close to two Commissioners. When a reduction in force was presented, the Commissioners protected the Sheriff and would not allow reductions in his department. The local District Manager for the electric company stood up on Mr. Sossamon's behalf.

Mr. Sossamon has not been involved in anything controversial and absolutely nothing in his conduct would concern a reasonable person. The people who sided with the Sheriff were the minority on the Council but it was well known that if they got their majority, they would let Mr. Sossamon go. They finally got the numbers to remove him and the whole County was shocked. The whole atmosphere has changed since Mr. Sossamon left.

Mr. Sossamon is one of the best Administrators Hernando County has ever had and Mr. Dukes would rehire Mr. Sossamon immediately. He will do a good job for whoever hires him and everyone will like him.

**Reference Notes  
Leonard “Len” B. Sossamon**

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**Words or phrases used to describe Len Sossamon:**

- Articulate,
- Timely,
- Very intelligent,
- Great background in finance and knowledge,
- Great with personnel,
- Always courteous with others, and
- Makes others feel comfortable.

**Strengths:** Knowledge, background, finance, personnel, treats others nicely, nice person to work with, stands up for himself, disciplines staff in a way that is not belittling or embarrassing.

**Weaknesses:** Tells you exactly how things are which Mr. Dukes appreciated but some of the other Commissioners did not take it well.

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**Garth Coller – County Attorney, Hernando County, FL 352-428-7525**

Mr. Coller has been the County Attorney for Hernando County since 2000. Mr. Coller is the in-house attorney as well as the prosecutor. Mr. Sossamon was hired as the Administrator. Mr. Coller has worked with 11 County Administrators who were either temporary or permanent. Mr. Sossamon is at the top of the list in terms of skill and ability.

When hiring personnel Mr. Sossamon rates in the mid to upper range. The Board has limited the resources and an Administrator cannot hire the best candidates without the resources to do so. Most of Mr. Sossamon’s hires were as expected considering the resources he had. His decisions were very good. He maintains an organization at a high level.

When working with the public Mr. Sossamon did extremely well. He was very charming and members in the community tried to get the votes to retain Mr. Sossamon, which reflects on how well the public viewed him.

Mr. Sossamon is one of the Administrators who are smart enough to let the Attorney know what they are going to do before they do it, rather than ask permission after. He realized which decisions needed legal input and did not waste Mr. Coller’s time unnecessarily. When the situation seemed risky Mr. Sossamon brought legal in.

Mr. Sossamon is primarily a leader and less of a manager. He is a good manager from behind the desk but he was a leader who made changes where he thought they were wise. In terms of business development, he emphasized the need to broaden the tax base. He warned

**Reference Notes**  
**Leonard “Len” B. Sossamon**

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Commissioners that cutting budgets would hurt them in the long run, and it did but they blamed him for it.

Hernando County had a historically significant property on land owned by the state. Even with a zero budget he managed to put together a group of members of the public to take it over as a guild. They ran it on a shoestring and it is now generating revenue, mostly because of Mr. Sossamon. He has good financial skills.

Mr. Sossamon responds remarkably well to stress. He did not see the move to terminate his employment coming and he still handled it very well. He politely defended himself when nonfactual statements were made and was more gracious than most people would have been.

You cannot be a County Administrator without controversy, but nothing unusual happened. The most controversial item in Mr. Sossamon’s past was a political fight with a local power broker who spent a fortune trying to oust Mr. Sossamon. He put signs up with every election calling Mr. Sossamon a liar, which was not true but it took a toll on the Commissioners. The opposing party on the Commissioner managed to get the three votes needed to terminate Mr. Sossamon’s employment. It was very much a surprise and very hard for the County.

Even the Commissioners who voted to let him go gave him remarkably good evaluations in terms of his skillset and abilities. Residents want to be given everything they want and when the Administrator has to say no, they strongly hold it against them. Enough of these interactions over time will lead to the Administrator’s demise. Mr. Sossamon was the longest serving Administrator of Mr. Collier’s tenure. Very few lasted longer than three years and some not even two.

Mr. Collier volunteered to be a reference for Mr. Sossamon when he learned of the Board’s decision. He gladly speaks the truth on Mr. Sossamon’s behalf.

**Words or phrases used to describe Len Sossamon:**

- Calm,
- Thoughtful,
- Smart,
- Gracious,
- Good humored,
- Good personality, and
- Likeable man.

**Reference Notes**  
**Leonard “Len” B. Sossamon**

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**Strengths:** Very charming, very good with the public, good communicator, decisive, understands the professionalism the job needs, terrific with business development, charming. He was a favorite of the general public, and he communicates well with Commissioners and the public which is not always the same skill.

**Weaknesses:** Trusted people more than he should. Politicians can be remarkably good at misleading you to believing you are safe when you are not and Mr. Sossamon was caught up in that.

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**Tina Duenninger – Executive Office Manager, Hernando County, FL 352-346-4256**

Ms. Duenninger met Mr. Sossamon in 2012. Mr. Sossamon is very detail oriented, very high energy, and a go getter. He is very intelligent. She has worked for Hernando County since 1999 and no other Administrator compares to him in terms of intellect and style.

They use a hiring panel of three people but Mr. Sossamon has the final say. He made good decisions both when hiring and in general. He is innovative. When he first came to the County, he restructured the organization to streamline processes and introduced a strategic plan which the County did not have. He measured the organization by the strategic plan and saw where the County was falling short.

Mr. Sossamon frequently spoke at homeowners’ associations, various community summits, and local Hernando County events. He is a very eloquent speaker and was in high demand. He kept everyone informed and was a leader who rallied employees around the strategic plan.

Hernando County has issues on a daily basis. Mr. Sossamon might be dealing with landfill issues, animal shelter issues, and personnel issues at the same time. Every day brought a multitude of issues which he was very adept in addressing.

Mr. Sossamon has good financial skills and is always responsive. His emails come in at all sorts of hours, late at night and early in the morning. He does not just work 8 to 5.

Hernando County always has controversy and is very political, which led to Mr. Sossamon’s departure but was not of his making. Nothing about his conduct or background would concern an employer.

During Ms. Duenninger’s tenure she witnessed employees when many Administrators left the organization but Mr. Sossamon’s departure was different because employees were crying actual tears. Not just regular staff members but department managers as well. His impact was significant.

**Reference Notes**  
**Leonard “Len” B. Sossamon**

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Ms. Duenninger would hire Mr. Sossamon. Hernando County has 857 employees and most of them would agree with the statements in this reference. Anyone would be crazy not to hire Mr. Sossamon, he is just really wonderful and they were sorry to see him leave.

**Words or phrases used to describe Len Sossamon:**

- Intelligent,
- Eloquent,
- Kind hearted,
- Go getter,
- Leader, and
- Planner – likes to plan ahead of time.

**Strengths:** Very calm in stressful situations, takes time to get the point across, very personable, treats the custodial staff the same as he treats elected officials.

**Weaknesses:** He does not like to say no and will take on more than he should have. He played the role of Economic Development Director as well as Administrator. Sometimes he should say no.

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**Pat Crowley – former President, Chamber of Commerce, Hernando County, FL  
352-584-3351**

Ms. Crowley has been the President of the Chamber of Commerce since 2000. She participated in one of the interview Committees when Mr. Sossamon was hired in Hernando County.

Mr. Sossamon’s strengths is very much in collaborative efforts and working with people. He is very community minded and had a presence in the community. The County has a population of 187k and they are a suburban rural area. A good percentage of their population is retirees. It is a very close knit community for leaders and business owners in the community. He was very active and present. He participated in community events and attended functions.

Managing a community of stoic people who do not want change is difficult. However, Mr. Sossamon is innovative and tried to move the County forward while maintaining a good balance between the residents who had lived there for a long time and the new, more transient, diversified population with different ideas. He is visionary.

The Chamber does not collaborate with the County on many items, but they meet now and again. They have a government affairs director who spent a great deal of time with the County Commissioners and also with Mr. Sossamon. He believes in collaborating and working together. He offers the olive branch to make it happen.

**Reference Notes**  
**Leonard “Len” B. Sossamon**

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The Chamber is a free standing entity with no funding through the City or County, they rely totally on their membership. They have a collaborative partnership with the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) at the University of South Florida in Tampa. They began to partner with the County to fund this program but had to negotiate whether the County would pay for it every year. Mr. Sossamon was supportive of the program because he realized that it was important for economic development. He included the program as part of the economic development program so the Chamber did not have to renegotiate County funding every year which was very appreciated.

Mr. Sossamon seems to have good financial skills, Ms. Crowley is not involved in the budget process enough to be certain. They only worked together on economic development, for which Mr. Sossamon had definite expertise and met deadlines. He always had a smile and his staff never said a negative word about how he managed them.

The Board was constantly changing and they terminated Mr. Sossamon’s contract. He knows how to work with a Board, but they had some challenges which were political in nature. Ms. Crowley is not aware of anything negative in Mr. Sossamon’s background and she never saw him do anything inappropriate.

Mr. Crowley would definitely consider hiring Mr. Sossamon in a different situation with a different Board. He did an exceptional job of moving the County forward. Their County is comprised primarily of lower income folks who do not want their taxes raised. He did a great job maintaining balance between these residents while still addressing the effects of the recession.

**Words or phrases used to describe Len Sossamon:**

- Dynamic,
- Positive,
- Outgoing,
- Collaborative,
- Strong leader,
- Fun, and
- Always has a smile.

**Strengths:** Very community minded, very much a collaborator, very outgoing personality, very positive person which is important in government, good listener, mediator who created a win/win for everyone.

**Weaknesses:** None identified.

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**Reference Notes**  
**Leonard “Len” B. Sossamon**

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**Barbara Behrendt – Reporter, Hernando County, FL 352-848-1434**

Ms. Behrendt covers County Government in Hernando County. She first met Mr. Sossamon when he applied to the position and made the finalist list.

Mr. Sossamon was always very truthful in their interactions. He had detractors and supporters, which is common for political figures. Hernando County is very political, and you cannot avoid running afoul of one side or another of the powers that be. The current Commission believes that Mr. Sossamon is terrible with money while others say that the Commission is responsible for deciding how the money is spent.

Mr. Sossamon’s decisions were good, he never made any decision that was in his own personal best interest. He was visible in the community and he got along with everyone. He is very personable but will not stop talking about BBQ when it is mentioned. Reporters in the area know not to bring it up in an interview or they never get back to the topic at hand.

While Mr. Sossamon never went out of his way to contact Ms. Behrendt, he was always very responsive to her and even gave her his cell phone number. If she sent him questions via email, even on items that most managers consider painful like looking at what the County accomplished in the past year, he was always gracious and made time for her.

When the Board let Mr. Sossamon go, he had plenty of ammunition he could have used against them. He was blunt and honest because he needed to be. When Ms. Behrendt interviewed him after the fact about his departure, he was honest but not spiteful. Mr. Sossamon’s job is controversial. The people against him believed he was a terrible economic development director, but the people who supported him listed all of his economic development achievements. In politics it is all about who has the majority vote, he had it for a long time and then he did not.

Administrators in Hernando County typically last about two years, but Mr. Sossamon did not get caught in that cycle because he can relate to others. Even people who had negative things to say about his work felt like he was a nice man. Mr. Sossamon survived a long time in a difficult political environment.

Ms. Crowley was uncomfortable providing phrases and adjectives as they are value judgments. In her role as a reporter she has to remain non biased.

**Strengths:** Always truthful and always fair.

**Weaknesses:** None identified.

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**Prepared by:** Lynelle Klein  
Colin Baenziger & Associates

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*CB&A Internet Research*

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**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches  
Leonard B. Sossamon  
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)**

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**CB&A Note:** Please be aware that a very nasty website, [www.lennytheliar.com](http://www.lennytheliar.com), exists. While the front page of the website states “updating”, it is possible to reach other pages on the website, see the link below.

<http://www.lennytheliar.com/Documents/>

We spoke with several responsible people in the community about the website, and its claims. Everyone stated emphatically that the website is false and without any validity.

They further indicated that the website was created to retaliate against Mr. Sossamon because he would not bend to pressure from special interests – specifically, influential, if not entirely above board, business people in the community.

Unfortunately, the site continues to live on and to damage Mr. Sossamon’s career opportunities.

Summary of the interviews follows:

**Notes Regarding [www.lennytheliar.com](http://www.lennytheliar.com)  
Leonard “Len” Sossamon**

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**Wayne Dukes – County Commissioner, Hernando County, FL 352-263-8353**

The person who created the website, [www.lennytheliar.com](http://www.lennytheliar.com), is a businessman who is borderline crazy with a few screws loose. He tried to run over Mr. Sossamon and was not able to, so he created the website to discredit him. Everyone thought it was a joke because they knew the information in it had no validity.

Overall, the business community and the public loved Mr. Sossamon. He worked well with the Chamber and the public, and he is a great person. Hernando County does have an element, however, which wants to influence local government leaders, and they did not appreciate the fact that Mr. Sossamon would not bend to special interest groups.

Regarding Mr. Sossamon’s departure, a Commissioner was being appointed as Chairman who had never been Chairman before. Everyone knew that his sole purpose in wanting to be

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches  
Leonard B. Sossamon  
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)**

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Chairman was to remove Mr. Sossamon as the administrator. This decision was absolutely personal and stemmed from businessmen in the community who feel that the staff works for them instead of for the Commission. Members of the public came to the meeting in large numbers to state that Mr. Sossamon's termination was a disservice to the County.

Anyone who hires Mr. Sossamon will be thrilled with his performance. He knows how to get things done. Hernando County went through five administrators in eight years. Mr. Sossamon was there from 2012 to 2019, which says much for his abilities. Anyone who hires Mr. Sossamon will not be disappointed.

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**Charles and Diane Greenwell – 502-939-9809**

Mr. Greenwell is a prominent local attorney and he and his wife are knowledgeable members of the community. He was surprised to learn that the website still exists and considers it to be false. Hernando County in general, and particularly Hernando Beach, has a social media mob. Mr. Greenwell feels that Mr. Sossamon should hire someone to trace the website to its owner. As it has impacted Mr. Sossamon's employment opportunities, and the accusations on the website are not valid, he could have a substantial claim against the creator of the website.

While neither Mr. nor Mrs. Greenwell knows for certain who created the website, the rumor is that it was someone who was on an unpaid advisory committee that Mr. Sossamon discontinued. The disbanding of the committee led to hard feelings and one committee member went after Mr. Sossamon as a payback. This type of political retaliation is very characteristic of Hernando County right now and has occurred on many occasions.

The region has a network of people who try to control elections and the website about Mr. Sossamon seems to be directly tied to this network. Money flows to Hernando County from the south, and to the south from Hernando County. Mr. Greenwell ran for office and was told that if he wanted money from the south, he had to do certain things. He refused as that is not how he plays the game and lost the election.

Mr. Sossamon is a great administrator and a tremendous leader. The staff, without exception, was very supportive of Mr. Sossamon and was very sad when he left. Essentially, Mr. Sossamon was caught in the good ol' boy system and his departure was purely political. A political ambush was orchestrated and many knew about it but did not think the parties involved had enough votes to actually terminate Mr. Sossamon. The process was not well done, very unceremonious and an embarrassment to anyone involved in leadership in the County. Mr. Sossamon did a tremendous job in the County and was one of the longest lasting administrators the County has had. He had great ideas, worked well with others, and kept everyone informed. He was fair to everyone no matter their party affiliation. He was very transparent with the public.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Leonard B. Sossamon**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Palatka Daily News (FL)  
March 24, 2021

**Returning to Service - Former Palatka official tapped to be interim Crescent City manager**  
Author: Sarah Cavacini

CRESCENT CITY – The city commission’s first choice for interim city manager is a Putnam County native. During a special meeting Tuesday, former Palatka City Commissioner Phil Leary was chosen, but his start is contingent upon background and reference checks.

Although it is unclear which candidate each commissioner voted for, three voted for Leary and two voted for Former Hernando County Administrator **Leonard Sossamon**. Should Leary decline the offer or the background check not clear, **Sossoman** would be the next candidate for the job and have to go through the same process.

Ideally, the commission wants the interim city manager to begin April 1, and work with current City Manager Michael Esposito until his departure. Esposito will leave Crescent City on April 10 to take another city manager job in Clayton, Georgia. “We’re really looking for someone who can wear a lot of hats,” Commissioner Lisa DeVitto said. “... We’re in need of everything. You have to be a one-man band.” The interim city manager will be paid \$7,000 a month without benefits and would be allowed to apply for the full-time city manager position.

Leary served as the state director of the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development from April 2019 through January 2021 after being appointed by President Donald Trump. Leary, who would commute from Palatka to Crescent City, said he would be interested in a long-term position but wants to see how the interim position goes before applying. “My first step would be to evaluate all the departments,” Leary said. “... (And), obviously, work with the transition from the city police department to the (Putnam County Sheriff’s Office) which, quite frankly, I thought was an outstanding move.”

Earlier this month, the Crescent City Commission voted for the sheriff’s office to take over for Crescent City Police Department as the city’s law enforcement agency. The top two interim applicants were chosen from a pool of four, including former DeFuniak Springs City Manager Mell Smigielski who interviewed via Zoom with a crying baby in hand and dog barking throughout parts of the interview.

Commissioners briefly discussed sending out the application for the permanent city manager position but said the interim city manager could finalize the details. However, they unanimously approved a starting salary of up to \$85,000 for the permanent position.

Tuesday’s special called meeting came as City Attorney Jay Asbury announced his retirement earlier this year, Administrative Assistant Deborah Wazowicz plans to leave April 1 and Financial Director Debbi Peacock, who is still working, announced her retirement in December. “Commissioner (Harry) Banks and myself have been here a long time,” Commissioner Judith

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Leonard B. Sossamon**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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West said. “This is probably one of the weakest moments I’ve seen our city in. Not because of the commission, but because we’re changing ... our people who have strategic jobs and we’ll need somebody to walk in and just kind of take over.”

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Leonard B. Sossamon**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Suncoast News (FL)  
December 9, 2020

**Port Richey’s City Manager Search Finalized**

Author: Eric Horchy

About five months after the familiar face of Vincent Lupo walked away from City Hall, Port Richey has selected its new, long-term city manager. Late last month, the City Council ended its search process by selecting Michael John Dudte over existing interim city manager **Len Sossamon**. Five candidates had been in the running, but three others removed their resumes from consideration. Dudte, currently the city administrator of Chapman, Kansas, comes to West Pasco after receiving a 3-2 vote from the board. Councilman Todd Maklary made the motion in favor of Dudte, Councilman Tom Kinsella seconded, and Mayor Scott Tremblay represented the swing vote.

The first motion, made by Councilman William Dittmer in favor of **Sossamon**, received a second from Councilwoman Jennie Sorrell but failed to receive any more supporting votes. Throughout the council’s roughly 50-minute discussion, all five board members expressed difficulty in coming to a decision between the two candidates. “I spent a lot of time with this issue because I think it’s probably one of the biggest issues we face as a city,” Tremblay said. “My humble opinion is this council could pick either one of the candidates and I think either one would move the city forward in a positive direction. I think both are well-qualified, and quite frankly, I like both of them.”

“No matter who is selected I think both should take our comments as not criticisms but constructive criticisms of what we saw and how they can improve themselves,” Maklary said. Dudte, 55, is native to Newton, Kansas, and the town he leaves governs about 1,400 residents. He’s been Chapman’s city administrator since May 2017 and previously served as a foreign service officer with the U.S. Department of State from July 2012 to May 2017.

Port Richey is more than twice the size of Chapman, with nearly 3,000 residents, but still falls in the small city category. The familiarity with small-town government was viewed by the council as a positive. “One of the things I really liked about him is that he runs a small city and the crux of that city is the same as our city,” Tremblay said. “They value the power company because that’s their lifeline, just like our water company. The biggest thing to the general public is to keep our taxes down and give us as much as we can get for our money. And he’s run a small city with 18 employees and some part-time help, so I really like that about him.”

Dudte’s desire to familiarize himself with all aspects of the city — from staff to business owners to residents — was praised by board members on multiple occasions. “That’s the one thing that really stuck with me about the whole evening speaking with him,” Dittmer said, referencing the interview process with Dudte. “His involvement within (Chapman) — getting to know the people, the businesses, the organizations, and being a part of it — is like taking ownership of that city,” Kinsella said. “I was very, very impressed with that.”

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Leonard B. Sossamon**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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While the council eventually landed on Dudte to take over as city manager, **Sossamon** received plenty of praise for his job running Port Richey since Lupo retired in late June. When **Sossamon** was selected to replace Lupo on an interim basis, it was to be for no longer than six months — a deadline that comes near the end of December. Midway through the city manager search, which was assisted by executive search firm Colin Baenziger and Associates, council members requested **Sossamon** add his name to the list of candidates.

“We were having some hard times,” Dittmer said. “The way (**Sossamon**) jumped into the seat ... and it wasn’t words, it was actions. We saw stuff turning right away. That is what really impressed me with **Len**. He was hands-on, not sitting back, moving forward, and he didn’t act temporary in any way. He was going to move us to what our goals were in the city, whether he was going to be here for three months or long-term.” “To his credit, every citizen I’ve talked to says **Mr. Sossamon** is very available and makes himself available,” Kinsella said of the outgoing interim city manager’s relationship with the public.

A factor that tipped the decision in Dudte’s favor was the potential for a longer-term commitment. Council members expressed the opinion that **Sossamon** may only be willing to stay in the position for a small handful of years, whereas Dudte desires to be around for a longer period of time. “I think what the city needs is some fresh blood, someone from the outside coming in and taking a look at the city as a whole and giving us new direction, new ideas,” Kinsella said. “Not that **Mr. Sossamon** can’t do that, but I’m also concerned about how long he’s going to be here. Mr. Dudte indicated that he’s going to be here for quite a while.”

Although **Sossamon’s** only been involved with the city for five-plus months, he has a familiarity with the region after spending the previous six-plus years as Hernando County administrator. Going with an out-of-towner is a risk, Tremblay said, prior to voting for Dudte.

[The remainder of the article has not been provided since it does not mention **Mr. Sossamon**.]



**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Leonard B. Sossamon**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Tampa Bay Times (FL)  
September 19, 2020

**Port Richey Considers Property Tax Increase**

Author: Barbara Behrendt

Property owners in Port Richey could see a significant increase in their city tax bill if the City Council gives its final approval during next Thursday’s final budget hearing. City officials have been talking about the need to replenish their reserves, which are monies not earmarked for specific expenses but are there for emergencies. Under the proposed budget brought to the council at their first budget hearing earlier this month, the city would end up with a \$960,000 reserve. Officials said that should be closer to \$1.6 million to meet the general mark for a reserve, but it was set to be just \$150,000 before the proposed adjustments in the budget and tax rate.

The rate on the table, which got tentative approval from the council on Sept. 10, is a mill higher than the current tax rate. That amounts to \$100 in additional city tax for the owner of a property with a taxable value of \$100,000. The current rate is 5.7847 mills and it will go to 6.7847 mills — a 17.3 percent increase. The change would mean the owner of that same property would have a bill of \$678.47 for city services. The tentative general fund budget is \$6.75 million.

During earlier discussions, the council considered a 50 percent higher rate increase, but sent interim city manager **Len Sossamon** back to the drawing board to find cuts while also allowing Port Richey to give employees a two percent pay raise. City staff found \$190,000 in cuts, including leaving a couple of positions open.

They brought back a pared-down spending plan which got to the council’s target. But one other change in the plan which raised some questions in the community concerned the city’s Community Redevelopment Agency. While the city was on track to contribute \$967,000 to the agency, which focuses on projects to improve blighted areas in the city, this year **Sossamon** brought forward a recommendation to contribute just \$31,646. That amount tracked a contribution percentage approved in a previous budget year.

Some in the community approached **Sossamon** and posted on social media that the decision could cost money that Pasco County also contributes to the Port Richey Community Redevelopment Agency. But Pasco officials said they have budgeted their contribution at \$835,159. The budget changes were acceptable to council members, and Port Richey Mayor Scott Tremblay said the plan “leaves us very healthy all the way around.” The final hearing on the city budget is set for Thursday at 6:30 p.m.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Leonard B. Sossamon**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Tampa Bay Times (FL)  
June 16, 2020

**Port Richey Picks Former Hernando Administrator as Temporary City Manager  
City Council Members Chose Len Sossamon Citing His Familiarity with Florida Law and  
Extensive Background in Government.**

Author: Barbara Behrendt

The Port Richey City Council has chosen **Len Sossamon** as interim city manager over three other candidates, noting he has considerable government management experience. **Sossamon** will serve for no more than six months as the city seeks a permanent manager to replace Vince Lupo. He announced his retirement last month amid a contentious debate over his decision to move police chief Gerard DeCanio into retirement sooner than he had wanted.

Lupo leaves at the end of the month. City officials wanted to get someone on board as soon as possible. At their regular council meeting last week they considered **Sossamon** and two other candidates who had been vetted by search firm Colin Baenziger and Associates, along with another candidate who submitted a resume.

**Sossamon** earned approval when council members noted he had been Hernando County administrator, knew Florida law, served for years as city manager in Concord, N.C., and had implemented Hernando's first master stormwater plan. **Sossamon** was Hernando administrator from 2012 through last year and also served as the county's economic development director.

**Sossamon**, 69, lost the Hernando job when the majority of the Hernando commission blamed him for ongoing budget shortfalls and poor management decisions. He will be paid \$90 an hour, get a car allowance, a cell phone and a laptop. **Sossamon** will start before Lupo's last day to get briefings on city issues. One of his first jobs is to hire DeCanio's replacement. He said he had faith that the Florida Police Chiefs Association, which was chosen for the search, would bring forward good candidates. "It's exciting," **Sossamon** said in an interview. "I feel I can do a good job for them."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Leonard B. Sossamon**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Tampa Bay Times (FL)  
December 27, 2019

**Residents hit with highest property tax increase in 30 years**

Author: Barbara Behrendt

Hernando County's painful budget problems all boiled down to one page of numbers projected on the wall as commissioners tried to sort out what to do. For each year that county officials hadn't overspent, the numbers were lined with green. For each year they overspent, the numbers were lined with red. The abundance of red lines, the depleted reserve accounts and projections of the bank account running dry by Oct. 1 led commissioners to a difficult decision to resolve a general fund deficit of \$11 million.

By a 3-2 vote, the commission agreed to raise the tax rate by a mill, which amounted to a dollar in taxes for every \$1,000 in appraised taxable property value. The owner of a house with a taxable value of \$100,000 would pay an additional \$100 to support county services. Commissioners Steve Champion and Wayne Dukes voted against the increase. Not coincidentally, they were the same two commissioners who earlier in the year voted no on firing County Administrator **Len Sossamon**.

Commission Chairman Jeff Holcomb and commissioners John Allocco and John Mitten had voted to end **Sossamon**'s contract. The majority said the administrator had failed to properly inform the commission of the pending financial disaster. **Sossamon**'s finance director also had made several significant errors, which made the financial picture worse. Yet, for several years, **Sossamon**, county budget officials, the county finance director and the auditor each had issued warnings that none of the five commissioners heeded.

In 2019, at the request of the new county administrator, Jeff Rogers, the commission hired a financial consultant who allowed them to see what would happen under a myriad of budget scenarios. Whatever was done with taxes, the advisor said, the county must curb the rate at which its expenses grew.

Commissioners moved the county's information technology department budget to the Clerk of the Circuit Court, saving money in years to come. They also made other staffing cuts. And county officials vowed to scrutinize union contracts that increase the cost of government with built-in pay raises.

As the year wound down, the commission got a bit of good news. With fiscal help from several county departments and an early influx of property taxes, the general fund probably wouldn't have to borrow money from the utilities department to pay bills at the end of the year.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Leonard B. Sossamon**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Tampa Bay Times (FL)  
February 21, 2019

**You Need ‘the Skin of an Alligator’: How Hernando County’s Warring Factions Sunk Another Administrator**

Author: Barbara Behrendt

When **Len Sossamon** was fired as Hernando County administrator on Jan. 29, it was just as predicted when he took the job in 2012. Hernando County, he was told, devoured its administrators. The head-hunter advertising the position urged candidates to have "the skin of an alligator." **Sossamon** became the ninth administrator in 12 years. **Sossamon's** tenure depended on support from at least three of the five commissioners. And he had that support until last year, after a shift in control of the all-Republican board.

Commissioners Nick Nicholson, Steve Champion and Wayne Dukes formed a majority coalition that supported **Sossamon**. Then Nicholson was arrested in April on prostitution-related charges and suspended from office. Gov. Rick Scott replaced Nicholson in June with John Mitten, who sided with Commissioners John Allocco and Jeff Holcomb on a number of issues, including **Sossamon's** firing.

Over the years, commissioners have formed competing — and sometimes shifting — factions, whose votes have benefited businesses ranging from tourism development and land purchases to garbage hauling and airport operations. And business and political leaders have struck out behind the scenes at commissioners — and administrators — who don't behave as they wish.

In **Sossamon's** final moments on the job, members of the new majority criticized him for letting other commissioners run him in the past. There wasn't a single commissioner who didn't do that, **Sossamon** fired back. "I think I can safely say in front of God and everybody that the micromanaging potential and propensity of the boards I've had in this county has been greater than in any place I have served in 30 years, without a doubt," **Sossamon** said. "Nobody's shirt tails or cuffs of their britches are clean, bar none," he said. "I can say that unequivocally."

The way it was

For years, the commission majority supported **Sossamon**, and their supporters benefited. Dukes gave **Sossamon** perfect scores on his evaluations, and Nicholson's were largely positive. Both had connections to Tom Barnette, a local businessman who gave counsel and money to their campaigns. Barnette owns a travel agency and has ties to other enterprises that have done business with the county.

Barnette won a \$50,000 contract for his "Follow the Mermaid" marketing campaign, which the county bought in 2014, but never used. He arranged a consulting agreement in 2016 with a company chosen to run a multi-million dollar, waste-to-energy effort that the county later dropped. And he was a consultant to Republic Services, which in 2017 won a seven-year, no-bid contract with the county for garbage service.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Leonard B. Sossamon**  
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Champion joined the majority coalition when he was elected in 2015. It was not so much that Champion was a Barnette man, but more that he wasn't a Kimbrough man. Champion said he ran to oppose what he called the good old boys in Brooksville, whom he blamed when SunTrust bank canceled accounts with his American Gun and Pawn business.

For years, the face of SunTrust in Hernando County has been bank executive Jim Kimbrough. The bank helped finance local business expansion, and Kimbrough worked behind the scenes to influence commissioners and administrators. As recently as last week's commission meeting, Champion said he was pleased to see SunTrust disappear from the local banking landscape after hearing about its recently-announced merger with BB&T.

The Champion-Dukes-Nicholson coalition was made clearer last year during the Hernando County Sheriff's Office investigation into charges against Nicholson. A witness close to Nicholson told investigators that she overheard Champion tell him that if Nicholson left the board, their three-person alliance would no longer be in charge. The three "are all on the same team together, and they can get whatever they want done, because they're the majority," the woman told detectives. Champion and Dukes cast the two lone votes against firing **Sossamon**.

**The other camp**

Commissioners Holcomb, Allocco and Mitten voted to fire **Sossamon**. Among the new majority's connections are ties to local Republican Party leaders and the Greater Hernando Chamber of Commerce. Holcomb leads the Hernando County Republican Party Executive Committee, a job he took over from Allocco, who took it over from state Rep. Blaise Ingoglia (R-Spring Hill). Until this year, Ingoglia was head of the state Republican Party.

Mitten chaired the Chamber's government affairs committee for years. And Chamber chairman Marilyn Pearson-Adams is head of Century 21 Alliance Realty, the same company at which Holcomb is a real estate agent.

Local Republican and business leaders have long said that **Sossamon** should not have been both county administrator and economic development director. Outwardly, they said that the economic development role was so important, there should be one person doing only that job. Anonymously, through pop-up social media sites, they criticized **Sossamon** specifically.

The idea of splitting the job surfaced again after Mitten joined the board last year and commissioners first discussed reopening **Sossamon**'s contract. The Chamber reminded commissioners of its concerns in an email sent to all commissioners on the day of **Sossamon**'s ouster. "... an individual dedicated solely to the mission of economic development is necessary to help achieve economic prosperity for businesses and residents of Hernando County," wrote Pat Crowley, chamber president.

One of the biggest prizes for commission factions has been helping their business interests at the Brooksville-Tampa Bay Regional Airport. It came down to a power struggle between **Sossamon** and Gary Schraut, a real estate broker, who also works with Chamber chairman Pearson-Adams.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Leonard B. Sossamon**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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When **Sossamon** arrived in Hernando County, Schraut was chairman of the airport's Aviation Authority, a longstanding advisory board that the commission disbanded in 2014 after a series of controversies. On the day he was fired, **Sossamon** told commissioners this story: Shortly after he arrived, he said, Schraut asked him to sign some airport paperwork and reacted badly when **Sossamon** wanted to read it first. "The battleground of Hernando County is littered with people who tried to take me out," **Sossamon** said he was told by Schraut. "I thought to myself, I'm a southern boy, and I recognize a threat when I hear one."

Schraut told the Times this week that he never had that conversation with **Sossamon**, although he remembers telling him that he would be around long after **Sossamon** was gone. Schraut denied any power struggle over the airport — as Aviation Authority chairman, he said, the law was on his side. But he acknowledged that he and **Sossamon** were at odds.

**Sossamon** lied to him, Schraut said, and worked to secure business for Barnette. That's why Schraut said he helped to run a website called "Lenny the Liar" during the 2016 election season, blasting **Sossamon** and the commissioners who supported him. Schraut has been closely aligned with Kimbrough. In 2013, Kimbrough and Schraut were outed for holding secret meetings with commissioners about the airport, perpetuating the sense that the airport was a closed shop and only certain individuals got business there. Kimbrough publicly supported the Schraut-led Aviation Authority, and his bank funded economic development projects at the airport.

In 2016, Schraut supported Kimbrough and Cliff Manuel of Coastal Engineering, when they made a run at the county waste-to-energy contract — challenging the company connected to Barnette. Also during the run-up to the 2016 election, Ingoglia admitted this week, he was an investor in the now-defunct Florida News Flash, a blog that also posted negative stories about the commissioners who supported **Sossamon**. Ingoglia said he had no editorial control over the site, even though he was a site administrator.

Ingoglia said he does not discuss local politics with commissioners and has no alliance with Holcomb or Allocco. He said he did not think **Sossamon** was doing a good job but was not behind his ouster. "I thought he was a poor administrator," Ingoglia said. "He took on too much and played too many political games."

**Sossamon** told the Times last week that he tried to talk to all sides during his tenure, even Kimbrough and Schraut. That probably extended his longevity, he said. But he also was realistic. "You can please some of the people, but you can never please all of the people," **Sossamon** said. "Sooner or later, it comes back to bite you. And it did."

The new reality

Holcomb had been in the minority coalition since he was elected to the commission in 2014. But his fortunes began rising last year as he became part of the new majority. In December, Holcomb was named head of the county Republican Party. Days later, he was nominated to be commission chairman — over vice-chairman John Allocco.

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**Sossamon's** biggest cheerleader on the board, Dukes, blasted giving Holcomb the chairmanship. "He hasn't shown that he has a working relationship with our administrator," Dukes said. "Matter of fact, the rumor is that he'd like to fire him today." In fact, Holcomb gave **Sossamon** his most critical evaluations over the years and spoke out about his contract extension in 2016. Dukes was outvoted, however, and Holcomb took the gavel.

On Jan. 29, Holcomb — not known to spearhead issues at commission meetings — passed his gavel to Mitten so he could make a motion himself. Holcomb gave a detailed statement about why **Sossamon** needed to go and moved for his termination.

Dukes spoke out again. Dukes said he had missed a recent meeting of the local Republican Executive Committee. But he had heard that during the meeting, Ingoglia's father, Andrew Ingoglia, asked Holcomb when he was going to fire **Sossamon**. "Folks, there's something wrong with this," Dukes said. "It smells." Holcomb said he responded at the committee meeting that he had placed an item about **Sossamon's** contract on the upcoming commission agenda.

Blaise Ingoglia's legislative assistant, Ashley Hofecker — who is not a regular at commission meetings — sat through the meeting on Jan. 29, occasionally typing on her cell phone. The Times requested any government business-related texts received by commissioners that day on their county or private cell phones. They are public under the Florida Government in the Sunshine Law. Four commissioners responded immediately. Mitten produced a text from Manuel, saying that with **Sossamon** gone, they should talk about deputy administrator Jeff Rogers. Three others said they had no government-related text messages on their private phones. Holcomb didn't respond.

A week later, when called specifically about the texts, Holcomb said he had no government-related texts. "I had no marching orders from Blaise Ingoglia. He's too busy," Holcomb said. "People just want to have an enemy they can point to." Ingoglia said it was Hofecker's job to monitor local government, and that's why she was at the meeting.

At the Jan. 29 meeting, Allocco and Mitten shared Holcomb's concerns about **Sossamon**, citing budgeting errors and poor employee management decisions. Those problems have the county spending more than \$9 million more in its general fund this year than it is collecting in revenue. Allocco said this week that he arrived at his decision on **Sossamon** independently. But the question of who was responsible for the county's budget and personnel problems — **Sossamon** or the commissioners he worked for — remains.

Since the majority coalition of the commission flipped, Schraut has started to attend commission meetings again after being away for years. And a new airport advisory committee has formed. Two properties that Schraut represents, and stands to receive a commission from selling, secured county contracts at the same meeting in which **Sossamon** was fired. Manuel challenged a recent bid for airport engineering work after Coastal Engineering wasn't recommended by the county staff. The matter is slated for discussion at Tuesday's commission meeting.

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Several days after his termination, **Sossamon** said he is proud of his business development accomplishments, the county's strategic plan and its master storm water plan. "My conscience is clear," **Sossamon** said. "I did a good job for the county." He hopes the "revolving door" of administrators doesn't happen again, saying it does not serve the county.

**Sossamon**, 68, said he is looking at several possible employment opportunities. He earned an annual salary and benefit package worth just over \$295,000 for his dual position and will receive a parting package worth \$76,089 in severance and \$61,386 in paid leave time.



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**Leonard B. Sossamon**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Tampa Bay Times (FL)  
June 8, 2018

**County Official's Score Drops**

Author: Barbara Behrendt

In the midst of Hernando County's budget shortfall, the county commission's evaluation score this year for county administrator **Len Sossamon** is the lowest since he arrived in 2012. However, as in past years, **Sossamon** has both fans and critics on the board. The multi-million-dollar shortfall is the definitive issue in ratings by commissioners Jeff Holcomb and John Allocco, who marked **Sossamon** "unsatisfactory" in financial management. Commission Chairman Steve Champion marked him "marginal, needs improvement," in that category.

Commissioner Wayne Dukes marked **Sossamon** as "excellent/proficient" in each of the 15 qualities measured, as he has in past years. **Sossamon's** average score this year was 4.2, with Dukes giving him a 5.0, the highest possible, and Holcomb giving the lowest score, 2.93. The five-point scale places **Sossamon's** average just above the category of "exceeding expectations" overall.

The rating system includes marks for everything from job knowledge and ethics to organizational skills and humor. Holcomb noted that **Sossamon's** "hiring of a budget director created a budget crisis for the 2019 budget." He gave **Sossamon** lower marks on communicating with the governing body, and being honest and fair. For Holcomb, the administrator exceeded expectations in only three areas: creativity, adaptability and resilience.

Allocco also graded **Sossamon** as needing improvement in honesty and fairness, and in planning. Allocco said he trusted the accuracy of budget information given out last year, his first year on the commission, and was not aware until recently of the budget problems. "I feel that **Len** was either unaware of the poor financial position ... or was unwilling to communicate this openly with the commissioners in the sunshine during last year's budget workshops and meetings," Allocco wrote. "I depend upon him to speak honestly during our meetings to make sure we all have the whole story, even at the risk of hurt feelings."

Allocco also suggested goals that **Sossamon** make hiring and firing decisions based on the needs of the county rather than lobbying from individual commissioners, and that he give commissioners "the whole story," especially about budget issues. Champion praised **Sossamon** for picking a strong deputy county administrator in Jeff Rogers as part of his succession plan, for his experience in leadership and his ability to forge compromises between commissioners.

But Champion also urged **Sossamon** to be sure that information he provides commissioners and the public is accurate. His goal for the administrator was for him to fix the budget without raising taxes and to find a compromise with the budgets of constitutional officers. Dukes' perfect score for **Sossamon** praised his "strong leadership ability" and "sound judgment decisions." For goals,

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he stated: "Continue to strive to help local businesses to expand, continue reaching out to bring new businesses to Hernando County."

**Sossamon**, whose pay and benefits total \$295,684, also is the county's economic development director. **Sossamon**, 67, came to the county in 2012 from North Carolina, making him one of the longest-serving Hernando County administrators in recent history. He did not do a self-evaluation this year, but said he understood the commissioners' concerns about the budget gap. **Sossamon** said he presented commissioners options that included reduced spending and raising revenue, but commissioners have held fast to not raising taxes. **Sossamon** said he was confident that county staff and commissioners will resolve this year's budget shortfall. The budget comes up for final approval in September.

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Leonard B. Sossamon  
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)**

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Tampa Bay Times: Web Edition Articles (FL)  
February 13, 2018

**CHAMBER MEMBERSHIP MEETING**

Author: Jean Hamilton

The Greater Hernando County Chamber of Commerce will have its monthly membership meeting at 7:15 a.m. Feb. 28 at Silverthorn Country Club, 4550 Golf Club Lane, south of Brooksville. The breakfast is sponsored by Spherion Staffing Services.

The kickoff breakfast for the chamber's Keys to Success business development series will feature keynote speaker **Leonard Sossamon**, Hernando County Administrator.

Advance tickets are \$15; \$20 at the door. To RSVP, visit [hernandochamber.com/events](http://hernandochamber.com/events). For information, call (352) 796-0697.

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Tampa Bay Times (FL)  
June 16, 2017

**Sossamon to Continue with Dual Roles**

Author: Barbara Behrendt

**Len Sossamon** will be keeping his dual jobs of county administrator and economic development director for at least a while longer. County commissioners this week rejected the idea of spending \$23,000 to conduct a nationwide search to find a new economic development director, which would allow **Sossamon** to focus on his administrator chores, and also opted to not spend \$25,500 on a similar search for a new deputy administrator.

While the need for more focus on economic development was a primary plank in the campaign platforms of County Commission candidates last year, the board couldn't muster enough support to bring in a full-time director at the present time. Concerns that the 2017-18 budget is still top-heavy with expenses, and disagreement about which of the potential new jobs might be needed and how **Sossamon** is performing in the dual roles, the commission opted for a cheaper alternative for now.

Commissioners voted to advertise the job of deputy administrator - a job that would replace several assistant administrator positions now held by department heads - but to do so only internally, taking applications from employees in departments controlled by the commission and as well as from those employed by the county's constitutional officers. The job posting is expected to go up immediately.

The cost of filling that job, clerical support and space and equipment is estimated at \$200,000. A small amount of that might be recovered if those in the current assistant administrator jobs take pay cuts, but that has not yet been determined, according to Cristi Charlow, the county's personnel and risk manager. Commission Chairman Wayne Dukes said he was concerned about spending money for nationwide searches, especially since the commission is in the middle of setting its budget for the 2017-18 fiscal year. "I don't want to be writing any checks I cannot cash," Dukes said.

Commissioner Nick Nicholson wanted to see how much **Sossamon's** load would be reduced with a deputy administrator added. He suggested the commission wait for several months after that person is on board to assess how things are going. "I think we have some talent internally" for the deputy administrator job, said Commissioner Steve Champion. He was also concerned about the cost of the search, which was to have been done by the same search firm that found **Sossamon** five years ago.

But Commissioner John Allocco strongly supported finding a new economic development director. He said **Sossamon's** annual evaluations have been largely positive over the last couple of years, indicating that he wasn't having trouble managing the administrator part of the job. "If these are accurate, then why does he need help?" Allocco said.

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The previous commission began the process of seeking a full-time economic development director before the new commission was seated in January, so "hiring an economic development director should not seem unreasonable" at this point, he said. Asking **Sossamon** to do two full-time jobs was doing him a disservice, said Commissioner John Mitten. He said he saw the decision to hire a new deputy administrator or a new economic development director as an "either-or" proposition, but also noted that the county needs to focus on economic development full time as the county grows.

Dukes reminded the board that a search a few years ago for a new economic development director didn't turn up a suitable candidate, so the board turned to **Sossamon**, who had economic development experience in his past jobs. Dukes praised his work and asked him if he is currently working with new business prospects.

**Sossamon** detailed a variety of upcoming meetings with potential new businesses, noting there are between 16 and 18 he is currently courting. Dukes and **Sossamon** have also encouraged the board to find a way to beef up the county's war chest of potential financial enticements for new businesses, a kitty that sits just below \$1 million currently. Other places have much bigger incentives to offer, they argue, including Pasco County, with a \$50 million fund available.

Champion said there is a financial benefit to both the economic development and deputy administrator positions. He took note of several controversial issues that are costing the county money and said he wants to see a deputy who is "like a bulldog, somebody in charge." He said he was concerned that there are special interests trying to influence the hiring of an economic development director and that names of potential candidates are already being circulated. "I don't like that," Champion said. Commissioners voted to move forward with the internal search for the deputy administrator, with Allocco casting the sole no vote.

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**Leonard B. Sossamon**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Tampa Bay Times (FL)  
November 18, 2016

**County Board Extends Sossamon's Contract**

Author: Barbara Behrendt

As one of their last official acts, the Hernando County Commission this week awarded **Len Sossamon** a four-year contract extension as county administrator and economic development director - much to the chagrin of government watchdogs and the two incoming commissioners. The unanimous action likely means **Sossamon** is safe in his current jobs until Commissioner Jeff Holcomb, who has been gone on military leave for the last several months, returns. It is unclear when that will happen.

Two sitting commissioners, Wayne Dukes and Nick Nicholson, strongly support **Sossamon**, while the two commissioners who will be sworn in Dec. 6, John Allocco and Steve Champion, have raised questions about **Sossamon's** future in one or both of those jobs. Without a fifth commissioner to break a tie vote, nothing can be done to change Tuesday's action.

Critics, including Allocco and Champion, urged the old commission to leave the decision up to the new board. But Dukes argued that, with 30 years of commission experience among them, members of the old board "are more qualified than anybody" to decide on **Sossamon's** performance and better suited than "the guys with no experience."

Nicholson sang **Sossamon's** praises, saying that the administrator has worked with every commissioner and has made government more efficient and responsive. He said none of the county's other recent administrators' performances "could hold a candle" to **Sossamon's**. He also took the opportunity to urge the new commissioners to represent the public in every decision and not the "special interests." Nicholson noted, "we don't need anyone who pulls our strings or is telling us how to vote." Nicholson said that, when he ran afoul of powerful community leaders, he was told to drop out of the commission race or he would see his family and his business destroyed.

"What we need is a School Board, a City Council and a County Commission in which all the representatives are voting their conscience and not based on what someone is telling them to do," he said, contending that **Sossamon** has brought in 10 times as many jobs to the community as his predecessor, who earned \$100,000 just for his economic development work. "Anyone who wants to do away with (**Sossamon's** economic development record) - I'm not so sure he should be sitting up here," Nicholson said.

**Sossamon**, who makes \$168,750 a year performing both jobs, was the target of much of the election rhetoric aimed at replacing Nicholson and Commissioner Diane Rowden. Nicholson won re-election; Rowden was defeated. The commission's action on Tuesday does not actually tie the commission to anything. The extension of the contract calls for the same salary provisions and includes the same ability to remove **Sossamon** from the job. He would have received the

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same 20-week severance package if his contract was not extended past its previous May 2017 end date, county legal staff told commissioners. The decision, argued county resident Pat Miketinac, "should be up to the new commission."

Chuck Greenwell, who heads the government affairs committee of Hernando Beach Property Owners Association, had another perspective. He praised **Sossamon's** work, saying he was "one of the hardest-working people I have had ever seen in government." He called **Sossamon** "the glue, the continuity that holds the commission together" and said the county would be hard-pressed to find any replacement who could do better.

Allocco, who has been critical of **Sossamon**, urged the administrator himself to stop the commissioners from moving ahead on his contract, but County Attorney Garth Collier explained that **Sossamon** had no authority to do so. Pulling an advertised item from the agenda required either the chairman or a vote of the majority of the commission, Collier explained.

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**Leonard B. Sossamon**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Tampa Bay Times (FL)  
July 29, 2016

**Election Season Online Attacks Target Sossamon**

Author: Barbara Behrendt

During election season, incumbent candidates for public office expect to get blasted for their voting records and for pet issues. But in this year's Hernando County Commission races, some of the harshest attacks have been focused on County Administrator **Len Sossamon**, who doubles as the county's economic development director. The latest attack raised the hackles of commission Chairman Jim Adkins, who during this week's commission meeting complained about incorrect information circulating on social media. **Sossamon** read a memo he wrote to the commission, correcting the record on a particularly nasty attack on the Facebook page of Frank Rossetti, the CEO of a financial group that serves school district employees.

Rossetti, who was briefly a candidate for the School Board, posted an article about a Connecticut gun manufacturer that was trying to relocate and chose Texas over Hernando County. "I am sure that if we had the right people orchestrating this deal, it would be a win-win for everyone," Rossetti wrote. "There is no reason to lose companies like this to Texas or any other state for that matter, I mean if it's about jobs then let's bring jobs here."

Others chimed in, implying that getting such jobs might require bribing local officials. Local Realtor and political player Gary Schraut - who has long been critical of **Sossamon's** handling of airport and economic development issues - wrote: "We tried going after these companies 2 years ago. **Sossamon** screwed it all up." He stated that in order to land companies, **Sossamon's** "buddies" would all need to be paid.

Also jumping into the Facebook discussion was Jimmy Lodato, the Democrat hoping to win the District 1 seat on the commission. He is also a personal friend of the owners of the gun company. "Gary, I gave this to Mike McHugh (the previous economic development manager) and the commissioners never backed him up," Lodato wrote. "Alan Mossberg (an executive with the gun company) was my neighbor and my good friend in Tierra Verde. Three years ago, I asked Mike McHugh to contact my friend Iver Mossberg about moving here and he did, but the county never followed through after he left. Sadly, another missed opportunity."

Lodato's Facebook page is loaded with videos critical of the county's economic development efforts. "Some of the allegations in the Facebook stream are personal and are, in fact, totally untrue," **Sossamon** said. "I am accused of doing nothing to attempt to recruit, not only Mossberg, but other firearms manufacturers as well. The (County Commission) is accused of not backing ... McHugh. In general, our business/economic development efforts are critiqued as useless."

He said the county did follow up with the Mossberg family, but they never responded. In fact, **Sossamon** said, he wrote more than 360 letters to firearms manufacturers, and that began even before he officially became the county's economic development director. "We did not drop the



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*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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ball on Mossberg or the others," **Sossamon** said. He noted that he wondered if the Facebook critics realized that the company moved its business to a subsidiary in Texas that has been in business for more than 25 years.

The Facebook commenters joining the criticism of the current commission include Jeff Holcomb, the county commissioner who is now on military leave. In the middle of a discussion about noon July 21, a commenter notes that the current commissioners need to be replaced - all but Holcomb. Holcomb responded at 3:35 p.m. that day: "Thank you gentlemen, if we get the right folks elected in November we can make some changes!" Commissioner Wayne Dukes said he appreciated that the county staff responded but noted that the people who are engaged in such discussions don't care about the facts. "It's personal attacks for personal gain," Dukes said.

When former planning commissioner and oft time County Commission critic Anthony Palmieri brought up recent accusations by a local conservative blogger that the commission and **Sossamon** were covering up for an airport business that was not meeting its contract obligations, Dukes said, "Consider the source." The blog, Florida News Flash, has been criticized by the commission before, with **Sossamon** calling out the accuracy of blogger Samuel Martin McCall and taking note of McCall's felony conviction for grand theft in Alabama.

Palmieri insisted that, if the company in question, Transformation Aviation Services, hasn't met a requirement to hire a certain number of people by this month's deadline, that information should be made public or it would seem like a coverup. County Attorney Garth Collier said that, if a company doesn't meet its contract requirements, there would be sanctions. As for whether those would be announced at a public meeting, he noted that the county is trying to attract business to Hernando, not turn it away. At the last commission meeting, Transformation Aviation Services owner David Tidwell, said publicly that his contract obligations for hiring employees had been met.

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Tampa Bay Times: Web Edition Articles (FL)  
March 31, 2016

**Hernando Administrator Receives Good Evaluations from all but One Commissioner**  
Author: Barbara Behrendt

Because of a mediocre score from the newest county commissioner, Jeff Holcomb, County Administrator **Len Sossamon** saw the average score drop in his annual evaluation for the first time this year. **Sossamon** will celebrate his fourth anniversary as administrator next month, a rare feat in a job that has long been like a rapidly revolving door. Commissioners evaluate administrators annually in 15 categories, ranging from resilience and adaptability to organizational skills and ethics. The scoring scale ranges from a 1, which indicates an unsatisfactory performance in a category, to a 5 which indicates excellence and proficiency.

In evaluations released late last month, **Sossamon** earned an average of 4.49 compared to last year's average of 4.64. Two commissioners, Wayne Dukes and Diane Rowden, gave **Sossamon** perfect scores of all 5s. Rowden praised **Sossamon** saying that his "organizational skills and motivational skills are incredible" and that he "has improved so many areas and continues to improve. He is always several steps ahead of the curve."

In November, Rowden raised the issue of highlighting the good work that **Sossamon** has done when he was wearing his other hat as the head of economic development for Hernando County. Rumors have been flying that **Sossamon** has a target on his back and that the upcoming November election could turn the tide for **Sossamon's** future. Among the powerful business leaders who **Sossamon** has crossed is Realtor Gary Schraut, who strongly opposed the County Commission's move to abolish the county's aviation authority on which Schraut had served for years. He has posted negative public comments on his Facebook page about **Sossamon** and his abilities. Dukes also expressed support for **Sossamon** at the meeting last year, as did Commissioner Nick Nicholson. Nicholson, who gave **Sossamon** a score of 4.93, and Rowden are both up for re-election this year.

On his evaluation, Nicholson said that the administrator "reorganizes positions to best use each person's strengths" and that he is "not afraid to change people around if he needs to." As a goal he has for **Sossamon**, Nicholson wrote "keep delegating but also follow up to see if people are doing their job and following the board's direction and his." Commission Chairman Jim Adkins, who is not seeking re-election, gave **Sossamon** a 4.53. He praised the administrator for his economic development efforts and credited him with creating jobs. "Keep working to get more good businesses in the county," he wrote. Holcomb did not write any comments about **Sossamon's** performance, but he gave him an average score of 3 which means "meets expectations." In the detail of the ratings, he marked **Sossamon's** "financial management" at a 2, which is "marginal, needs improvement," and his "job knowledge" as a 4 or "exceeds expectations." **Sossamon** signed all of the evaluations except for Holcomb's.

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Tampa Bay Times (FL)  
November 6, 2015

**Commissioners Back Sossamon**

Author: Barbara Behrendt

At a meeting late last month, the county's economic development supervisor, Valerie Pianta, touted new projects that have brought in hundreds of jobs and filled several vacant industrial sites. People need to pay attention, said County Commissioner Diane Rowden, because the rumor mill has been churning with stories that Pianta's boss, County Administrator **Len Sossamon**, has a target on his back. "To me, it's very disheartening to hear the rumblings of a concerted effort to get rid of Mr. **Sossamon**," Rowden said. "People need to recognize what's being done with Hernando County and the airport...with millions of dollars we've received through grants."

**Sossamon**, who also serves as the county's economic development director, added that in the last two months, Brooksville-Tampa Bay Regional Airport has received more than \$2 million in grants for projects including the replacement of antiquated lighting, a new instrument landing system and replacing signs. More grant funds are expected soon to replace hangars. Rowden said she had heard some people in the community complain that **Sossamon** has accomplished nothing, but "they need to look at the numbers."

Commissioner Wayne Dukes also praised the economic development efforts, as did commission Chairman Nick Nicholson, who said of **Sossamon**, "I think he's doing a great job." Commissioner Jim Adkins spoke about the need to fast track more speculative buildings so the county will be ready to offer locations as businesses considered a move or expansion. One place where **Sossamon's** activities have been questioned is on the Facebook page of politically influential Realtor Gary Schraut. He has had a prickly relationship with **Sossamon** over airport issues since Schraut's chairmanship of the Aviation Authority, which the commission abolished last year. On his Facebook page, Schraut paints **Sossamon**, Dukes, Nicholson and Rowden all with the brush of tax-and-spend Democrats. Only Rowden is a Democrat. Schraut also complained about the void of county business successes. "We have an administrator/economic development director along with a trio of commissioners who just keep trying to buy their way into a successful business by wasting tax payers \$'s! All these tax payer \$'s are be wasted so they can claim they are business friendly...more like business inept," he wrote on the site Oct. 19.

Schraut also railed against **Sossamon's** bankruptcy in a private-sector venture several years ago. "Very little successful private sector experience on the BOCC. They abolished the Aviation Authority so we would not stand in the way of County Administrator 'Mr Bankruptcy' **Len Sossamon**," he wrote Oct. 19. "Yes, he had one serious venture outside of government and filed bankruptcy without his 50/50 partners consent!!! But he sure has pulled the wool over this community with the help of the BOCC, they know all about it!!" Schraut said he has since softened his feelings toward **Sossamon** because he believes he is only trying to please three members of his board. But he also said he strongly believes the job of county administrator needs

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to be separate from the job of economic development director. And he has little good to say about **Sossamon** in either role. **Sossamon** said people need only look at his record to know he is doing his job. "The proof is in the pudding," he said.

That includes the projects Pianta presented at the meeting. Her report touted seven projects in the last year adding or absorbing 230,000 square feet, creating 230 new jobs and retaining 101 jobs. Also announced was a new company that has moved into and is fixing up the old Christian Contractors building on U.S. 41, according to Pianta. That 170,000-square-foot building will soon house Regency Technologies/Florida Metals Processing, a metal recycler. The company plans to hire 70 people. Pianta promised more good things ahead as the county is working with 14 other companies.

**Sossamon**, in a later interview, also talked about improvements in other county departments. "Apparently, somewhere along the way, I stepped on someone's toes," he said. Then, **Sossamon** remembered when he first came to Hernando County 3 1/2 years ago, he suspected within the first 48 hours he would meet the person who would ultimately be his undoing. "If I get fired, I'll do something else," he said. He said some people in the county's power structure want him out because he uses his experience to make his decisions. "I don't like to be handled," **Sossamon** said. "I know how to run a county."

Nicholson said he stands behind **Sossamon** and that he is the best administrator the county has had in recent memory. He said **Sossamon** has put good people in leadership positions, increased employee morale, gotten union contracts settled quickly, sped up permitting and demolished unsafe buildings. "The fact is that people are telling me to get rid of **Leonard** because he is in their way," Nicholson said. "They need to get three votes on the County Commission, and they don't have that now. It's just that simple."

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*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Tampa Bay Times (FL)  
June 5, 2015

**Commission Gives Administrator High Marks**

Author: Barbara Behrendt

The more the Hernando County Commission knows their administrator **Len Sossamon**, the more they seem to like him. As he hits his third anniversary in the job - a rare feat in the many years of high turnover in the county's top job - **Sossamon** has earned the highest marks he has received since arriving in Brooksville. The average score he earned when graded by the five commissioners late last month was 4.64 out of a possible five points. That's up from last year's 4.43 and his first year's score of 4.09. A 4 represents that **Sossamon** "exceeds expectations" while a 5 is excellent/proficient.

Two of the commissioners, Wayne Dukes and Diane Rowden, gave **Sossamon** 5's in all 15 categories, from planning and organization to honesty and creativity. His lowest score came from Jim Adkins who gave him all 4's. Dukes told him to "keep up the good work" and listed his strengths as providing strong leadership and being a team builder. Rowden gave him credit for "phenomenal" organizational and managerial skills and noted "his whole approach is proactive that goes hand in hand with his vision where Hernando County needs to be in 10-20 years." She also suggested that the county needs a more defined business development plan. "We need to pay Mr. **Sossamon** a significant increase for doing two jobs with excellent performance," she said.

**Sossamon**, who is also the county's economic development director, receives an annual salary of \$168,750. Commission Chairman Nick Nicholson praised **Sossamon** for his problem solving and gave him a goal to fix the county's fleet and maintenance department. Adkins noted **Sossamon** "works very hard to expand economy in Hernando and expanding the workforce."

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Tampa Bay Times: Web Edition Articles (FL)  
December 25, 2014

**Heading into 2015, Hernando Administrator Has a lot of Prospects, Projects on His Plate**  
Author: Barbara Behrendt

For **Len Sossamon**, the pace each day is a sprint. That's because **Sossamon** is wearing two very demanding hats — one as county administrator and the other as Hernando's economic development director. When he takes a breather to think about what's in store for the county in 2015, as he did recently with the Times, it is no surprise that he has not just one, but two lengthy lists of tasks. **Sossamon's** first list reflects his favorite duties. "Recruit jobs. Recruit jobs. Recruit jobs," he said, noting that he and the county's economic development supervisor, Valerie Pianta, are currently working with 20 to 24 active prospects for new or expanding businesses, in addition to following up on leads from a number of organizations.

On the list of active prospects is a craft beer manufacturer. But **Sossamon** knows that the company is weighing its options, and Hernando County's competition is Asheville, N.C., a community that has some features going for it that Hernando doesn't. One of those is a technical school that offers a certification and degree program for brewing craft beer. That is why **Sossamon** is always exploring ways to make the incentive packages for businesses interested in Hernando County as attractive as possible. Other types of businesses on the active prospect list include high-technology companies and various research and development shops, as well as manufacturers of such products as cosmetics, pharmaceuticals and prosthetics. "We've made them proposals, and they just have to say yes," **Sossamon** said.

In addition to traditional economic development activities, he is continuing to look for a tourism venue for Hernando County. As the county has worked through finding a home for the proposed Nature Coast Education and Tourism Center, all eyes have been on that project to fulfill the need. It might, **Sossamon** said. But there might be something else in the works, as well. The County Commission has settled on a site in the Weekiwachee Preserve for the education center, but is awaiting input from the Southwest Florida Water Management District, which owns the site, before starting the design work. **Sossamon** said he hopes to get an extension from the state for spending the \$3 million in state dollars that will help fund the project, which he anticipates could be completed within 18 months. Other ideas for the tourism venue are also in discussion, including working toward some traditional ecotourism options, as well some more active rather than passive types of tourist activities. Another possibility is the development of a sports complex.

In the new year, the county will continue to participate in the multicounty German manufacturing apprenticeship program that is set to be headquartered at Brooksville-Tampa Bay Regional Airport and Technology Center. That could be open by March, **Sossamon** said, and classes for adults could begin by May or June, and by the start of the school year for younger students. Work also continues with the school district and airport interests on developing an aviation academy. Micro Matic USA, which makes beer-dispensing equipment, has broken

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ground on its new 73,000-square-foot home, visible from the Suncoast Parkway. A ribbon could be cut for that facility by late June. **Sossamon** said multiple county departments have come together to make that project happen as smoothly and efficiently as possible. Another major push in 2015 will be to finalize the list of projects the county hopes to have funded through the Restore Act, which is the oil spill settlement fund from BP. The county has a list of projects, but has also solicited ideas from outside groups and individuals.

Development of a snorkel trail along a portion of the Hernando County coast might be one of the projects. Another possibility is identifying the worst infestations of invasive plants along the coast and starting to get them under control. As part of that discussion, **Sossamon** said, he also would like to update the county's ordinance on Brazilian peppers to include other plant invaders. "It's on the coast. It protects the environment. It's enhancing the environment," **Sossamon** said. Those are among the criteria that projects must meet to qualify for Restore Act funds.

Other top projects on the list for the coming year include taking a look at the companies ranked by county commissioners that provide nonlandfill alternatives for getting rid of solid waste, storm water-control projects and the continuation of lime rock road paving projects. **Sossamon** said he is looking forward to continuing the effort to diversify the county's tax base and to the impact that the opening of the new Cortez Commons shopping center and other new commercial buildings will have on the local economy in the coming months. "2014 was a good year," he said, "but I think 2015 will be even better."

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Tampa Bay Times (FL)  
November 16, 2014

**Airport Lease Dispute Lands in Court**

Author: Barbara Behrendt

For several months last year, controversy swirled around the efforts of a Clearwater-based airplane maintenance company to move to Brooksville-Tampa Bay Regional Airport and expand its operation. The debate sparked a power struggle between Hernando County Administrator **Len Sossamon**, and the leadership of the airport and the Hernando County Aviation Authority. The divisive issues ranged from the financial capabilities of the company, Corporate Jet Solutions, to a debate over whether the county was responsible for repairing its flawed building and site as a condition of the lease that the company ultimately signed in July 2013.

At the time, county officials agreed to fix some of the problems at the site, which previously had been known as the Brooksville Air Center. But since Corporate Jet Solutions owner Tony Dye and his father, Bradley, moved in, a host of new problems have arisen. Last week, the ongoing dispute about who is responsible for fixing what led the Dyes to seek an injunction in Circuit Court to prevent eviction from the site. A day later, the county filed paperwork in court seeking to evict the company. On Friday, Circuit Judge Donald Scaglione denied the injunction sought by Corporate Jet Solutions and canceled a hearing scheduled on the issue, making it possible for the company to make its arguments about the county's responsibilities for the flawed facilities through the county's eviction lawsuit.

The paper trail of legal action reveals that Corporate Jet Solutions officials have discovered several serious problems with their site, including substandard wiring, buildings not grounded to minimize danger from lightning, a fuel tank that doesn't measure up to the county's airport standards and a hangar with a smaller entry door than the one described in the county's advertisement seeking someone to lease the site. The wiring and grounding problems were discovered in October when a lightning strike immobilized the company's electric gate, telephone system and other electronics. "Defendant Hernando County performed the inspection necessary to obtain certificates of occupancy for the FBO (fixed-base operator) and the hangar," according to the Corporate Jet Solutions filing. "Therefore, defendant Hernando County knew or should have known about the faulty cabling, poor grounding and other latent defects at the property." The filing states that the county "willingly and knowingly permitted unlicensed, uninsured or unqualified lay persons to perform construction and electrical work," and the result created conditions that Corporate Jet Solutions officials were not aware of at the time they signed the lease.

On Oct. 7, County Commission Chairman Wayne Dukes visited Corporate Jet Solutions, and, according to court papers, Bradley Dye believed that Dukes intended for the more than \$30,000 it will cost the county to replace the undersized fuel tank to be deducted from the company's lease payments. "As to the damages of the lightning strike, the estimate cost to repair the county's telephone system and other service equipment and to correct the defective grounding



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exceeds an additional \$30,000," according to the court papers. The representative of Corporate Jet Solutions also notes that, "as a showing of good faith and to refute any allegations that this petition for injunctive relief is being used as a tactic to delay the payment of rent," the company has put \$32,864.16 in escrow.

In an email written to his son and a representative of his lawyer, Bradley Dye characterizes his meeting with Dukes by saying, "I am convinced that Mr. Dukes was truly sincere and was frustrated to find that these problems have lingered since our leases were signed in July 2013. Mr. Dukes assured me that all of these issues would be completed by Nov. 4, 2014. ... "He was appreciative that the matters were handled away from the media, as I told him that going public would only hurt us both."

In the county's eviction complaint, deputy County Attorney Jon Jouben notes that Corporate Jet Solutions has not paid its rent since the beginning of August. Earlier this month, airport manager Kevin Daugherty put the company on notice that it owed \$32,864.16 for its leases, and to pay up or face eviction. Corporate Jet Solutions officials met last week with county officials to try to work out a compromise but several hours later filed paperwork seeking the injunction.

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Tampa Bay Times (FL)  
June 11, 2014

**Side Job Earns High Marks for Sossamon**

Author: Times Staff

Hernando County commissioners like what they see in their county administrator/economic development director, **Len Sossamon**.

On Tuesday, Commissioner Diane Rowden reminded her colleagues that six months have passed since **Sossamon** took on economic development as a side job, and that it was time to negotiate a permanent agreement if commissioners were satisfied with his performance.

Commissioners agreed to allow the county attorney to negotiate an agreement to examine at a future meeting. "I think our administrator is doing a very good job," Commissioner Nick Nicholson said. Though six months perhaps didn't seem like a long time for a full assessment, Nicholson said, "in a very short time, we've seen some good results."

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Tampa Bay Times (FL)  
May 30, 2014

**Hernando Leader Scores High Marks**

Author: Barbara Behrendt

For the second straight year, Hernando County Administrator **Len Sossamon** has earned high scores from county commissioners, including two perfect evaluations. Hired in May 2012, **Sossamon's** overall score this year was 4.428 on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 meaning "excellent/proficient." That is up from last year's score of 4.09.

Commission Chairman Wayne Dukes and Commissioner Diane Rowden, who don't always agree on issues, gave **Sossamon** 5's in each of 15 categories, ranging from planning and organizing to humor and ethics. Dukes praised **Sossamon** for thinking outside the box, being a good communicator and stepping up to take on more responsibilities. In addition to serving as administrator, **Sossamon** agreed several months ago to take on the role of economic development director.

For **Sossamon's** goals in the year ahead, Dukes wrote "fast track" of projects. "The county administrator has brought back consistency in government," Rowden wrote. "He respects the county employees as the backbone of the organization and values their input. The administrator has gained the employees' respect through his management style. "Mr. **Sossamon** is such a breath of fresh air for Hernando County's administrator position." Rowden suggested that **Sossamon** continue to delegate more work to his four assistant administrators so he can spend more time on economic development.

Commissioner Dave Russell noted that **Sossamon's** involvement in community functions was a good reflection on the county and he wrote that the administrator has "strong visioning for enhancing quality of life initiatives." **Sossamon's** lowest score came from Commissioner Jim Adkins, who gave him only one 5 - for "communication with the governing body." **Sossamon**, 63, who came to Hernando from North Carolina, did not complete a self-evaluation.

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Tampa Bay Times (FL)  
March 5, 2014

**Hernando Administrator Accepted Free Game Ticket**

Author: Barbara Behrendt

On Jan. 8, Hernando County Administrator **Len Sossamon** joined three local University of Florida supporters in Gainesville to watch the school's basketball team take on **Sossamon's** favorite squad, the University of South Carolina Gamecocks. The Gators won. One of their most prominent local fans, SunTrust Bank executive Jim Kimbrough, picked up the tab for **Sossamon's** \$20 general admission ticket.

On Tuesday, after questions were raised about the game, **Sossamon** told the Times that he had invited Kimbrough to his office so he could repay him for the ticket. "In about an hour I'm going to insult Mr. Kimbrough and give him a check for \$20," **Sossamon** said. He also planned to tell Kimbrough that he couldn't travel out of the county with him again, but he would be free to meet with him in his office. A dozen years ago, another county administrator - Paul McIntosh - was pushed out of his job after it was revealed that he accepted sports tickets from local business leaders and a round of golf at the exclusive Black Diamond golf course in Citrus County from Kimbrough.

While the cost of the ticket **Sossamon** accepted doesn't meet the \$25 "minimal value" outlined in the county's gift policy, the news of the trip to Gainesville still riled up one commissioner. Commissioner Nick Nicholson said he didn't care whether **Sossamon** repaid Kimbrough for the ticket or not. "It's a concern of mine," Nicholson said. "I would just prefer for him not to do these kinds of things." Nicholson said that **Sossamon** should meet Kimbrough only in his office and that trips and long lunches send a bad message because **Sossamon** "is with people who are trying to influence his decision making."

In the past, Nicholson has voiced concerns about Kimbrough, who is influential in local politics, meeting individually with commissioners. "Mr. Kimbrough has come to my office before and left not happy, to say the least," Nicholson said. Nicholson said he planned to talk to **Sossamon** about the perception of influence and to remind him that he answers to commissioners. "The five of us are his boss," he said. **Sossamon** said he was invited to the game because he is a Gamecock fan. He said he went in an effort to mend fences between the government and business leaders. "It was all in good spirit to make amends with the business community," he said.

Also along on the trip were Cliff Manuel, president of Coastal Engineering, and local lawyer Bruce Snow, who is a past county attorney. During the ride with Manuel and Snow, **Sossamon** said they talked about sports, Hernando County history and who is related to whom. **Sossamon** also acknowledged a discussion about barbecue, a topic near to his heart. The three met Kimbrough in Ocala and then traveled to Gainesville for the game. They each bought themselves water, peanuts and popcorn. **Sossamon** also got Gator pompoms, which still sit in his office. "Nobody bought them for me," he said, and no county business was discussed.

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Other than that trip, he acknowledged only one other out-of-the-county trip with Kimbrough. The other was to Dade City, where they met with Billy Brown of the Withlacoochee River Electric Cooperative to talk about the utility's industrial land adjacent to the Brooksville Walmart distribution center. That conversation happened before the County Commission gave **Sossamon** the additional duties of being the county's economic development director.

County Commissioner Diane Rowden, who also has been critical in the past of private meetings between Kimbrough and county commissioners, didn't see a problem with the basketball tickets, especially since **Sossamon** paid back the cost. "I have full confidence and trust in Mr. **Sossamon**, and if he said he didn't discuss county business, I have no reason to doubt that," she said. "He didn't violate any policy by going to a basketball game."

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Tampa Bay Times (FL)  
December 11, 2013

**Hernando Leader Takes on Extra Role**

Author: Barbara Behrendt

When Hernando County lost its business development manager to the private sector in August, county commissioners embarked on a nationwide search to find a replacement with a proven track record. They found that person Tuesday, and he had been sitting in the room with them all along. Commissioners on Tuesday agreed to allow County Administrator **Len Sossamon** to take on the role of economic development director in addition to his job of running the county, at least on a trial basis.

When **Sossamon** was hired, part of the appeal, commissioners said at the time, was his experience as both administrator and economic development point person in his old job in Concord, N.C. Among his accomplishments there was developing the city's airport and industrial areas. After a national search to replace Michael McHugh, 31 applicants were narrowed to just two to be interviewed in person. The interviewers - including **Sossamon**, his staff, commissioners and local business leaders - decided neither one was the right fit. On Tuesday, **Sossamon** asked what to do next.

Commissioner Wayne Dukes suggested hiring a professional recruiter, which is how the commission found **Sossamon** nearly two years ago. But Commissioner Jim Adkins suggested that **Sossamon** be tapped for the job because he had done it before, even if just temporarily. In his current job, he has already been involved in some economic development activities, he said. Commissioner Nick Nicholson said he had been talking to **Sossamon** about the possibility for months. "He's got the track record," he said. "I'm in agreement," said Chairman Dave Russell, as long as **Sossamon** didn't find that he was "spreading himself too thin."

**Sossamon** thanked the board and members of the public who spoke up in favor of the idea. He said he was happy to take on the challenge and would let commissioners know if he was in over his head. The choice takes the county in a different direction, one that puts the administrator in a more active business recruitment role. In recent months, there has been a tug of war between the county's airport and the administrator's office for control of the airport's industrial components. A proposal for how the new job will work will be negotiated between **Sossamon** and Russell and be brought back to a future meeting.

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Tampa Bay Times (FL)  
May 15, 2013

**Commission Likes What it Sees in Sossamon**

Author: Barbara Behrent

For his one-year anniversary as Hernando County administrator, **Len Sossamon** received the gift of a positive evaluation from county commissioners. His evaluation earned him a numeric score of 4.09 out of a possible 5 and none of the commissioners scored his qualities as below the standard of "meets expectations" in any category. The ranking is slightly higher than he gave himself in his self-evaluation, which averaged out to 4.07. **Sossamon** said that he felt good about the review by commissioners and that he was already making their suggested improvements. He earned his lowest score from Commissioner Nick Nicholson, who was also most detailed in his comments about work **Sossamon** needs to do. "Employee evaluations have not been done for years," Nicholson wrote. "After a year on the job, I would have hoped that you knew about this without me bring(ing) it to your attention."

That's the same criticism Nicholson leveled at **Sossamon** during a recent commission meeting. Since that time, **Sossamon** has met with his assistant administrators and supervisors have been told that they must have their evaluations up to date by the end of May. Those who don't will be reprimanded, he said. Nicholson also jabbed at the county utilities department, saying that it needs to be reorganized and that there are too many supervisors. **Sossamon** said that he has already talked about this to Brian Malmberg, assistant administrator for operations, and that Malmberg is looking into it. Nicholson also urged **Sossamon** to get a new fleet manager on board and the administrator said he is working on that as well. As a weakness, Nicholson wrote that **Sossamon** "needs to know when county policies are not followed. Can improve by having people reporting to him telling him what is going on."

**Sossamon's** recent reorganization, which narrowed his core managers to four assistant administrators, is accomplishing that goal, **Sossamon** said. Not all of Nicholson's comments on the administrator were negative. He noted that **Sossamon** worked hard, finished tasks, listened well to his commissioners and was always accessible. Commission Chairman Dave Russell urged **Sossamon** to implement his strategic plan and **Sossamon** said he will soon be bringing that before the commission, possibly as early as the end of the month. Russell also noted that **Sossamon** "has done well in his efforts to boost morale in his management team and county employees. His community outreach program has struck a positive chord with the public as well."

"**Len** hit the ground running," wrote Commission Wayne Dukes. "His experience in the private sector in addition to his government work experience has already shown to be beneficial to his role as county administrator." Commissioner Jim Adkins wrote that he wants **Sossamon** to keep working on economic development and he noted that the administrator has a "good management style. Very good keeping me well advised." **Sossamon's** highest marks came from Commissioner Diane Rowden. She noted that his "communications skills are excellent." In his

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*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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self-evaluation, **Sossamon** listed what he perceived as his accomplishments in his first year. The were "restructuring the county's operations, reorganizing Animal Services, dealing with last spring's "monsoon season," dealing with issues of trust with the citizens and the press." His goals for the upcoming year are to get his strategic plan approved and put in place, to soon receive oil spill money though the Restore Act to benefit Hernando County and to continue to restructure government to make it more efficient. **Sossamon** also sought help from commissioners, asking them to be "precise in directives," and to help him "anticipate problems or areas of concern that I am not hear(ing) about. This way we can be more proactive and less reactive."



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Leonard B. Sossamon  
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)**

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[CB&A Note: Only the information relevant to **Leonard Sossamon** listed below.]

Tampa Bay Times (FL)  
December 30, 2012

**FOUR OF 2013'S MOST NOTEWORTHY PEOPLE**

Page: 2 | Section: HERNANDO TIMES

**Leonard Sossamon**

After seven months on the job, the honeymoon is over for Hernando County's newest administrator. **Sossamon** has confronted mismanagement at Animal Services; a commission trying to micromanage his selection of a public safety director; and anti-government hostility at a recent town hall meeting called to cull budget ideas on county services.

Of **Sossamon's** five current bosses, only two initially wanted to hire him, though Russell acquiesced immediately to make the selection unanimous. **Sossamon** is seeking to get the commission to look beyond the seat-of-its-pants governing that dominates much of the decision-making at the county building and take a long-range view of Hernando County's ambitions and how the commission can achieve them.

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Hernando Today (FL)  
November 15, 2012

**Sossamon Gets 1st Review**

Author: Michael D. Bates

"A model of efficiency." "Leading the charge to improve citizens' perception of government." "Handles employee challenges professionally and fairly." "A refreshing, take-charge attitude." These were some of the remarks from county commissioners when they evaluated their new county administrator after his first six months on the job. Only these were from 2008, and the administrator was David Hamilton.

Hamilton was fired about 3 1/2 years later after commissioners criticized his professional judgment, blamed him for a severe drop in employee morale and questioned his role in promoting directors. "I do not have any confidence left in this administrator to lead this organization," Commissioner Jeff Stabins said in a November 2011 meeting. Fast forward to November 2012 and the first performance evaluation of County Administrator **Leonard Sossamon**. In his first six months on the job, commissioners gave **Sossamon** a sterling evaluation, receiving an overall 3.93 average out of a maximum 5. That puts **Sossamon** well within the "excellent-proficient" category.

Among other things, **Sossamon** was evaluated on such things as decision-making, initiative, customer service, dependability and leadership. Like his predecessor, **Sossamon** is still in the "honeymoon period" and commissioners are expecting the best. But this time, they hope **Sossamon** breaks the routine of rapidly departing administrators and erases the stigma that Hernando County cannot keep an administrator around long enough to stabilize the organization. Incoming commissioner Diane Rowden, criticized during her previous tenure on the board and in the just-concluded political campaign for her style of micromanagement, said she will maintain a "hands-off" policy toward **Sossamon** and allow him to do his job.

New commissioner Nick Nicholson, though, believes there has been too little oversight of county administrators in the past and intends to keep a close eye on **Sossamon** to make sure he is monitoring department heads and weeding out the bad ones. Nicholson said he doesn't put much stock in **Sossamon's** six-month evaluation because he hasn't been there long enough to learn the ins and outs of the community or government or familiarize himself with employees. "It's too much to learn (in six months)," he said. Nicholson said **Sossamon** should have had enough time on the job to start implementing some of his initiatives instead of doing things "off the cuff."

Commissioner Jim Adkins said the next six months will be more telling for **Sossamon** as he starts from the beginning the crafting of a new fiscal year budget and deals with the reorganization of the county utility department. From hereon, evaluations will likely be tougher, especially as **Sossamon** is expected to get a major chunk of his much-awaited long-term strategic plan for Hernando County completed. Adkins said **Sossamon** is inheriting a different atmosphere from Hamilton, who almost from the start was forced to cut directors, trim employees and

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streamline government. That led to ill will for many in the system, he said. Adkins said he intends to continue talking to **Sossamon** about issues but not to the point of micromanaging. "I don't ever want to do that," he said.

County Commissioner Dave Russell said he has great hopes for his administrator. He describes **Sossamon** as "extremely congenial, and it's meant a lot to the folks who work under him." Hamilton was criticized as time went on for his lack of "people skills" and a decline in morale. "I don't want to compare the two," Russell said. "They're two different people. **Sossamon** was hired in May and faced a tumultuous budgetary session. He was immediately faced with a breakdown of management in animal services. A tropical storm caused huge residential and commercial damage and destroyed much of the Peck Sink stormwater project.

In his performance self-evaluation, **Sossamon** said he has worked to manage many of those problems. "I have worked to find new revenue sources to help bring the budget into better control," **Sossamon** wrote. He lists as his accomplishments the reorganization of stormwater management, animal services and code enforcement. His objectives include developing a "smoother and better process for the annual budget" and to finish the county's strategic plan. As chairman of the county commission, Wayne Dukes said he probably interacts the most with the administrator. "I'm impressed by what I see," Dukes said. "He's bringing a lot of new ideas and setting good standards for the workers." Dukes added someone would have to work hard to receive a poor six-month evaluation. "If you screw up your first six months, you better be looking for a bus trip home," he said.

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*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Hernando Today (Brooksville, FL)  
September 15, 2012

**The first 100 days**

Author: Michael D. Bates

Most days, **Leonard Sossamon** will leave his second-floor office at the downtown government center after work, travel the short distance to his rented Brooksville home, put on shorts and sneakers and do a four- or five-mile walk around the neighborhood. Coming from North Carolina, the county administrator says he doesn't mind the heat and humidity. If he's in the mood, **Sossamon** cooks up some pasta or pork chops, kicks back with a book or watches something on the Food Channel. Often, he drives back to his office for some late-night work where he is undisturbed by the daytime crush of appointments and interruptions.

**Sossamon** recently passed the 100-day mark of his tenure. He didn't even realize it until a Hernando Today reporter reminded him. He's just been too busy: there was Tropical Storm Debby that came through in June, causing flooding problems that still linger. Another storm, Isaac, caused some anxiety before moving away from the area. Animal Services was in the midst of a controversy following the public outcry about the same day euthanasia of a dog and other operation practices. County commissioners were in the thick of budget battles, and dealing with a shortfall that seemed to increase weekly.

Even with the hectic schedule, **Sossamon**, 62, has managed to shoehorn in the occasional drive to North Carolina, to visit his wife Esther, who is staying on there until she retires from her AT&T job in June. And through it all, **Sossamon** has been putting the finishing touches on a 25-year strategic plan for Hernando County. That plan, which **Sossamon** calls his baby, is almost complete and charts a course for where he believes Hernando County must go to remain economically strong and a place people want to live. "I heard a lot of talk about strategic plans when I got here but I never actually saw one," **Sossamon** said.

**Sossamon**, who worked with the Alliance Development Group LLC in Charlotte N.C. before coming here, said he's only been here three months and he is already enamored of the county. Hernando County, he said, is fortunate to be rural but so close to the urban areas of Tampa and St. Petersburg. He likes the geographical and topographical dichotomy of the county: rolling hills in the east and the gulf on the west. And everywhere he goes, he sees a sea of green. Looking out of his huge windowed office at the government center, he points out the green trees and foliage of downtown Brooksville and beyond.

County commissioners were looking for a "people person" in their next administrator and **Sossamon** would seem to fit that description. He also plans to break the string of revolving door administrators who up and leave soon after being hired. Whether it's talking to the custodial staff at the government office or patrons at local stores and restaurants, **Sossamon** says it's indicative of who he is. With his distinctive Southern accent and demeanor, **Sossamon** seems unflappable during county commission meetings when he has to defuse many citizens' complaints or answer

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tough questions from staff. He believes his relationship with board members is solid. Former administrator David Hamilton fell out of favor with commissioners toward the end of his tenure.

The board cited morale problems with employees and a lack of trust. **Sossamon** says he believes morale has improved and believes in open communication with department heads and board members to avoid some of the administrative landmines that blew up in front of the previous officeholder.

Outside the boardroom

In his spare time, **Sossamon** says he likes to cook. He prides himself on a mean chili recipe, but admits people may need a cast iron stomach. "I made some chili recently and on a scale of 1-10 in hotness it was a nine-plus," he jokes. His taste in books is eclectic and ranges from professional journals, local and out-of-state newspapers and some fiction.

He is a huge football fan and has a special affinity for the University of North Carolina Tarheels. Of course, the recent Tampa Bay Buccaneers and Carolina Panthers game posed somewhat of a dilemma for **Sossamon**. But because he now considers this area his home, "I was actually pulling for the Bucs," he said.

**Sossamon** is a NASCAR fan and has a signed Richard Petty cap in his office. He admires Dale Earnhardt Jr. There are also motorcycle helmets displayed on the shelves. **Sossamon** said he rode cycles when he was younger. "I wrecked three of them so I don't ride anymore," he joked. A jazz aficionado, **Sossamon** has displayed a poster of Dizzy Gillespie from the 2007 South Carolina Jazz Festival.

'Face guy of the county'

**Sossamon** said he is confident Animal Services is on the right track and he continues to meet regularly with Public Safety Director Mike Nickerson to solidify new and existing policies to increase efficiency. He hopes to present to the board either Oct, 25 or early next month a proposal to hire a veterinarian to temporarily manage that department.

He is pleased the county was able to get much of the heavy lifting on the budget done before the recent first public hearing so there were no surprises at the last minute. The county, he said, has cut about half its workforce and he is not sure there is any wiggle room left to lay off more people without compromising services.

His challenge after this 2013 budget is over is to start almost immediately on the following year seeking untapped revenue sources. He will meet with his leadership committee to discuss strategy. "We'll take about a month breather after this one is put to bed and then start on the next year," he said. "We're down about 50 percent employees. So now we will look for ways to increase revenue and maintain services with no tax increases." **Sossamon** said he didn't want to dip into reserves to balance this most recent budget, but there was no time left to explore any other avenues.

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**Sossamon** said he also wants to roll out a countywide stormwater management plan that will better protect area roads and address flooding concerns made evident from recent storms. To facilitate that, county commissioners recently transitioned the county's stormwater management department under the Department of Public Works.

**Sossamon** said a county administrator's job is more than hanging out in the office, shuffling papers and meeting with staffers. It's getting out in the community and connecting with people, he said. To that end, he has spoken to numerous community and civic groups. "I'm the face guy of the county," he said.

And **Sossamon** shares at least one attribute with his predecessor. He refuses to let negativity rule him and won't engage in verbal battles. "Lose your temper, lose the argument," he said. "My wife calls me an eternal optimist. I'll look for ways to make things happen."

'He's enjoying himself'

County Commissioner Dave Russell said he is impressed so far with **Sossamon**, especially with his initial response to problems when he took the top spot. "He didn't come on like a bull in a china shop," Russell said. "He's come in engaged with various departments in depth. He hasn't been terribly outspoken on any issue. At this point in time I think what he's doing is forming a game plan."

Russell said he believes **Sossamon** and his management team handled the animal services firestorm successfully and didn't overreact to any of the subsequent county audit findings of department inefficiencies.

Commissioner Jim Adkins said he enjoys talking with **Sossamon** and was pleased he took the time to familiarize himself with the county and the issues. Adkins said **Sossamon** came in 100 days ago and inherited a far different situation than former administrator Hamilton. "When Hamilton came in 2008, government was big and he had to do some drastic cutting," Adkins said. "The county was bloated. Hamilton was forced to make several employee cuts, which affected morale. Adkins said. By the time **Sossamon** got here, much of that was done.

"He's a people person," Adkins said. "He gets out, he takes trips with department heads and divisions. He looks over their divisions. He's enjoying himself."

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Tampa Bay Times (FL)  
August 8, 2012

**OFFICIAL RESIGNS AFTER CLASH OVER DISCIPLINE**

Author: Tony Marrero

The damage caused to the Peck Sink stormwater project has spread beyond the borders of the site off Wiscon Road and into the offices of the county Utilities Department. Dale Ravencraft, manager of the department's engineering staff, resigned abruptly Monday from his \$90,563-a-year post. His boss, county environmental services director Susan Goebel-Canning, confirmed on Tuesday that Ravencraft was given the option to resign or be fired. "There was a series of events basically indicating his inability to manage his staff," Goebel-Canning said.

Ravencraft's departure is the culmination of a weekslong disagreement with Goebel-Canning over whether to discipline Diana Koontz, the engineer who has helped oversee the Peck Sink project. Koontz, who joined the engineering department in January 2011, diverged from the design plans by directing the contractor to plant grass at the site instead of laying sod.

Ravencraft told the Times he concluded two weeks ago that Koontz was the victim of what he called an unethical campaign to discredit her. He said he started cleaning out his desk at that point because he realized he could no longer work for Goebel-Canning. "Once I saw the direction that Susan was taking with this, I knew that I couldn't work with her," he said. "It's a throwback to (former County Administrator) David Hamilton and his style, and I can't work under those kinds of conditions, a cloud of intimidation or retaliation."

Awarded to Goodwin Brothers Construction in June 2011, the \$1.3 million project on the north side of Wiscon Road, southwest of Brooksville, includes swales, lined ponds, piping and plants to treat the stormwater entering Peck Sink Preserve. The sink serves as the drain into the aquifer for a large area from southwest Brooksville to the Hernando County Airport.

In April, Koontz directed the contractor to plant seed instead of laying sod, which was expected to save about \$50,000. That directive, though a cost saver, conflicted with the original recommendations by the county's consultant, King Engineering. Ravencraft was on vacation at the time, Goebel-Canning said, and Koontz did not consult her or the other senior engineer on staff. Diverging from the plan relieved King of possible liability for damage that later was caused by tropical storms Beryl and Debby. "It basically was like gambling with the county's money," Goebel-Canning said. "It placed the county in a very unfavorable position."

When Goebel-Canning directed Ravencraft to give Koontz a written reprimand, he tried to persuade his boss to reconsider. Koontz made a well-intentioned mistake, Ravencraft said, so counseling and training would be appropriate. Goebel-Canning insisted, so Ravencraft handed Koontz a reprimand memo on July 2. A week later, the county's administrative services director, Cheryl Marsden, asked Ravencraft about the status of the reprimand. By then, Ravencraft had changed his mind and told Marsden and Goebel-Canning he would not be completing the official

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reprimand form. "I could not ethically participate in what I saw as an undeserved and punitive response which would only serve to stain the reputation of the most productive member of my staff and achieve no positive results," Ravencraft wrote later in a lengthy memo to County Administrator **Len Sossaman**.

Marsden told the Times on Tuesday that Ravencraft had been "insubordinate to Susan and pretty much undermined her authority." Still, Ravencraft and Goebel-Canning reached a compromise, agreeing to give Koontz a verbal reprimand. But Ravencraft dragged his feet, Goebel-Canning said, so she gave him a verbal reprimand.

Ravencraft, who started work with the county in 2006, said that shocked him. He said he was never given a time frame to give Koontz the warning. Ravencraft asked that the verbal reprimand of him be rescinded. He also denied assertions by Goebel-Canning that he had failed to properly manage his staff.

In the memo to **Sossaman**, Ravencraft said that ongoing tension between Koontz and his administrative assistant, Denise Kane-Agosto, was the only ongoing issue among his employees, and that he had tried without success to clear the air. He also wrote that he thought Goebel-Canning, influenced by gossip stemming from the disharmony between the two women, decided to take a hard line against Koontz. Goebel-Canning denied that. She said the dispute between Koontz and Kane-Agosto is evidence Ravencraft had failed to tend to personnel matters.

In a two-page memo to **Sossaman** asking that her verbal reprimand be rescinded, Koontz said she had repeatedly expressed concerns about King's performance and errors that caused the county to incur additional costs. She also recalled a directive from at least one county commissioner to get the project done without additional change orders. "(T)he county has chosen to give me a reprimand for a decision that I feel was the only option," Koontz wrote. She declined to comment Tuesday when reached by the Times.

**Sossaman** said he supported Goebel-Canning's actions. "It looked like there were some management decisions that should have been made" by Ravencraft, **Sossaman** said.

The position will be filled as soon as possible, Goebel-Canning said. The job will be advertised, and in-house applicants will be considered. The repairs needed at Peck Sink are expected to cost about \$150,000, but it remains unclear who will cover that, Goebel-Canning said. Sod will be put down at the site.



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Hernando Today (FL)  
May 20, 2012

**Inside Leonard Sossamon**

Author: Michael D. Bates

**Leonard Sossamon** spent the past week moving from North Carolina to his new home in Hernando County. On Monday, he will settle into his second-floor office and become Hernando County's newest county administrator, and the public will see him in action during his first commission meeting Tuesday. Will **Sossamon** be the man who bucks the trend and stays in the job more than a few years? County commissioners hope so, and **Sossamon** says he has every intention of doing so. Hernando Today talked to the 61-year-old North Carolinian this week to learn what he will do when he starts his duties.

Here is part of that interview:

Q: What will your first week on the job look like?

A: I will start meeting with staff, talking with (interim County Administrator) Ron Pianta, (budget manager George Zoettlein) and others to go over the budget, where we are, because that's something that needs immediate attention. I want to find out where we are, what we have tried. Let's see if I can come up with some new ideas or twists on old ideas. Then, obviously, I will be talking with the commissioners and different department heads. It's going to be a busy week.

Q: There is a perceived high level of dissatisfaction toward county government officials. What will you do to reduce the level of negativity in the community?

A: I want to see exactly where the origin of those feelings are, to see if they are valid or not and, if it is, see what we can do to change those attitudes. If there are problems, let's try to find a solution to them and build a bridge to re-establish that trust. Residents must know their problems are going to be heard. The (county administrator) needs to re-establish that foundation with not only the public but also with the staff. As the lead person, I will be the person most of the time that people will expect to carry the ball and go a long way in terms of establishing trust with the public.

Q: Hernando County has not had a good track record of retaining administrators. How do you plan to reverse that trend?

A: Hopefully, I'm going to be the first person who can reverse that trend. I believe in doing the best job possible, being compassionate with concerns and trying to find the way to solve problems that exist and lead by example by being out front. I don't look at this as a stepping stone. I don't even think about retiring, I really don't. I like to stay active and busy. As long as the commissioners, the public, are happy and I'm happy, why not stay? I look forward to being here on (Monday), and I hope everyone has good expectations. That meeting the second day will obviously be interesting and exciting.

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Q: How long will it take you to get up to speed on Florida law?

A: There are some similarities between Florida and North Carolina. The Florida (Government-in-the-Sunshine Law) is probably more rigid, more strict, and I'm sure the county attorney, Garth Collier, will keep me straight on that, so I will count on him.

Q: The community was incensed by the same-day euthanizing of an 8-month-old pit bull at animal services. The county clerk's office is doing an audit of the department. Have you been following this issue?

A: I guess the hot-button issue is animal services. I have been following it. I haven't had a chance to talk in detail (with staff), but I've read the newspaper articles and watched part of a meeting where it was discussed. I want to sit down when the audit is completed and find out what happened.

Q: How will you work with the media?

A: I will try and be as open as possible and as responsive as possible. I think the public should be informed, and I think the media coverage (in Hernando County) is good.

Q: Do you plan to be visible in the community? What is your impression of Hernando County, based on your recent visit?

A: I do get out and about. I like to exercise. I am more of a people person, (and) everybody appears to be very friendly.

Q: Explain your management style. Should there be a clear-cut chain of command?

A: I like to have my door open and talk with people, public and staff. Obviously there is a chain of command, but (I) like to help staff solve problems, and if they need help, give me a holler. Why have department heads if you do not let them do their jobs?

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**Sossamon's** wife, Esther, will stay in North Carolina for about a year until she wraps up her job there and retires. Until then, he will be living in Hernando County alone. "It won't be the easiest thing," he said. "But she has vacation time built up over the years, so we'll have long weekends and holidays, and I'm looking forward to that."

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Hernando Today (FL)  
April 10, 2012

**Sossamon Tabbed as New Hernando County Administrator**

Author: Michael D. Bates

**Leonard Sossamon** said he can't wait to hit the ground running as county administrator of Hernando County. The weather is gorgeous, the people seem nice and he believes he will get along well with commissioners and government employees. With a 5-0 vote of support from his bosses under his belt, **Sossamon** said he expects to work out contract details and start work within 30-60 days. "I really do appreciate the vote of confidence from the Hernando County board of commissioners and I look forward to working with them, as well as the citizens and the Hernando County staff," **Sossamon** said. **Sossamon**, 61, was one of three finalists recommended by the consulting firm of Baenziger & Associates. Heading into Tuesday's vote, he was also the favorite, as reported in Hernando Today over the weekend.

Commissioners said **Sossamon's** successful track record in diversifying industry while administrator in Newberry was impressive and hoped he would do the same in Hernando County, which has seen the construction industry tank. Four out of five commissioners chose **Sossamon** via straw poll before Tuesday's formal selection. Commissioner Dave Russell, who chose none of the three finalists, changed his mind and threw his support behind **Sossamon** in a spirit of cooperation. "I was just looking for a little bit more," Russell said after the meeting. But Russell said **Sossamon** was the strongest of the three and doesn't want him to think he doesn't have his full support going into the job. "I think it's important he recognize I'm behind him 100 percent," Russell said. "I want him to be successful."

Russell said he is impressed by **Sossamon's** experience and demeanor. "I want him to spend the next couple years proving I was dead wrong in not supporting him from the get-go," Russell said. "We look forward to a new direction in Hernando County," Commission Chairman Wayne Dukes said. **Sossamon** has two years' experience as a county administrator in Newberry, S.C. and 13 years as city manager in Concord, N.C. **Sossamon** said his first priority will be tackling the 2013 budget. He was in town last week when county commissioners learned in a workshop they were staring at a \$9.5 million shortfall.

**Sossamon** said economic development and jobs creation will be high on his radar when he starts. He plans to bolster the manufacturing sector and target medical-technical jobs. He said he would examine where budget cuts can be made without sacrificing resident services. He was pleased the county has developed a new tourism marketing plan, designed to maximize bed tax dollars and target certain travelers. **Sossamon** is married and has no children. Born in the South, he has not been a frequent visitor to Florida but knows the warm weather will be right up his alley. "I'd rather have it 95 degrees than 35," he jokes.

**Sossamon** will replace former administrator David Hamilton, who was fired last November after the board said it lost confidence in his ability to manage. They also criticized Hamilton's people

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skills which they believe led to low morale in the government center. Hamilton's tenure lasted three-and-a-half years, longer than anyone in that position since Chuck Hetrick, who had served from 1984-97. **Sossamon** will be the county's ninth administrator since Hetrick left.

On his resume, **Sossamon** states he has been co-founder and owner of Cabernet Holdings since 2006 to the present. He also lists himself as CEO and executive vice president of Alliance Development Group LLC in Charlotte, N.C. Cabernet Holdings in Concord N.C., filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy in April 2010 to head off foreclosure proceedings against him and his partner, who owned the Holiday Inn Express in Lexington. But commissioners chalked up the bankruptcy to the economy and did not sway their votes.

The other two finalists for the position were Ed Green, who spent the last 14 years as county manager for Garfield County, Colo.; and James Wilson, who served as the equivalent to a county administrator for nine years in Galveston, Texas and was also director of housing and community development. The job was advertised at \$120,000-\$160,000. Hamilton made \$134,999 annually. Land Services Director Ron Pianta will remain as interim administrator until **Sossamon** takes the reins.

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Leonard B. Sossamon  
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

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Hernando Today (FL)  
April 7, 2012

**Finalist Has Money Woes**

Author: Michael D. Bates

At least two county commissioners said they are leaning toward **Leonard Sossamon** as their choice to take over the top managerial job in Hernando County. **Sossamon**, 61, was one of three finalists for the county administrator's position. Whether that support will evaporate with the knowledge that **Sossamon** was involved in a bankruptcy two years ago will be determined Tuesday, when commissioners are slated to pick their next manager. As of Friday, the support still seems to be there and they chalked up **Sossamon's** failed business venture to a bad economy.

Hernando Today has learned that **Sossamon's** company, Cabernet Holdings in Concord, N.C., filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy in April 2010 to head off foreclosure proceedings against him and his partner, who owned the Holiday Inn Express in Lexington, N.C. Cabernet Holdings is a limited liability company in Lexington owned by **Sossamon** and Dan Boone, each as a 50-50-member-manager of the LLC. The paperwork was filed in the U.S. Bankruptcy Court, Middle District of North Carolina.

According to paperwork, NewBridge Bank in January 2010 started foreclosure proceedings against the company, which it said owed the bank some \$6.6 million. On his resume, **Sossamon** states he has been co-founder and owner of Cabernet Holdings since 2006 to the present. He also lists himself as CEO and executive vice president of Alliance Development Group LLC in Charlotte, N.C. In July 2010, a foreclosure auction was held at the Holiday Inn and another hotel chain won with a \$5.6 million bid. **Sossamon**, contacted Friday, said his firm developed the Holiday Inn Express for a group of investors who, at the last minute, did not close on the deal and that left Cabernet holding the bag. He said there was no option but to file for Chapter 11 corporate bankruptcy.

County Commissioner John Druzbeck said **Sossamon** likely didn't disclose the bankruptcy episode for the same reason former administrator David Hamilton would probably not disclose his involvement with the controversial Hernando Beach channel dredging project. Hamilton was roundly criticized for his management of that much-delayed project. "You're going to find something in everyone's past that may be questionable, if you want to call it that," Druzbeck said.

Druzbeck said bankruptcies are occurring everywhere given the economy. "It was a business investment that obviously did not do well," Druzbeck said of **Sossamon's** failed venture. In addition to his private sector background, **Sossamon** was county administrator of Newberry, S.C. from 2004-06. He was also city manager of Concord from 1985-98. **Sossamon** was one of three people who made the short list of Baenziger & Associates, hired by county commissioners for about \$21,000 to conduct a nationwide search for the county administrator position. In the interview notes conducted by Baenziger's staff, the bankruptcy is not mentioned. [CB&A Note:

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*To correct this article, the bankruptcy was disclosed in Mr. **Sossamon**'s materials.] Nor did it come up during this week's public interview session held by county commissioners.'*

Currently, with his privately owned entities, **Sossamon** is making \$145,000, his profile said. When he was employed with the city of Newberry, he made \$107,000. Druzbeck said **Sossamon** is "the better fit" for Hernando County than the other two candidates.

Newberry, where he served as county administrator, is demographically similar to Hernando County and he has faced many of the same financial challenges the local board is facing. "I think what Mr. **Sossamon** offers is something closer to what Hernando County needs and has been striving for," Druzbeck said. When the textile industry soured in Newberry, **Sossamon** strove to diversify the county's industry to revive a dying tax base, he said. Druzbeck is also impressed with **Sossamon's** efforts in North Carolina to help establish manufacturing parks, an airport and nurturing private-public partnerships. "I just think he brings more to the table for Hernando County than the other two candidates," he said.

\* \* \* \* \*

County Commissioner Jim Adkins said he too is leaning toward **Sossamon**, especially after this week's one-on-one meetings with all three candidates and the public interviews. Adkins said he was impressed with **Sossamon's** efforts to revitalize his county's economy. Hernando County, he said, is trying to do the same thing by reducing its reliance on the building industry. **Sossamon** seems to have a good vision for Hernando County. Adkins said he asked all three candidates if there were anything in their backgrounds that would embarrass the county and all three denied any skeletons. Adkins said he did not know about **Sossamon's** company bankruptcy but didn't think it was serious enough to raise issues.

These days, bankruptcies are not uncommon and as long as there is nothing criminally related, there shouldn't be a problem, Adkins said. However, the county human resources department will conduct a background check, he said. **Sossamon**, according to the interviewer with Baenziger & Associates, believes in "straightforward and honest communication. "He has created a positive atmosphere in the community by being transparent with all forms of media," the interviewer wrote. "He has nothing personally controversial in his background, nor has he done anything that would be potentially embarrassing to a future employer." When told of the bankruptcy filing, County Commissioner Dave Russell said it is "something we'll need to look at, obviously." Russell said he had not narrowed down his preference for the manager's position. All three seem to have the experience for the job, he said.

County Commission Chairman Wayne Dukes said he was aware of **Sossamon's** bankruptcy filing but doesn't believe it should be an issue. Dukes said **Sossamon** assured him there were no pending problems in his professional life that would be detrimental to doing the job here. But Dukes said he is keeping an open mind about all three candidates.

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The Dispatch  
April 26, 2010

**Hotel at Winery Files for Bankruptcy**

Author: Vikki B. Hodges

The owners of the Holiday Inn Express Hotel & Suites at the Vineyard have filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection to stave off a foreclosure on the property. Cabernet Holdings, owned by Concord developers **Leonard Sossamon** and Dan Boone, filed for a Chapter 11 reorganization April 1, the last day of the upset period for the foreclosure sale, said William Miller of High Point law firm Roberson, Haworth & Reese. Miller was recently appointed receiver by the judge handling the bankruptcy case.

The foreclosure process was begun in January by NewBridge Bank, which claims it is owed approximately \$6.6 million in loans. Miller said he has retained the hotel's management company, Myrtle Beach, S.C.-based Strand Management, to continue managing the property as the bankruptcy proceedings are completed. "It's business as usual," said Therese Henderson, general manager at hotel, the newest in Lexington. "In fact, we were basically sold out last week." She said customers last week included people attending the High Point Market, a group from the N.C. District Attorneys Association, business people from Matcor, a metal fabricator in Welcome that is adding staff, and Home Trust Bank, the new owners of Industrial Federal, who are also planning some training at the hotel's conference room facility.

Henderson said business has been up since September 2009, with the first four months of this year up substantially from the same period last year. She said the occupancy rate has been between 60 and 70 percent of late, and bookings are looking good for the remainder of the year. "It's not for a lack of business," Henderson said of Cabernet Holdings' financial difficulties. She said the company's problems stem back to July 2008 when Cabernet Holdings was set to sell the hotel it built to a buyer who backed out of the deal. Cabernet Holdings had only intended to develop the hotel, not manage it. When the sale fell through in the middle of the recession, the company decided to hire a management company to run it for them. "They inherited all the debt, then the economy crashed," she said. "It just wasn't a good time to open a hotel, but they didn't want it to sit empty."

After gaining a 30-day extension from an April 13 bankruptcy court hearing, Henderson said the owners plan to present a reorganization plan May 18 in court. She said the extension will allow them to pull together all the paperwork they need to show they can continue to operate the hotel and pay off the debt. Miller said the hearing May 18 will also address a couple of motions filed by NewBridge. The bank has filed for a dismissal of the Chapter 11 filing by Cabernet Holdings and has also filed a motion to allow it to proceed with the foreclosure sale, even if the Chapter 11 filing stands.

The four-story, 88-room hotel, nestled between Childress Vineyards winery and The Shoppes at Vineyards Crossing, has had a history of false starts. First the hotel was set to open and be built

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to the specifications of the Best Western chain. Then the hotel changed to a Hampton Inn and finally to Holiday Inn, one of the sponsors of Richard Childress Racing. In between those hotel franchise changes, the ownership also changed a couple of times, with Cabernet Holdings taking ownership in July 2008.



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Independent Tribune (NC)  
March 20, 2008

**Graffiti or Urban Art?: Definition of What's Art, What's Not Inspires Debate**

Author: Eric C. Deines

Through the ages, artists have pushed the definition of art and left critics to argue its merits. Has that argument now hit downtown Concord? Downtown property owner **Leonard Sossamon** may agree it has. At a Concord City Council meeting last week, **Sossamon** addressed the council concerning some graffiti -- or "urban art" -- that has appeared at the rear of his property at 11 Union St. South. The "urban art," as **Sossamon** referred to it at the meeting, features a spray-painted skateboarder, as well as some profanity and other markings. In a letter from the city, **Sossamon** was asked to remove the art within a given amount of days before a \$100-a-day penalty was enacted. Concord's Chief of Police Merl Hamilton said the city keeps graffiti in check by applying its signage ordinance. If graffiti appears, Hamilton said, it's treated in the same manner as a sign that is out of compliance with the city code. "It's pop art," **Sossamon** said. "It's not a sign, because I'm not advertising anything." Hamilton said the city has policies that look to rid buildings of graffiti because it's seen as a stimulus for greater crimes. "It's a disorder issue, which often leads to crime," Hamilton said, comparing graffiti to a broken window.

If a broken window were left as such, Hamilton said, it may eventually lead to other broken windows on that same building. Then, vagrants may find it easy to enter the building, which could lead to several other crimes, such as drug abuse. Hamilton said a downtown area covered in graffiti may give the idea that downtown is an appropriate place to engage in criminal behavior. And gang-related graffiti, Hamilton said, already has its direct link to criminal activity. He said that graffiti is often reported by residents, code enforcement officers or city employees. **Sossamon**, who in 2007 completed a \$2 million renovation of downtown's old Paramount building, said he knows several instances where graffiti art has been as accepted as true art. **Sossamon** also said he has considered commissioning such an artist to paint a mural on one of his buildings.

The letter that came to **Sossamon** from the city referred to the wrong city ordinance, which was actually found to only read "reserved," **Sossamon** said. **Sossamon** also addressed this matter as one of his concerns when speaking to Council. City Council agreed to waive any fine for the graffiti while a further study is conducted. "I don't know what I was in violation of, and I still don't," said **Sossamon**, a former Concord city manager. Hamilton said business owners are often given a seven-day period to remove the graffiti before a penalty is enacted, though the city will work with owners to give them more time when necessary. At the City Council meeting, **Sossamon** also named some other locations around downtown where he found graffiti, including some city-owned properties. City Manager Brian Hiatt said the city-owned locations included in **Sossamon**'s list were cleaned this week. Hiatt said that the city generally tries to have its building maintenance crews clean graffiti from city buildings within 48 hours.

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Charlotte Observer, The (NC)  
March 2, 2008

**Concord development group says thanks to 3**

Author: Sharif Durhams

The Concord Downtown Development Corp. has honored three local residents and elected officers and board members. Chad Tarlton and Alex Rankin were recognized for outstanding volunteer efforts. The award is given to people who have given many hours for the organization and community.

Tarlton, vice president of Cabarrus Bank and Trust Co., was recognized for his support of downtown events throughout the year. He has given many hours of his personal time to help make events successful, including Union Street Live, the Spring into Arts Festival and Holiday Happenings, said Vickie Weant, CDDC's executive director.

Rankin, president of CESI and a member of CDDC's board of directors, was honored for his efforts to bring free wireless Internet service to the downtown area and his dedication to local economic development, Weant said.

CDDC presented its Keystone Award, which recognizes "a significant contribution to the enhancement of downtown," to **Leonard Sossamon**. **Sossamon**, a property owner and developer, revitalized 9 Union St. N., Weant said.

"This building, along with several others that **Sossamon** owns, has helped to bring downtown back to life," Weant said.

Board members and officers for 2008 are **Sossamon**, president; Rankin, vice president; Steve DeConti, secretary; Dan Levinson, treasurer; Will Swink, past president; Jeff Brady; Allen Craven; Janet Dearmon; and David McClellan.

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Newberry Observer, The (SC)  
August 9, 2006

**County's creative financing garners award in bond deals**

Author: Cindy Pitts

Creative financial dealings have led Newberry County to getting a second coveted award for the bond deal that kept Springfield Place and J.F. Hawkins Nursing Home open. Last week the county won the J. Mitchell Graham award at the S.C. Association of Counties meeting. This is the highest award given for achievement and progress in a county government. To get the award the county had to share their project with representatives from other counties.

County Council Chairman Mike Hawkins introduced the county's project and County Attorney Gary Pope gave the details through a Power Point presentation. Professors from Clemson, USC and a representative from the Department of Juvenile Justice judged the projects.

"They asked us a lot of questions," said Hawkins. "Going in I knew we were going to win." Hawkins said the project gave the county a unique way to refinance the bonds on the retirement centers and affected a number of people by allowing them to stay open. "Not only did this effect the residents but also their families," said Hawkins, adding if the financing had not come through then the county was looking at closing or selling the facility.

After getting their unique finance through on the retirement complex, the county used the same financing to refinance the bonds on the hospital. "I told them, 'We did it and you can, too,'" said Hawkins. The award will put the county on the cover of an upcoming issue of the Association of Counties' magazine.

The county also won the "Deal of the Year" award chosen by The Bond Buyer's bureau chief and editors in December.

Under the sponsorship of the county, J.F. Hawkins was established in 1965. To encourage growth and expansion of the facilities throughout its four decade history (including the addition of an Alzheimer's unit in 1996 and Springfield Place Retirement Community in 2000), the county provided financial support in the form of general obligation bonds issued under the county's 8 percent constitutional debt limit and periodic contributions of cash. With operations struggling by the late 1990s and the facilities teetering on bankruptcy by 2001, the county took the unprecedented step in 2002 of taking direct control of the facilities and incorporating them into county government as an enterprise fund to ensure continuity in the level of care. By so doing, however, the county also introduced an enterprise fund burdened by five privately placed loans with rates as high as 8.875 percent.

To right the financial ship, the county enlisted as its consultant, the South Carolina Jobs-Economic Development Authority (JEDA) and Merchant Capital to devise a refinancing of the facilities' high interest rate debt portfolio.

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Under the guidance of then administrator **Leonard Sossamon**, County Council approved a financing and legal structure, which enabled the county to use general fund support for the facilities without threatening the county's 8 percent constitutional debt limit in the process.

"In essence, in addition to the normal debt service fund, the county pre-funded a debt service reserve fund that put aside a year's worth of debt service payment," said **Sossamon**. "If this reserve fund is drawn down during the year, then the county's obligation each budget year, subject to annual appropriation, is to fully replenish that fund to the extent that it was drawn down. This unique approach enabled the county to receive underlying investment grade ratings on the nursing home from both Moody's and S&P of Baa2 and BBB+, respectively."

The county was also able to secure bond insurance from Radian Asset Assurance, Inc. thereby allowing the offering to carry enhanced ratings of Aa3/AA from Moody's and S&P, respectively. The bonds were offered for public sale in April of 2005 with priority given to Newberry County investors.

As a direct consequence of the enthusiastic reception of the bonds by the investor community, the county secured a blended cost of funds of 4.8 percent, which translates to \$300,000 in estimated annual savings, and initial estimated debt service coverage levels of greater than 160 percent.

The county did the same debt structure two months later on behalf of Newberry County Memorial Hospital. The refinancing resulted in a 25-year fixed rate of 4.54 percent and estimated debt service savings of \$1.94 million in that endeavor.

Bond counsel for the county was Robert Galloway, of the Greenville Office of Haynsworth, Sinkler, Boyd.

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The Newberry Observer (SC)  
June 26, 2006

**County Looking for Leadership  
Administrator Resigns-Again**  
Author: Cindy Pitts

A search is underway for a new county administrator. County Administrator **Leonard Sossamon** told County Council on Wednesday night that he would not be returning after a six month leave of absence. **Sossamon** resigned earlier this year due to his aging parents' health problems. He was later asked by council to take six months' leave and return in July.

On Wednesday night **Sossamon** told council that things with his parents had not improved, and he would not be returning. Council Chairman Mike Hawkins said working with **Sossamon** over the past two years has been a "fun ride" and he hopes **Sossamon** can help the county with future projects. **Sossamon** came to work for the county in January of 2004. Councilman Henry Summer will chair a committee assigned with hiring a new administrator.

After **Sossamon's** first resignation, Gene Klugh was hired as acting administrator and will remain in that position until a new administrator is named. Hawkins said the process could take six months but adds that Newberry County has lot to offer potential candidates.

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The Newberry Observer (SC)  
January 6, 2006

**County Administrator Resigns-Surprised Council to Search**

Author: Cindy Pitts

Through a flow of tears, County Administrator **Leonard Sossamon** announced Wednesday night that he was resigning his duties with the county. The announcement, which was initially made in executive session, came as a shock to the county council. **Sossamon** stated he was leaving so that he could help care for his elderly parents, whose health is declining. "I admire your decision. It shows the great relationship you have with your family," said Councilman John Caldwell.

Councilman Andy Morris said **Sossamon** was the right person at the right time when he was hired in January of 2004. "We will be thanking you 10 years from now for your service to Newberry County and the things you have accomplished," said Councilman Henry Summer. Council Chairman Mike Hawkins said working with **Sossamon** over the past two years has been a "fun ride." "If you told him to do something you better mean it because he began to work on it that night or first thing the next morning. I appreciate the job he has done," said Hawkins, adding the resignation came as a surprise. "I will miss you. You put in a lot of hours for the county," said Councilman Bill Waldrop. "I hate to see you go," echoed Councilman Edgar Baker. **Sossamon** will work through the end of January and Hawkins said the county plans to continue to use **Sossamon** on some projects.

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**The Bond Buyer (USA)**  
December 28, 2005

**Special Source Refunding Saves South Carolina Nursing Home**  
Author: Tedra DeSue

Faced with the possibility of losing a key nursing home facility in its community, Newberry County, S.C., officials sold about \$11.5 million of debt earlier in April in an unprecedented transaction that earned a Southeast honorable mention in The Bond Buyer's Deal of the Year Awards. The relatively small debt sale was recognized partly because it involved the issuance of special source refunding revenue bonds, which have never been sold for a nursing home in South Carolina. Proceeds were used to refinance several relatively high-interest loans - for a considerable amount of savings - that had previously been taken out for J.F. Hawkins Nursing Home.

Since the transaction closed, one other deal using a similar structure has sold, showing that the innovative structure can be duplicated, which is one of the factors The Bond Buyer's editors and bureau chiefs consider when judging deals for the awards. Newberry County sold the bonds, with Merchant Capital as underwriter and Haynsworth Sinkler Boyd bond counsel. Radian Asset Assurance Inc. insured the deal. A subsequent \$11 million county issue for Newberry County Memorial Hospital was completed this summer. The nursing home deal was structured with fixed rate, tax-exempt revenue bonds going out 25 years. More than half of the total - \$6.6 million - were term bonds that mature in 2021, 2025, and 2030.

Since 1965, the county has sold general obligation bonds to help the facility with its expansion and growth efforts. However, during the late 1990s, the nursing home's operations began to struggle and the facilities were teetering on bankruptcy, said Newberry County Administrator **Leonard Sossamon**. J.F. Hawkins' facilities include an Alzheimer's unit and a retirement community. To help them regain their financial footing, Newberry took the unprecedented step in 2002 to acquire the facilities and incorporate them as an enterprise fund. To do so, the county had to introduce an enterprise fund saddled with five privately placed loans with rates as high as 7.75%. That resulted in debt service coverage levels from 2000 and 2001 of 0.22 times and 0.97 times, respectively.

To improve coverage levels and generate some savings, county officials called on Merchant Capital and worked closely with banker Brent Robertson. The solution, they determined, was to issue the special-source refunding bonds. They were able to achieve a new rate of 4.81%, with a debt service savings of \$300,000 a year. The deal ended up with underlying ratings of Baa2 from Moody's Investors Service and BBB-plus from Standard & Poor's. Those ratings are another reason officials take pride in the transaction, as it allowed them to convert what would have otherwise been treated as non-investment grade nursing home paper into a revenue bond of the county.

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In addition, structuring the deal that way allowed for it to not be counted against the county's state-imposed debt limit. In South Carolina, a municipality cannot issue general obligation debt that exceeds 8% of its assessed property value without getting voter approval. This has often tied the hands of issuers, especially school districts that face growth-funding needs. Several of them have gotten around the limits by issuing installment purchase revenue bonds through nonprofit corporations. However, there was some public outcry that the structure was illegal, with critics charging that those bonds in fact amounted to school district debt and therefore should be considered as part of the debt limit statute.

For this deal, **Sossamon** said, there were no legal challenges. Also, several public hearings were held, and the transaction received support from the community. "We were able to do a marvelous job in freeing up capital and improving cash flow to help these facilities," **Sossamon** said. "People realized that this was a good bang for public dollars."



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The Charlotte Observer (NC)  
November 14, 2002

**Downtown's Packing more and more Sizzle**  
**New Tavern is Hoping to Pump Added Vitality into the Center City**  
Author: Jaime Levy

Friday's opening of the George Washington Bookstore & Tavern marks what could be a defining moment for downtown Concord. With the tavern opening its doors to high-profile nightlife - and the recent or coming debut of several other restaurants on Union Street, Concord's main strip - the city is on the brink of a downtown revival. It's been coming for a while. Three years ago, the Union Street Bistro set up shop at 48 Union St. S., bringing upscale and dinnertime dining downtown. In the past year, more downtown buildings have been bought and sold than in the previous five years combined. The city in March unveiled a master plan that pictured a lively downtown complete with good lighting, a grocery store, a bookstore, and plenty of restaurants.

Now, a lot of simmering developments are starting to boil. The Barry Patch - a sandwich and pizza shop across the street from the Cabarrus County Courthouse - opened a week ago. A European-style delicatessen and wine shop called Montmartre is slated to open next month. A group of developers are discussing restoring a movie theater that once existed in what is now known as the Mini-Mall. "We've got some momentum going," said Connie Kincaid, director of the Concord Downtown Development Corp. "Downtown is becoming more and more a dining and entertainment district. Especially with the opening of the George Washington, you see that's really the direction in which we're moving."

**Many niches at once**

Part restaurant, part bar, part music hall and part bookstore, the George Washington - housed in a restored 102-year-old building - will try to fill many niches at once. "I've been in Concord since 1978. When I got here, I was a little shocked there was really nothing to do outside of creating your own entertainment," said Laine Harling, the former city councilman who owns the tavern. "I think downtown is the heart of a community. We have a beautiful historic district. It's got character. "The community is thriving now with people looking for something to do without driving to Charlotte or the University area," he said. "Something they can put their hands on." The tavern has a stage, an in-house drum set and a musician's lounge, and Harling hopes it will help put Concord on the music map. He's booked performers each weekend through the end of the year (see Entertainment Calendar, Page 9K). "We're creating our own music scene," Harling said. "This is going to be, we hope, a venue for regional, and eventually national, acts."

**Old and new together**

By salvaging antique pieces of wood, marble and other items from around the county, Harling has put together a venue that he hopes will successfully combine old and new: the same double identity that all of "Classic Concord," the brand name for the city's historic district, is trying on. For example, developers at Hunter & Brown bought the Mini-Mall at 9 Union St. N. within the last year. Built in the early 1920s as the Paramount Theater, the building is now empty. "We like

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historical buildings," said **Leonard Sossamon**, a partner with Hunter & Brown. "We felt like maybe the time was right for something of that nature. A number of cities are trying to create downtowns. We're not trying to recreate it - we're just trying to preserve it."

**More people downtown**

Other area business owners say they are pleased to see more activity coming to the area - that, at this point, the market is far from being saturated. "The more people you have come to the area, the more exposure you have," said Raymond Hvasta, co-owner of the Union Street Bistro. "If they're coming downtown to go to the George Washington, chances are they'll pass by our place. The businesses can just feed off each other." Richard Barry, owner of The Barry Patch, agreed. "It's bringing more people to my end of town," he said. "I'm hoping to get them away from the malls and to our area of town for shopping."

**Growing confidence**

More new retail, however, is necessary to improve the viability of downtown Concord as a destination, Hvasta said. "I think we need better retail to get a nice mix of retail and restaurants," he said. "If you put 20 restaurants down here, nobody's going to make any money." As of now, Union Street is lined with several antique shops and a handful of specialty stores, including an equestrian gear shop and a sewing and needlecraft boutique. Kincaid, of the Downtown Development Corp., said she expected to see a growing group of retailers along the strip.

"Twenty years ago, this was the major retail center. Once Carolina Mall was built, most of the key anchors went to the mall," she said. "Now, small businesses want to come back downtown. It's not the malls where economists are predicting a major upswing. It's Main Street U.S.A." Kincaid said it makes sense for downtown to see a burst of activity now: The master plan, she said, gave investors a reason to look here. "Because we have (demographic) data and have just gone through an extensive visioning and planning process, people are (saying), 'Wow, these folks know where they want to go,'" Kincaid said. "Suddenly, there's confidence in the market." That's what Donna Wright says. Wright currently owns a children's store in Cornelius. Now the Concord resident is bringing the boutique - called Victoria & Friends - to 78 Union St. N. The shop will carry clothes, cribs, bedding and other items for children. "I started seeing more things opening up," she said. "That's what made me go ahead and do it now - before somebody else does."

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Salisbury Post (NC)  
October 29, 2000

**N.C. Republicans Attacking Sossamon’s Record**

Author: Scott Jenkins

As the race for the 90th District seat in the N.C. House of Representatives heats up, the N.C. Republican Party is attacking Rep. **Leonard Sossamon**’s brief legislative record. But **Sossamon**, a Democrat from Concord, says the party of his opponent, Linda Johnson of Kannapolis, is not only distorting the truth, but telling outright lies in its campaign to discredit him. The N.C. GOP has mailed at least four fliers to voters in the 90th District — which includes Kannapolis and Concord — during the past two weeks. Three of the glossy fliers accuse **Sossamon** of voting to “raid” the state’s Medicaid reserve fund for \$70 million to pay for “pet projects” like studies of turf grass and ocean crabs. One mailing shows a stack of \$20 bills being passed from one hand to another, with an arrow pointing to **Sossamon**’s picture, indicating the money will be passed to him. Inside, the text begins, “**Leonard Sossamon** raided the Medicaid Trust Fund. You just can’t trust **Leonard Sossamon**.” The bill the flier refers to as its source is House Bill 1840, the appropriations portion of this year’s budget. **Sossamon** scoffs at the idea that he’s being attacked for voting for the budget.

Republicans voted in favor of the budget as well and are running for re-election touting it as an achievement, he said. Notably among them, **Sossamon** said, is Rep. Charlotte Gardner of Rowan County. “Charlotte voted for that, and I did too; so did Sen. Fletcher Hartsell (of Cabarrus County), who is a Republican,” he said. “I think it’s strange that, in my case, they’re trying to beat me up about it, and in other cases they’re running positive ads about it.”

In fact, the N.C. Democratic Party has done the same thing. It mailed a flier praising **Sossamon** for voting for increased teacher pay and help for seniors who can’t afford prescription drugs, citing the same budget bill. The General Assembly did move \$70 million from the Medicaid reserve fund to the regular 1999 Medicaid fund to pay for current expenses. That money replaced \$70 million in the regular Medicaid fund that was then returned to the general fund and became part of the state’s \$18 billion budget.

The money could conceivably have been used to pay for the studies the GOP refers to, but since it became part of the state’s larger general-fund pot, it’s hard to track specific dollars. The reserve fund was established to contain federal money put into the Medicaid system to help reimburse hospitals for their care of Medicaid patients, said a fiscal analyst familiar with state government. When the federal government overpays, the money is placed in the reserve, or trust account. Eventually the state must settle up with the federal government on overpayments. But Medicaid is an entitlement program, meaning anyone who meets the criteria set for receiving it cannot be turned down, **Sossamon** said. “I think what they’re trying to do is confuse seniors,” **Sossamon** said.

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Dan Gurley, political director for the N.C. GOP, admits that Republicans as well as Democrats voted in favor of the budget containing the transfer of funds. “There are a lot of bills that come out of the General Assembly that are not party-line votes,” Gurley said. “In this instance, we believed this was a bad vote for residents of the 90th House District.” Gurley said the 90th District seat is a “top tier” race for Republicans, who need to win seven seats in November to regain control of the House. It is an attractive race for several reasons, he said, including the fact that **Sossamon** was appointed to replace Richard Moore, who stepped down in May after pleading guilty to several felonies. “With him being appointed to the seat, there was not a long legislative record,” Gurley said. “We had to look at the votes he cast while in office.” Gurley said the Republican party’s research indicated the Medicaid issue “played very well for us, that it was important to voters in the district and it was a strong issue for Republicans to put forward.”

The fliers say they are not endorsed by a candidate. And Johnson, the Republican running for the seat, said she couldn’t comment specifically on them since she didn’t give them her blessing. But she said she opposes the “creative accounting” of shifting money among funds. A similar move, she said, left a hole in the ABCs fund for teacher bonuses that the state may be unable to fill next year. “I think you ought to balance the budget, and I think you ought to not leave holes for the next year,” she said. Johnson said she has received no direct financial support from the state GOP. It has sent out a flier on her behalf, saying that she’ll support a prescription drug plan for needy seniors.

The N.C. Democratic Party has mailed at least two other fliers praising **Sossamon** — one saying he’ll stand up to HMOs for better health care and one saying he’ll protect private information from telemarketers. The Republican party mailed at least one flier departing from the Medicaid issue. That one accuses **Sossamon** of voting to raise taxes on gas and electricity, but doesn’t cite a specific bill. **Sossamon** denies the charge. “They really screwed up this time, because that was voted on before I was ever in the House of Representatives,” he said.

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Salisbury Post (NC)  
September 30, 2000

**Sossamon, Johnson Set Their Sights on 90th District Seat**

Author: Scott Jenkins

Democrat **Leonard Sossamon Jr.** and Republican Linda Johnson square off Nov. 7 in a race that has gotten more publicity for who is not in it than who is. Richard Moore, a popular and rising young Democrat from Kannapolis, announced early this year that he would not seek a third term in the 90th N.C. House District. The announcement came amid allegations that the former A.L. Brown High School teacher committed sex-related crimes with former students. Moore left the Legislature in May after pleading guilty to three charges. The Cabarrus County Democratic Party nominated **Sossamon** to finish Moore's term, a natural move since **Sossamon** had won the Democratic primary only weeks earlier.

Johnson, a former member of the Kannapolis Board of Education, which accepted Moore's resignation from A.L. Brown, defeated Jim Gulley Jr. in the GOP primary. Gulley came up short against Moore in 1998 in one of the most expensive House races in the state. Now **Sossamon** — with a short session, some co-sponsored bills and several House votes under his belt — and Johnson have set their sights on the future, and the issues facing the state and the 90th District, which includes Kannapolis and Concord. The issues include nagging problems like road construction and maintenance, in which the state seems lagging locally. Other issues are populist rallying cries, like improving education. Still others are touchy subjects, like a state lottery, which some legislators — and both candidates — prefer to put to a vote of the people.

While they agree on a lottery referendum, the two disagree on other issues. **Sossamon** said he'd consider a moratorium on state executions to allow death-row inmates access to new technologies, like DNA testing. Johnson opposes such a moratorium, saying it would deny victims of crime the justice they and their families deserve.

**Leonard Sossamon Jr.**

**Sossamon**, 50, of 830 Courtney St. S.E. in Concord, calls himself a "bona fide newcomer." Though he spent several months this spring in Moore's old chair in Raleigh, **Sossamon** has never won public office or run a full race for one. He worked 13 years as Concord city manager and five years before that as the city planning director. He resigned in 1998 to become a founding partner in Hunter & Brown, a Concord real estate development company. A self-described fiscal conservative, **Sossamon** said he ran the city like a business, and the way he conducted business led some local residents to express surprise when he registered as a Democrat last spring. After he resigned, council members praised **Sossamon** for his work in aggressively pursuing new economic prospects, including Concord Mills, and pushing Concord Regional Airport.

**Sossamon** entered the Concord City Council race last year but withdrew, citing potential business conflicts. He said running in the 90th District is an extension of the work he did in the public sector for more than two decades. And **Sossamon** cited that experience as evidence that

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he's more qualified for the job than Johnson. "I think I've got more experience dealing with large budgets and larger personnel issues," he said. "I think (voters) should consider that as an issue. They should look at my track record as opposed to hers, and they would vote for me." He also pointed out that he and Johnson part ways on a proposal that she supported while on the school board, giving local boards of education taxing authority. County commissioners provide school systems with funds now.

Johnson said that if school boards are going to be held accountable for education, they ought to have the authority to go along with that responsibility. **Sossamon** disagrees. "I'm not for giving another unit of government taxation authority," he said. "I think that's a slippery slope, and once we embark on it, who knows where it stops?" **Sossamon** said he believes the state can improve education by reducing class sizes, continuing to increase teachers' salaries and accountability and considering ways to help counties build schools, such as a redistribution of sales taxes. Supporting education means improving not only the public school system but the state's community colleges as well, he said. He supports the \$3.1 billion bond package that voters will decide on this fall. Another matter **Sossamon** said is best left to a referendum is a lottery, which proponents say could generate a great deal of money for public education.

During his brief stint in Raleigh, **Sossamon** served on the House Transportation Committee. Improving local roads is one of his priorities. Like most elected representatives and candidates from this area, where study after study finds the roads are worse than those in the east, **Sossamon** said the state's current funding formula isn't fair. He hopes to help change it. If voters send him to Raleigh, **Sossamon** said he'd try again to push through an expansion of the Homestead Exemption Act, a tax bill to benefit seniors that failed to pass in the short session, and look for ways the state can help seniors defray health-care costs.

Linda Johnson

Johnson, 55, of 1205 Berkshire Drive, Kannapolis, is a self-employed computer analyst and tax accountant who served eight years on the Kannapolis Board of Education. She's proud of her involvement in building A.L. Brown High School's Cyber Campus with money donated by businesses — and no taxpayer involvement — and creating a foundation to keep the Cyber Campus going. Johnson also highlights her involvement in rewriting system policy, which occurred during her first year on the board, and her work to teach abstinence in sex-education classes. The system made gains in academics and safety all eight years of her tenure, she said.

Though she's held no other elected offices, Johnson served six years as an appointed member of the Cabarrus County Parks and Recreation Commission, where she helped create a foundation to provide money for parks services during years when the county budget can't pay for them all. She also helped develop a plan for school recreation facilities to be used as public parks. "That's a double use of the tax dollar," she said. "I've been really proud of that." Johnson also has served on the boards of Head Start and Communities in Schools and was a founder of the Kannapolis Dixie Youth Baseball League. "I've been an activist for the community for 30 years, and I've always tried to solve the community's problems with common sense and concern for individuals," she said. "And I'd like to do that in Raleigh."

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She has worked in Raleigh as an unpaid lobbyist for the N.C. School Boards Association and on behalf of local education needs, she said. She describes herself as conservative and said her background in accounting would help her analyze the state's budget and ensure that it's "really balanced, not just transferred from account to account, leaving a hole for next year."

Johnson said she has served as an elected official and not, like her opponent, as a government employee. That gives her an advantage, she said, because she knows what it is to seek and do the will of the people. "I believe representation is truly getting the wants and the desires and the needs of the community met at the local level, making sure the voices of the businesses, the community, the individuals are heard in Raleigh," she said. Johnson agrees with **Sossamon** that those voices should be heard on the question of a state lottery, though she calls it a "quick fix" and fears it would allow the Legislature to divert current education funding elsewhere in the budget.

To improve education, Johnson supports the continued use and refining of the ABCs of Education accountability program, more focus on campus safety and an increase in the numbers of teacher assistants and school nurses. Johnson said she'd like to see the state spend more money on education. She said it could, without raising taxes, find the money to live up to its 1931 pact with counties to pay expenses for county-built schools. Right now, about 25 percent of the Kannapolis system's budget pays utility bills, she said. "I believe in the taxpayers' money going to schools to help solve a lot of problems," she said. "I think it's an important time to have an education representative in Raleigh." On transportation, Johnson agrees with **Sossamon** that the main culprit in Cabarrus County's road woes is the uneven way Raleigh distributes money. The problem won't be solved, she said, until Cabarrus gains more political clout in Raleigh and forces the state to face the issue.

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Charlotte Observer, The (NC)  
September 14, 2000

**Downtown Champions**

Author: Nancy Riley

Gov. Jim Hunt announced three Champions of Concord Downtown during an event Wednesday in New Bern celebrating the 20th anniversary of the N.C. Main Street program.

John M. Barnhardt was the first board president of Concord Downtown Development Corp., then known as the Concord Downtown Redevelopment Corp. He encouraged citizens and government officials to support the revitalization of Concord's central business district. He currently is president of the board of trustees for Historic Concord Preservation Trust.

Randy Baucom is an innovative business owner, according to the presentation. Recognizing the need for more downtown parking and the need for a temporary solution for his customers, Baucom advertises "valet parking" for his customers. In bad weather, Baucom will pick up cars parked down the street and pull them in front of the business while customers load themselves and their packages into their cars.

**Leonard B. Sossaman** was city manager of Concord for more than a 10 years. Born and raised in Cabarrus County, **Sossaman** was a city manager in several N.C. cities before he returned to Concord. He began his work for Concord as its city planner. **Sossaman's** foresight encouraged elected officials to support and pay for the downtown revitalization program in the area of Concord where the city began in 1796.



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The Charlotte Observer (NC)  
May 17, 2000

**Sossamon Named to Fill Cabarrus Seat in Legislature**

Author: Courtney St. Onge

Cabarrus County Democrats unanimously recommended former Concord City Manager **Leonard Sossamon** to fill the N.C. House District 90 seat left open by Richard Moore's resignation last week. The district executive committee voted 22-0 on Tuesday to have **Sossamon** go to Raleigh and finish Moore's term. **Sossamon** likely will be sworn in today after Gov. Jim Hunt affirms the recommendation. "I really do appreciate the opportunity," **Sossamon** said. "It really is a strong vote of confidence from the people." **Sossamon** was the logical choice; he won the Democratic nomination for the seat earlier this month. Both of his opponents in the primary, Richard Anderson and Wayne Troutman, supported his appointment.

In November, **Sossamon** will run against Kannapolis school board member Linda P. Johnson, who won the Republican primary. Moore, 29, was the youngest member of the N.C. House and a rising star in the state Democratic Party before allegations of misconduct surfaced last summer. Moore, a one-time A.L. Brown High School teacher, was accused of inappropriate behavior with former male students. He resigned his seat in the General Assembly on May 7, on the eve of its short session. Later that week, he pleaded guilty to one felony count of crime against nature and two misdemeanor counts of attempted crime against nature.

The Cabarrus County Democratic Party executive committee met May 7 to hear Moore's resignation, but party officials agreed to wait until Tuesday to choose a replacement. County party Chairman John Clark said they wanted to vote when all precincts were represented. He said it was important to get someone to the legislature to represent District 90 as soon as possible. Clark said he hopes that having **Sossamon** run as an incumbent will help the Democrats' chances in November. "The conventional wisdom is that being an incumbent helps," he said. "If we can get him there now, it could."

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The Charlotte Observer (NC)  
February 28, 1998

**Concord Manager to Resign**

Author: Scott Verner

The city manager who has led Concord through one of the most aggressive periods of growth and change in its history announced Friday he will resign in April. **Leonard Sossamon** told the city council he would leave April 10 after 13 years as city manager to go into the real estate development business. **Sossamon**, 47, a city administrator for 18 years, most recently helped shepherd the land deals for the 1,800-acre Kings Grant development. That project includes the 1.4 million-square-foot Concord Mills regional outlet mall, another outlet mall and plans for a city convention center/hotel complex.

Ground breaking is set for Wednesday on the Concord Mills mall at Kings Grant, which Mayor George Liles cited as **Sossamon's** crowning achievement. "He's been a real genius in getting that done," Liles said. "There's been some criticism about the city getting into the real estate business, but we needed to do it to get things started out there (at Kings Grant). Now we're going to have a full-service hotel and convention center there, and we'll be out of the real estate business."

**Sossamon** worked to expand and improve the city's and Cabarrus County's water system, including construction of a new reservoir on Coddle Creek and a water treatment plant nearby. He also has led efforts to develop industrial parks and establish tax incentives that helped the city recruit several major industries; build and expand a new city airport; develop a city golf club; and build new low-income and affordable housing. "Everything that's made this city progressive has been under his regime. All the good things that have happened, and the progress going on here, he's been the one that implemented it all," Liles said. "We think of things to do, he tells us how to get it done." **Sossamon** will continue to live in Cabarrus County, Liles said. Attempts to reach the city manager Friday were unsuccessful.

Liles said he has appointed himself and council members Lamar Barrier, Alfred Brown and Scott Padgett to a search committee to find a new city manager. "It could take months, and it probably will," Liles said. No interim manager has been named yet, he said. **Sossamon**, a Cabarrus County native and a 1968 graduate of Mount Pleasant High School, was hired as the city's planning director in 1980. He replaced G.L. Greenson as city manager in 1985. "Leonard is the type that when he goes after something, he goes after it 110 percent," said Barrier, who is in his fourth four-year term on the city council. "He's been a big help to me over the past 12 years. . . . He's done an excellent job. I'll miss him."

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The Charlotte Observer (NC)  
October 10, 1997

**Chamber Seeks Inspiration in Cabarrus**

Author: Gail Smith

Next to a table offering cheese Danish and imported gourmet coffee, Union County officials chatted about what they hoped to gain from their trip to Cabarrus County: Ideas on how Union could duplicate some of Cabarrus' recent economic success. On Wednesday, more than 30 Union Chamber of Commerce officials went to Concord for their 1997 intercounty visit - ready to hear about economic development incentives, governmental cooperation and tourism promotion. "Cabarrus County has done a great job of putting their act together," said Frank Carpenter, chairman of the Union chamber. "Cabarrus is a model for us with very similar opportunities," said Jim Carpenter, the Union chamber president. He's not related to the chairman.

Cabarrus and Union are similar in size and face the same growth issues, such as school overcrowding and industrial recruitment. Union's population is about 104,000; Cabarrus has about 120,000. Jim Carpenter admitted that Cabarrus, a prime competitor for industry, has "a leg up" on Union with its road systems and proximity to University Research Park and UNC Charlotte. Recently Cabarrus has pulled off some regional coups, including landing Sysco's new Charlotte area headquarters, Corning Inc.'s \$300 million optical fiber plant under construction in Midland and the planned 1.5 million-square-foot Concord Mills mall at the Cabarrus/Mecklenburg line. Cabarrus and the city of Concord created its tax-rebate packages for industrial and retail projects as incentives to balance residential growth with more commercial development, Cabarrus County Manager Frank Clifton told the Union officials.

Clifton and Concord City Manager **Leonard Sossamon** both cited cooperation between the county and other local governing boards as key to recruiting success. And they said it's important to have strong leaders with broad vision serving on city and county boards, not people with narrow agendas. And access to an interstate highway is important, but it's not the make-or-break advantage, Clifton told the group. "Corning located in south Cabarrus County, almost as far away from the interstate as you can get," Clifton said. Union County should focus on what it can offer, he said - not what it can't. Bob Smith, elected Tuesday night to the Monroe City Council, said one of the main things he learned from the Cabarrus trip was the need to balance residential and industrial growth. And Smith, also a former Monroe school board chairman, said Union County may need to consider a room/hotel tax, which Cabarrus has, to bring in revenue for its tourism industry.

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The Charlotte Observer (NC)  
May 23, 1997

**Concord Road Tax Proposed**

Author: Gail Smith

Concord's roads are getting more congested by the day, and City Manager **Leonard Sossamon** said the city should raise taxes to do something about it. He proposed Thursday a 2-cent increase to bring in up to \$630,000 to improve intersections and add traffic signals and turn lanes. "That's not going to create a situation where all the ills will be cured, but at least it's a start," **Sossamon** said of the roads money. The current city tax rate is 44 cents per \$100 in assessed valuation. The proposed increase would raise city taxes \$24 on a home assessed at \$120,000.

Mayor George Liles said that Concord has a "terrible traffic problem" and that residents want the city to do something. "People are really concerned about it," he said. Liles and City Council members said the city, with the \$630,000 in hand, could get projects done more quickly - perhaps in combination with state road money. Council member Scott Padgett said the city has serious traffic problems, but said it's too early to tell whether he's ready to support a tax increase for roads.

Local traffic planners have said many of the city's two-lane roads don't have the capacity to handle the heavier traffic load, including tractor-trailers that need more room for wider turns. **Sossamon** mentioned U.S. 29, N.C. 73, Poplar Tent Road and N.C. 136 as troubled roads. The proposed operating budget is slightly more than \$25 million, a 3.7 percent increase over the current budget. Also included in the proposed budget is a 10 percent increase in city sewer rates, increased fees for services such as planning and zoning permits and maps, and a 401(k) investment savings plan for city employees. The public is invited to a hearing on the budget at 7 p.m. June 2, in the council meeting room at the city municipal building, 26 Union Street South. The budget is available at the clerk's office in the municipal building.

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The Charlotte Observer (NC)  
March 29, 1994

**Barber-Scotia College to Pay \$55,419 Utility Bill Gradually  
Deferment Plan Keeps City from Cutting Off Service**

Author: Jim Wrinn

In its struggle to stay open, Barber-Scotia College cleared a major hurdle Monday. Minutes before Concord city offices closed at 5 p.m., college President Asa Spaulding called City Manager **Leonard Sossamon** to accept the city's offer to accept gradual payment of a \$55,419 utility bill. If the offer had not been accepted, crews today would have cut off water, sewer and electric service to college offices, classrooms and dormitories. That would have shut down the college and displaced hundreds of students from dorms and from apartments rented by the school. The buildings would have been considered uninhabitable under city code, **Sossamon** said. The agreement calls for the financially troubled college to pay at least \$15,000 of its utility bill by noon Thursday, another \$15,000 by noon April 15 and the balance - \$25,419 - by noon April 29. Of the school's utility bill, \$25,752.31 is overdue, **Sossamon** said. The rest of the bill is not yet past due, he said.

Efforts to reach Spaulding and Charlotte Hornets owner George Shinn, who is chairman of the school's board of trustees, were unsuccessful Monday. Before talking with Spaulding late Monday, **Sossamon** said the city did not want to cut off the school's utilities but would have no choice. The next hurdle the school faces this week is its payroll of about \$400,000, due to faculty and staff members Friday, a source close to the college has said. The school also owes more than \$100,000 to the company that provides its food service, sources say. Dr. Joel Nwagbaroacha resigned earlier this month as president of the historically black liberal arts college, amid reports of financial mismanagement and news the school was more than \$1 million in debt. Spaulding, then trustees chairman, was named the new president.

Shinn was named to replace Spaulding as trustees chairman, and he pledged \$1 million to the school. But Shinn said Friday the money would not be forthcoming unless the school developed a business plan to get out of debt. On Monday, employees of Shinn were seen at the school, apparently signaling that Shinn's help is on the way, a source said. Last week Nwagbaroacha challenged the way his resignation was handled, saying Shinn and Spaulding "usurped the authority" of the board. Some students said they rejected Shinn's help and Spaulding's leadership. But on Monday, students started coming forward with appreciation. "I'm grateful for anything George Shinn can do to help us," said junior Greg Miller of Charlotte. "I feel like we're in a financial slump right now, but only positive things can happen from here on."

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Charlotte Observer, The (NC)  
August 14, 1990

**LEGAL WALL PUT AROUND SPEEDWAY LANDFILL**

Author: Lisa Pierce

Concord officials were outraged Monday at tentative action by the Cabarrus County commissioners to prevent the city from using a 292-acre landfill it approved only two weeks ago. ``The Cabarrus County commissioners have taken the Iraqi approach to government in Cabarrus County,`` said Concord City Manager **Leonard Sossamon**. ``While Saddam Hussein is holding Kuwait hostage, it appears that the commissioners are trying to do the same thing to Concord.``

**Sossamon** said the city would consider suing to stop the county`s action, which effectively would prevent Concord from using a planned new landfill at the Charlotte Motor Speedway that has been a focus of controversy for months.

In a 3-2 vote after a two-hour closed meeting, the commissioners approved the first reading of an amendment that would make it illegal to take solid waste generated in Cabarrus County to any landfill other than Cabarrus

County`s public landfill.

The amendment to the county`s solid-waste ordinance will have its second reading Monday at the commissioners` regular meeting. It will become official if adopted at that reading. Commissioners William Hamby, Martha Melvin and Bill Simmons voted for the amendment. Chairman Jim Lentz and Giles Moss voted against it. ``I don`t know how they think they can do that without going through

Raleigh`` for state legislation, said Concord Mayor Bernie Edwards. ``I question the legality of it,`` said H.A. ``Humpy`` Wheeler, president and general manager of the speedway. ``And in a time when the city and county need to be working together mutually to keep the tax rate down, this is a very profound development that, if it is legal, could cost the taxpayers of Concord upwards to \$15 million over a period of time.``

Hamby said the amendment was intended to keep the county from losing an estimated \$600,000 a year that Concord pays to use the county landfill. Without the revenue from the city, the county may not be able to pay for its new recycling program and other state-mandated programs, Hamby said.

The Concord Board of Aldermen approved the speedway landfill July 31 over the objections of hundreds of nearby residents, who said the facility would cause environmental problems and hurt property values. The landfill, an expansion of a currently operating facility, is planned for a site on the east bank of the Rocky River, just across Pitts School Road from three large residential subdivisions. At the same time, the city accepted an offer by developers Browning-Ferris

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Industries Inc. and its subsidiary, CMS Development Corp., to accept Concord's garbage free for the 15-year life of the landfill - saving the city an estimated \$6 million to \$8 million in fees at the county landfill.

Hamby denied the amendment was a direct response to Concord's decision. But Lentz said, "I think it's a little bit of a knee-jerk reaction" to the Concord Board of Aldermen's decision. "Lots of investigation work needs to take place," Lentz said. He suggested the county could save money by using the speedway landfill, if the county could obtain a guaranteed rate of \$2.50 per cubic yard for the next 15 years. Wheeler said he met Thursday with officials of Browning-Ferris, CMS Development and the county.

"We told them then that we understood the problems of a loss of revenue, but we thought we could assist them," he said. "And after informing them of that, we sent a letter to (County Manager) Mike Ruffin Friday and suggested a meeting between BFI and the county manager's office to see if we could assist them in their plight. "I didn't know they were going to do this tonight. I think it was a knee jerk reaction to put pressure on the City of Concord. But I think they're treading a very narrow legal line." Hamby predicted the speedway landfill wouldn't be able to maintain charges of \$2.50 per cubic yard. "The cost of solid waste management will increase, regardless of where.

State requirements will guarantee that prices will go up everywhere," Hamby said. Violators of the amended ordinance could be fined up to \$3,000 a day. The amendment wouldn't apply to garbage coming into the speedway landfill from outside Cabarrus County.

Most of the garbage dumped at the speedway's current landfill, as well as what's planned for the new one, is from Mecklenburg County.

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Charlotte Observer, The (NC)  
May 11, 1990

**CONCORD HOLDS LINE ON TAXES IN '90-'91 BUDGET**

Author: Edited by Ben Perkowski

There will be no tax increase in Concord next year, City Manager **Leonard Sossamon** said Thursday night at a meeting of the Concord Board of Aldermen. "For seven years, we have maintained a tax rate of 47 cents for a \$100 evaluation, and I can recommend the 1990-91 fiscal year budget without recommending a tax increase," **Sossamon** said.

No action was taken on the budget, and sessions will be set up for its review.



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The Charlotte Observer (NC)  
March 22, 1990

**Healing Hugo's Scars**

Author: Jim Wrinn & Scott Verner

Six months ago this morning, Cabarrus County residents cowered in their homes as the predawn fury of Hurricane Hugo raged around them. Later they emerged from their homes to find downed trees, broken power lines, debris and property damage everywhere. Falling trees smashed some people's homes or cars. Other people suffered no more than overturned trash cans or torn-off shingles.

Today, six months after the storm, most of the highly visible effects of the Sept. 22 hurricane have faded. But the scars of Hurricane Hugo remain embedded in Cabarrus County, and recovery is still taking place. In fact, the Cabarrus chapter of the American Red Cross only last week wrapped up its relief work. "We were just last week finishing up our last case," said executive director Carol Venzlaff. "So it's taken us six months to get to this point. "One house almost had to be renovated from the ground up," Venzlaff said. The house needed a new roof, new interior walls, new plumbing and electrical systems and much more, she said. "The bills haven't been paid yet, but the work is done," Venzlaff said. Part of the cost will be reimbursed with a grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency. And a group of 10 Mennonites volunteered the labor, staying three weeks. The Red Cross paid their room, board and expenses until they left Cabarrus County about two weeks ago, Venzlaff said. Now the Red Cross is busy preparing and recruiting volunteers to help with disasters that may occur here as a result of tornadoes or fires that could be worsened by remaining hurricane damage.

Venzlaff said about 25 trained volunteers are needed. A basic disaster training course will be offered April 28, she said. The storm's mighty fist fell hard on Concord's electrical system, which serves 15,000 customers in and around Concord. Officials say 99 percent of service was interrupted. Repair work began the day of the storm, has gone on for half a year and now could stretch out as long as another six months. "We still have a number of areas where there were poles and power lines rebuilt or restored just the easiest, quickest and safest way at the time to get power back on," said Steve Slough, Concord's director of public utilities. "What was done was to put on a Band-Aid; now we're going back and taking the Band-Aid off and making a permanent fix." A contract crew that has been helping the city restore its power system will continue to work for about another four to six weeks, Slough said. "We're still putting our electrical services back to a permanent status," said City Manager **Leonard Sossamon**. "Our system was in really good shape before Hugo. It's taking us a long time to go back and make sure we've got everything put back together."

**City Saves Some Money**

Although the repair work is continuing, the city expects to come out slightly better than expected on the dollars it will have to plunk down. "We originally were talking between \$4 million and \$4.5 million," **Sossamon** said. "One (electrical) substation was knocked out on N.C. 73 East,

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and we thought we were going to have to replace it.” That might have cost \$1 million, but was repaired for about \$100,000, he said. **Sossamon** now estimates costs to the city of between \$3 million and \$3.5 million from the hurricane. So far Concord has received \$1.5 million in disaster aid reimbursements from the Federal Emergency Management Agency. **Sossamon** said he expects to file a claim this spring to FEMA for another \$500,000.

Kannapolis, which does not own its own electrical system, finished its Hugo cleanup in December and put the price of the effort at \$267,331, almost double what it originally anticipated. The city has received \$113,073 in reimbursements from FEMA. “We expect to receive the other part,” said City Manager Gene McCombs. “Our biggest unexpected thing was the amount of debris. At first we estimated our cleanup at \$150,000, but it just kept coming. People kept bringing more stuff out, and we had to keep revising our estimates upward.”

#### Some Damage Was Hidden

Some Hugo damage wasn’t fully apparent until weeks or months after the hurricane passed. The band building at A.L. Brown High School in Kannapolis, for example, had shingles torn off and hurled back into the roof of the building. The support framework wasn’t damaged, but the embedded shingles made the roof susceptible to leaks, enough to prompt officials to replace it. “We knew it had happened, but we didn’t know how bad it was until we looked at the roof close up in January,” said Ernest Macon, assistant superintendent of the Kannapolis City Schools, who is in charge of buildings. This summer, Macon said, the roof will be replaced. “The solutions for many of the Hugo situations are coming long after the hurricane,” he said. The roof at Jackson Park Elementary School in Kannapolis, however, will meet a different fate. A recent decision to build a new classroom building means temporary roof repairs won’t be made permanent.

#### No Sign Of Leaks

Some things that were devastated by the hurricane, however, have been renewed with no lasting effects. It is amazing to Neil Shouse, principal at Mount Pleasant Middle School, that the second-floor classrooms now show no effects where roof damage allowed water to pour in. “It’s just like there never was a problem,” he said. Immediately after the hurricane, school maintenance workers built plywood sluices to channel the water out. The months haven’t dulled his images of the people who helped, said Slough, the Concord utilities director. “I just have to praise the dedication of the men who worked day in and day out for 12 to 15 days immediately following the storm, and the people who responded, the people who gave the crews food, the overwhelming community response,” he said.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Leonard B. Sossamon**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Charlotte Observer (NC)  
December 19, 1989

**Concord, Fieldcrest Make Pact**  
**Company has 2 Years to Reduce Pollutants**  
Author: Laurie Willis

The Concord Board of Aldermen on Monday unanimously approved an agreement with Fieldcrest Cannon specifying deadlines for reducing the pollutants the company discharges into the city's wastewater treatment plant. "The agreement sets up deadlines for certain improvements to be made by Fieldcrest Cannon and if they aren't made, certain action by the city can and will be taken," said Steve Slough, public utilities director. "We've sat down and discussed it with them, and they've agreed." Slough said the company has been discharging for several years excessive pollutants into the city's Rocky River Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant. "The agreement outlines a series of benchmarks they'll work toward achieving," City Manager **Leonard Sossamon** said.

The agreement gives Fieldcrest Cannon about two years to comply, **Sossamon** said. Their first deadline is sometime in January 1990. Penalties will also be higher if the deadlines aren't met. Among changes the board has approved in its Water Sewer Ordinance is an increase in fees for violations from \$50 to \$1,000. Also Monday, the board approved an agreement with the county authorizing the two governments to cooperate in areas where each offers services to cut off those services for customers who don't pay their bills. For example, if the city provides water service and the county has sewer service and a customer refuses to pay his sewer bill, the county can cut off that customer's water even if that bill is currently paid, Slough said. The agreement will be used as a last resort and is designed to ensure both governments get paid, **Sossamon** said.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Leonard B. Sossamon**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Charlotte Observer (NC)  
April 25, 1989

**Concord Balances its Budget**  
**City Manager Expects No Increase in Taxes**  
Author: Ted DeAdwyler

For the seventh year in a row, Concord residents will pay 47 cents per \$100 of valuation under the recommended 1989-90 city budget released Monday. ``You can't beat that - a budget without a tax increase,`` said alderman Frank Dusch. City Manager **Leonard Sossamon** credited the aldermen and city officials for the stable tax rate. ``It happened due to good and solid directions and policies established by the board of aldermen. It happened due to superior administration, sound fiscal management and astute operations by the city's management and staff,`` said **Sossamon**. The city's proposed general fund budget totals \$12.9 million, up from the current budget of \$11.7 million.

In addition, the proposed budget includes \$22.2 million to provide electric service for city customers, \$4.2 million to operate the Rocky River Waste Treatment Plant, \$3.7 million to run the sewer system and \$3.2 million to operate the water system. The proposed general fund budget includes \$323,000 to begin the second phase of the downtown ``Streetscape`` project by continuing sidewalk renovations on Union Street and adding decorative lighting and traffic signals on Church Street. Another \$176,000 would be used to pave 13,000 feet of dirt streets formerly maintained by the state but recently taken over by the city.

In addition, the budget adds several employees to the utility department to conduct water and sewer line inspections and gives all city employees a 5 percent pay raise. To balance the budget without raising the tax rate, the city would use \$549,000 of its \$5.3 million undesignated fund balance or savings account. ``I think we have to give credit to the staff and **Leonard (Sossamon)** because this budget is a job well done,`` said Mayor Bernie Edwards.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Leonard B. Sossamon**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Charlotte Observer (NC)  
March 12, 1989

**Officials Swap Notes at Conference**

Author: Ted DeAdwyler

While in Washington for several days last week, county commissioner William Hamby got a chance to look into an issue Cabarrus County will soon face. What can be done with solid waste as the county landfill reaches capacity? "I had an interesting conversation with county officials from the Memphis area who were dealing with tons of garbage. Their answer was incineration. I don't know if it will work here, but it is worth looking into," he said.

The conversation was an example why Hamby and other county officials who were in Washington say they find the trip a valuable part of improving county services. "It is always good to talk with other county officials and compare notes," said Giles Moss, who has gone to several of the gatherings. Five Cabarrus County commissioners and two county officials - County Manager Mike Ruffin and Finance Director Blair Bennett - last week attended the National Association of Counties (NACO) annual legislative conference at the Washington Hilton. The conference - at which speakers included Vice President Dan Quayle - attracted about 2,000 county officials from around the county.

And now that county officials have returned from the nation's capital, city officials from Cabarrus County are scheduled to be in Washington through Tuesday for the legislative conference of the National League of Cities. From Concord, City Manager **Leonard Sossamon**, City Attorney Gordon Belo, mayor pro tem Jim Dorton and alderman Laine Harling are scheduled to attend. And from Kannapolis, Mayor Bachman Brown, mayor pro tem Harold Holbrook and council member Ken Geathers are scheduled to go.

**Sossamon** said the gathering, also held at the Washington Hilton, will help the city prepare for federal legislation. The city manager said he was especially concerned about environmental and housing issues. "I understand there is some proposed legislation that might force cities to monitor discharges into drainage basins, and that could be quite costly," he said. **Sossamon** said he also wants to know more about how the federal government will provide housing assistance - either through subsidies or new construction. "We want to see what type of housing help we can expect for our citizens," he said.

Harling, who also wants to focus on environmental concerns, said the trip will give city officials a different perspective. "We will find out how the city relates to the rest of the country. And we can also see what direction the federal government is headed. You need time to take a broader look at things," he said. Usually there are some light moments on the trip, too. Several county officials, for example, traveled to Landover, Md., to watch the Charlotte Hornets play the Washington Bullets. They weren't alone. Members of other North Carolina delegations also were in the audience, they said.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Leonard B. Sossamon**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Taxpayers in Concord and Cabarrus County might be able to take a sigh of relief following release of city and county budgets. Those documents do not show a tax increase. Kannapolis residents, however, face a 5-cent hike, to 25 cents per \$100 valuation, according to the city's budget released last week. And, if voters approve on June 3 the merger of the City of Kannapolis with the Kannapolis and Royal Oaks sanitary districts, the city will require a 30 cents per \$100 valuation tax rate, but the 15 cents per \$100 sanitary district tax will be dropped. The budgets undergo scrutiny by elected officials before the documents take effect July 1.

Concord officials say they are proud to keep the tax rate at 47 cents. "It feels good to offer the same level of services at the same tax rate," said Cathy Combs, the city's director of finance. "I think it speaks well of the fine work and efficiency of our department heads."

A tax increase in Concord was avoided in part because of a growing tax base, accelerated by the city's annexation of 8.06 square miles. Come June 30, Concord will annex land along its western and southern borders, increasing the city's size from 11.51 square miles to 19.57. The population will grow from 18,465 to 26,149. The boundaries of the city will stretch to the Winecoff School area to U.S. 29 and N.C. 49 to take in three Cannon Mills plants, mill villages, subdivisions, S&D Coffee Inc. and Philip Morris, USA. In preparation for annexation, the city is adding nearly 70 workers to its 239-person work force. Joining the city will be 25 firefighters, 12 police officers and 30 public works employees.

As a result of annexation, the city budget grows to \$11.5 million for the upcoming 1986-87 fiscal year from \$8.3 million for the current 1985-86 year. However, money from Washington will not increase. "Unfortunately, the news about revenue is not all good," city manager **Leonard Sossamon** said in his budget message. "Due to federal budget cuts, revenue from the federal government is projected to be much less than in previous years." The city received \$225,000 in federal revenue sharing money this year compared with \$47,000 projected for next year. For Cabarrus County government, the tax rate remains at 52 cents per \$100 valuation.

County manager Charles McGinnis says he avoided a tax increase because of the county's good financial standing. "We have been working to build our financial structure," said McGinnis. "We wanted to get our house in order to have some latitude in financing." To support the budget, officials used \$2.9 million from the county's fund balance. County commissioners have pledged to hold the line on taxes. The county's proposed \$29.9 million operating budget for the 1986-87 fiscal year is an increase over the current year's budget of \$27.8 million. Cabarrus County Schools would receive \$5.4 million for operating costs, compared with \$5 million this year. The schools had asked for \$5.7 million.

Tina Loving, chairman of the school board, said that if the budget is approved unchanged, the school board will have to reassess priorities. In Kannapolis, council members will tackle the city's \$4.4 million budget during a June 9 work session. The proposed budget represents a 15 percent increase over this year's \$3.8 million budget. According to city manager Gene McCombs, much of the proposed budget increase would come from grant money the city anticipates during the coming year.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Leonard B. Sossamon**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Charlotte Observer (NC)  
April 6, 1986

**Diaper Collection Controversy Pits Mother Against City**

Author: Ted DeAdwyler

Who says you can't fight City Hall? A Concord woman is giving it a try. In a dispute over whether the garbage collectors will take away disposable diapers, Sandy Feibelman-Coppola, mother of two, has temporarily triumphed. "I think we won the war," said the Beverly Drive resident, after city workers picked up her garbage and children's diapers late last week. The city, however, will have the final word. "To prevent any inconvenience, we decided to continue pickups, but we haven't changed our policy," city manager **Leonard Sossamon** said Thursday.

The disagreement started a week and a half ago when a supervisor with Concord's public works department came to Coppola's door. Coppola said she was told her family's garbage would not be picked up unless the disposable diapers were put in a separate bag and placed on the curb for curbside pickup once a week, on Fridays. "My reaction was that I pay city taxes and I assume that my garbage will be picked up," said Coppola. She and her husband have a 2-year-old son, Chris, and a 3-month-old daughter, Laura. Later that afternoon, she went to City Hall to get a copy of the city's garbage collection ordinance and talk with officials at the public works department. Still unappeased, Coppola called city manager **Leonard Sossamon**, who told her he would look into the matter.

The next day, just as the public works supervisor warned, city garbage collectors did not remove her garbage. "They picked up the bag of garbage, looked at it and then put it back in the container," said Coppola, who says she rinses, rewraps and tapes diapers before placing them in a plastic bag for disposal. She then got back on the phone. After talking with **Sossamon** and city attorney Gordon Belo, Coppola said the two told her the city's policy was not to collect diapers along with garbage. The county landfill accepts disposable diapers. But city garbage collectors don't take human waste in backyard collections because of the tendency of plastic bags to burst as they are compressed in a garbage truck compactor, said a public works official. She said she was told the policy calls for pickup of disposable diapers in plastic bags along with household trash from curbside each week.

Coppola didn't think that was a good idea. "I think it would lead to an unsanitary condition," said the 31-year-old mother, whose family moved to Concord last year from Charlotte. "When it is hot and humid, the situation would be intolerable." In addition, neighbors with small children in disposable diapers had no problems with garbage collection, contended Coppola, who says her children go through 100 diapers a week. "It seemed as though I was being singled out," she said.

Next, **Sossamon** paid a visit to the Coppola home to inspect the disposable diaper garbage, but didn't give Coppola any assurance the garbage would be picked up from the plastic container by city workers next time. With diapers piling up, she then began to turn on the heat. Coppola, a

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Leonard B. Sossamon**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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former social worker in Wake County, called a local radio station and several newspapers to talk about the dispute. She requested time to appear before the Concord Board of Aldermen at its Thursday meeting.

And Coppola said she contacted the Concord/Cabarrus County Chamber of Commerce to say she planned to write companies thinking of locating here. She said she planned to tell them `Concord is a hostile city toward families with young children.` However, after missing one day`s pickup, three city workers came to her home in a truck about 2 p.m. March 28 and took away her garbage, including diapers. Still, Coppola had no assurance her garbage would be picked up the following week. But word from **Sossamon** came Wednesday, she said, that her garbage, including disposable diapers, would be collected. Her persistence paid off, she said. ``But I`m still a bit frustrated that it took all this time and effort to get the city to change its mind,`` said Coppola, who will appear before the aldermen Thursday.

**Sossamon** says Coppola`s garbage collections are continuing only while the city studies its policy.



**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Leonard B. Sossamon**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Charlotte Observer, The (NC)  
January 12, 1986

**FINANCING OF REFERENDUM REMAINS TO BE SETTLED**

Author: Lisa Pullen

Whether CHOICE's proposed financing of Concord's upcoming liquor-by-the-drink referendum is legal depends on who you talk to. The Concord Board of Aldermen, with a unanimous 7-0 vote, Thursday night called for a liquor-by-the-drink referendum after supporters of the referendum offered to pay for the election. The pro-referendum CHOICE group said it would bear the \$3,400 cost of the referendum through contributions.

On Friday, opinions differed as to whether such financing of the election is proper. "It's the opinion of this office that elections must be paid for with tax revenues," said Alex Brock, state elections director, from Raleigh. "I don't know of any authorization for a citizens group to pay for an election. That hardly is a pure process in the democratic process."

Brock says the question of private groups financing an election has surfaced perhaps a dozen times in his 20-year career and his position is that it cannot be done. Groups can, under state law, make a contribution to the general fund of a town or city to be used for the election, but "we're not talking about doing something one way because you can't do it another," said Brock. "Whether that would prove a surreptitious way, I don't know."

**Leonard Sossamon**, Concord city manager, said he had checked with officials with the League of Municipalities and the state attorney general's office Thursday after learning of the CHOICE offer. "They don't see any problem with it," he said. "It's my understanding under state law, private organizations, charitable organizations, whatever, can make donations and gifts to cities, counties and governments," he said. "The CHOICE group, in effect, is making a contribution to the city."

**Sossamon** said that CHOICE would make a donation to the city, which would go into city coffers. The city in turn would write the county Board of Elections a check to cover the costs of the election, which Alderman Lamar Barrier said at Thursday night's meeting would be between \$3,474 and \$3,919 depending on the number of helpers needed.

James Wallace Jr., assistant state attorney general, whose office would deliver the ultimate opinion on the issue, said Friday he was not sure the question was addressed in state statutes. His office will not give an opinion unless formally asked for one by a city official and that had not happened, he said. "I would say it's a very unique question and situation," he said. "Before I put time into researching it, I need an inquiry from an official."

The Cabarrus County Board of Elections will meet early Monday morning to receive the aldermen's request for the election and probably will discuss the matter of financing then, said Chairman Ken Kiser. The aldermen requested a March 18 date for the referendum and the board

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Leonard B. Sossamon**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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also will decide the date Monday. ``My personal gut feeling is it`s not legal,`` said Kiser. ``I don`t think that a private organization can pay for an election. I never heard of it.``

City attorney Gordon Belo could not be reached Friday.

CHOICE Cochairman Phil Smith said Friday his group ``was going on the assumption that it`s all legal.`` ``The offer was made and it was accepted by the aldermen with the city attorney there,`` Smith said. ``I assume it`s a legal contribution. It was made in good faith and accepted.``

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches  
Leonard B. Sossamon  
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)**

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Charlotte Observer, The (NC)  
January 2, 1986

**City Managers Take Reins.**

Author: Lynn Casey and Lisa Pullen

It was a year for city managers: McCombs came to Kannapolis and **Leonard Sossamon** took the post in Concord.

The Kannapolis City Council hired McCombs Aug. 15 to manage the newly incorporated town of 30,000. He began work Nov. 1. Since 1975, McCombs had been city manager in Staunton, Va. He had also been city manager of Lumberton and assistant city manager in Greensboro. McCombs topped a field of 108 candidates for the job, and council members insisted his Kannapolis roots had little bearing on his selection. He is a Kannapolis native, his parents still live here and his wife also is from Kannapolis. His first day on the job, McCombs was greeted with coffee and biscuits from a grateful Kannapolis City Council, glad to have a manager on board. ``It's going to be difficult to determine where to start, but I'm excited about it,`` he said.

Concord also got a new city manager, **Leonard Sossamon**. **Sossamon**, who was Concord planning director for five years, replaced G.L. Greeson, who resigned in January. He was appointed interim manager Jan. 11, then named full-time city manager Feb. 14. **Sossamon**, a Cabarrus County native, graduated from Mount Pleasant High School in 1968.

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Compiled by:           Cara Slade & Shannon Farr  
                              Colin Baenziger & Associates

COLIN BAENZIGER & ASSOCIATES

EXECUTIVE RECRUITING

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*Section 15*

*Ramon Trias*

*Lake Worth Beach City Manager  
Candidate Report*

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*Resume*

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**RAMON TRIAS**  
*7151 SW 103 Ct. Cir.*  
*Miami, FL 33173*  
*Ramontrias@aol.com*

**POSITION**

City Manager, City of Lake Worth Beach

**QUALIFICATIONS**

- Principal author of 1992 Redevelopment Plan for Downtown Lake Worth, which resulted in reconstruction of Lake and Lucerne Avenues
- 23 years of public sector experience in Public Administration in Florida
- 7 years of private experience in Planning, Architecture and Preservation as principal of own firm
- Since 1990, staffed and organized 85 Urban Design Charrettes, in 16 states and internationally
- 10 years as part-time adjunct professor of History, Theory and Design of Architecture
- 20 years of civic service, including chairman of Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council, vice chairman of St. Lucie County Planning Board and trustee of Florida Trust for Historic Preservation
- Member of the American Institute of Certified Planners; founding member of the Congress for the New Urbanism, signer of the CNU charter and CNU-A accredited; registered architect, Florida, AR94425 and NCARB 67353; LEED-AP Accredited Professional
- PhD in Public Affairs, (Policy and Administration)

**EXPERIENCE**

**TOWN PLANNING AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**

2012 - Present **Assistant Director of Development Services for Planning and Zoning**  
**Director of Planning and Zoning**  
Coral Gables, Florida

Reorganized planning and zoning functions of City as a single division. Improved review times and customer service. Coordinated and chaired Development Review Committee and established high standards and effective processes for project review. Enhanced

## Section 15

aesthetic review process for Board of Architects. Developed reference materials on Mediterranean Architecture and Best Practices for Architecture. Prepared planning plans and amendments to zoning code for key areas. Provided design advice for capital projects, including Miracle Mile, Giralda Avenue and Public Safety building. Promoted transparency and public information with web tools. Reorganized and updated the Coral Gables Zoning Code. Advised City Commission, Planning Board, Board of Architects and Board of Adjustment on development issues.

- 2005 - 2012     **Founder and Principal**, Trias and Associates: Town Planning, Architecture, Preservation  
Fort Pierce, Florida
- Organized and staffed charrettes and workshops for public clients, including the City of Vero Beach, Gretna, Sarasota, Fort Pierce Redevelopment Agency, Fort Pierce Farms Water Control District, and others, and prepared master plans for redevelopment and capital investment projects.  
Prepared development plans for new town of Indrio Groves (1000 acres), and new villages of Laurel Gardens (500 acres), Grand Reserve (130 acres) and Sunset Lakes (135 acres).  
Organized and staffed grass-roots project "Visions of Fort Pierce."  
Architect for historic preservation projects.  
Continuing services consultant or sub-consultant to FDOT District 4, St. Lucie County MPO, St. Lucie County, City of Fort Pierce CRA, University of Florida, Florida International University. Expert witness on planning issues for Palm Beach County Attorney.
- 1999 - 2005     **Director of Development**  
Fort Pierce, Florida
- 1995 - 1999     **Director of Planning**  
Fort Pierce, Florida
- Reorganized and staffed planning and zoning activities, and supervised building and code enforcement divisions. Developed city-wide plan, through public participation efforts, including charrettes and workshops. Guided design and construction of waterfront plaza, major road corridors, library, police substation, visitor center and Riverwalk. Worked with FDOT, County and School Board to improve the design of projects, such as Magnet School for the Arts and Smithsonian Aquarium.  
Established Historic Preservation program, Art in Public Places program and educational efforts, including exhibits and publications.  
Advised City Commission, Planning Board, Board of Adjustment, Historic Preservation Board and Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) on development issues.
- 1991 - 1995     **Urban Design Coordinator, Regional Planner**  
Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council, Stuart, Florida
- Established technical assistance program for urban design and city planning.  
Organized and staffed 20 charrettes, in West Palm Beach, Lake Worth, Boca Raton, South Martin County, Boynton Beach, Lake Park and other towns.  
Assisted municipalities in the implementation of master plans and form-based codes.  
Principal author of *Strategic Regional Policy Plan*, "Vision for the Future".



Since 1990      **Urban Design Consultant**

Organized charrettes for road designs, downtown and greenfield development and educational workshops. Major projects included: Austin, Texas; Parlier and Lindsay, Central Valley, California; San Francisco bay area towns, California; Salem, Oregon; Oyster Bay and Huntington, Long Island, New York; Traverse City, Niles, Hartland, and Grand Rapids, Michigan; Charlotte, North Carolina; Gainesville and Orlando, Florida; San Salvador, El Salvador; Calgary, Canada.

### **ARCHITECTURE**

- 1989 - 1990      **Architectural Designer**  
Ron Dorris and Associates, Homestead, Florida  
Prepared construction documents for residential and commercial projects.
- 1989              **Drafter**  
Rodriguez and Quiroga, Coral Gables, Florida  
Prepared archival drawings for the Historic American Building Survey.
- 1988              **Architectural Designer**  
Jorge Hernandez, Architect  
Prepared schematic designs and construction documents for residences.
- 1987              **Architectural Designer**  
School of Architecture, University of Miami  
Prepared plans for library renovation.

### **TEACHING AND RESEARCH**

- 2010 - 2011      **Researcher and Adjunct Professor, Planning and Architecture**  
Lehman Center for Transportation Research, and school of Architecture, Florida International University, Miami, Florida
- 2008 - 2012      **Instructor, Continuing Education**  
Fort Pierce Academy of Town Design, Fort Pierce, Florida  
Taught short courses on Town Planning and Historic Preservation.
- 2007              **Visiting Assistant Professor, Architecture**  
University of Miami, Coral Gables, Florida  
Taught Town Planning studio. Assisted with Master Plan for School of Medicine.
- 2001 - 2008      **Adjunct Professor, Architecture**  
Indian River State College, Fort Pierce, Florida  
Founded Architecture Program. Taught courses on History, Theory and Design.
- 1989 - present   **Speaker, on Urban Design, Architecture and Planning**  
Institute of Traffic Engineers; National and Florida American Planning Association;

National League of Cities; Florida Redevelopment Association; FDOT seminars; University of Virginia; Congress for the New Urbanism; Florida Trust for Historic Preservation; Green Building seminar, Palm Beach; Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce; FIU Business School; University of Miami Schools of Law and Architecture.

### **CIVIC SERVICE**

- 2015 – 2016 **Mayor’s Advisory Group on Historic Preservation, Miami-Dade County, Florida**  
Member
- 2010 – 2015 **Seven50, Southeast Florida Prosperity Plan**  
Executive Committee Member
- 2009 – 2012 **Smart Growth Committee, St. Lucie County, Florida**  
Chairman
- 2008 - 2012 **Board of Historic Preservation, City of Fort Pierce, Florida**  
Vice-Chairman
- 2007 - 2012 **Fort Pierce Academy of Town Design, 501 – c3 organization.**  
Founder and President, prepared educational exhibits and publications on architecture and town design. Received research grants to study Transfer of Development Rights and rural development issues.
- 2005 - 2015 **Florida Trust for Historic Preservation**  
Trustee
- 2004 - 2012 **Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council, Stuart, Florida**  
Board Member, Treasurer, Vice Chairman, Chairman.
- 1999 - 2007 **Planning and Zoning Commission, St. Lucie County, Florida**  
Board Member, Vice Chairman  
Provided leadership on growth management issues.
- 1998 - 2008 **Manatee Education and Observation Center, Fort Pierce, Florida**  
Board member provided direction for environmental education programs.

### **PUBLICATIONS**

- 2015 **Seven50 Plan and Regional Governance in Southeast Florida, Current Urban Studies Journal**  
Principal author of peer reviewed paper.
- 2006 - 2007 **Indian River Magazine**  
Author, general interest articles on architecture.
- 2001 - 2005 **Fort Pierce Tribune, daily newspaper**  
Author, multiple articles on architecture, town planning and cultural issues.

- 2001 **Fort Pierce, a Town in Florida**, book  
Principal author, historic development of oldest town in Florida's Treasure Coast.
- 1999 **Street Design Guidelines for Healthy Neighborhoods**, book  
Coauthor with Dan Burden, manual for street design. Recognized as definitive guide on pedestrian design issues.
- 1998 **Building Plans and Urban Design Principles for Cities, Towns and Villages in South Florida**, book and plan guide  
Contributing author, prepared chapter on building types and city redevelopment.

**EDUCATION**

**DEGREES**

- 2014 - 2019 **Ph. D. in Public Affairs, Public Policy and Administration** Department  
Florida International University, Miami, Florida  
Dissertation, *Democracy and Bureaucracy of Smart Place: Coral Gables, FL and the Role of Aspirational Content in Local Governance*  
Phi Alpha Alpha
- 1990 - 1991 **Master of Architecture, Suburb and Town Design Program**  
University of Miami, Coral Gables, Florida  
Studied under Andres Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk  
Outstanding student award
- 1984 - 1989 **Bachelor of Architecture**  
**Bachelor of Arts**  
University of Miami, Coral Gables, Florida  
Magna Cum Laude, General University Honors, Dean's List, President's List

**SEMINARS**

- 2017 **Florida International University, Miami, Florida**  
Six Sigma Green Belt
- 2012- 2014 **National Management Incident System (NIMS)**, Miami-Dade County, Florida  
FEMA Training
- 1996 - 2005 **Indian River Community College, Fort Pierce, Florida**  
Management seminars
- 1994 **Harvard Graduate School of Design, Boston, Massachusetts**  
Institute of Affordable Housing
- 1987 **Rice University**  
Architecture program in Amsterdam, Paris and Barcelona

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*Candidate Introduction*

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**Ramon Trias**

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**EDUCATION**

Ph. D. in Public Affairs (Public Administration and Policy), Florida International University  
Master of Architecture, University of Miami  
Bachelor of Architecture, University of Miami  
Bachelor of Arts (Spanish), University of Miami  
Registered Architect, Florida

**EXPERIENCE**

Planning and Zoning, Coral Gables, Florida	2012-Present
President, Trias and Associates, Town Planning, Architecture, Preservation Development, Fort Pierce, Florida	2005-2012
Planning Coordinator, Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council	1995-2005
	1991-1995

**BACKGROUND**

The population of Coral Gables is approximately 50,000. The city has 846 employees. I directly supervise up to 12 individuals. The total budget is \$254,000,000 and the general fund is \$177,000,000.

The three most important issues facing Coral Gables are:

- Quality of large-scale development
- Effective communication with residents
- Public projects, new and maintenance (street design, public buildings)

**GENERAL, MANAGEMENT STYLE AND EXPERIENCE**

In 1992 I led a redevelopment plan for Downtown Lake Worth, when I worked at the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council. It was my first project after graduate school, and I had the opportunity to apply theory to a community that was motivated to improve quality of life.

As a result, Lake and Lucerne Avenues were reconstructed with wider sidewalks and city staff expanded and implemented many ideas discussed with the community.

I have always been impressed with the city's historic urban fabric and appropriate development scale. This job presents an opportunity to enhance quality of life, one project at a time.

My management style is to provide direction and encourage professionals to use judgment and strive for quality. I do not micromanage, but I take full responsibility for outcomes.

**Ramon Trias**

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The staff would say that I add value to their work by providing constant input and policy direction.

The elected officials would say that I provide the information and advice they need to enhance the quality of life in the community.

My strengths are professionalism, expertise in planning and development, experience in the private and public sectors.

In terms of weaknesses, I have not followed a conventional career path for the position of city manager.

The metrics I use to measure performance are customer service responsiveness, quality of development projects, feedback from Commission.

My greatest achievement is the construction of the waterfront Plaza in Downtown Fort Pierce. A public parking lot was transformed into the most iconic, beautiful, and functional public space in St. Lucie County, with modest local resources and great public support and pride.

One of my regrets is related to several towns I designed in private practice prior to the great recession of 2007. They were not implemented. I learned to respect the relentless effect of finances and economic conditions, even when they are completely beyond our control.

Yes, I have let employees go. Two cases were clear violations of regulations. It was the best decision for the city and, in the long term, for the employees.

The challenges facing the next City Manager for Lake Worth Beach are establishing an expectation of excellence and quality, based on the policy direction of the Commission.

In my first six months I will listen with the intent of understanding and facilitating the goals of the Commission and the aspirations of the community.

The media has always been a valued partner towards informing the community and building support for an enhanced quality of life. Nothing in my background would embarrass an employer.

Social media adds value and immediacy to an overall communication strategy. My view is that communication is a profession. I would seek the assistance of professional staff.

None of the activists in the communities that I worked will contact the city with “the dirt” on me.

In my leisure time I like to read and visit buildings and towns of great artistic merit.

**Ramon Trias**

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**SIX ADJECTIVES OR PHRASES YOU WOULD USE TO DESCRIBE YOURSELF**

Professional  
Honest  
Patient  
Experienced  
Visionary  
Practical

**REASON FOR WANTING TO LEAVE CURRENT JOB**

The past decade in Coral Gables has been an outstanding experience. Nevertheless, I am ready to apply many lessons learned.

**CURRENT/MOST RECENT OR RELEVANT SALARY**

\$138,000 base salary plus car allowance and other benefits.

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*CB&A Background Checks*

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**Background Check Summary for  
RAMON TRIAS**

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**Criminal Records Checks:**

Nationwide Criminal Records Search	No Records Found
County	
Miami-Dade County, FL	No Records Found
St. Lucie County, FL	No Records Found
State	
Florida	No Records Found

**Civil Records Checks:**

County	
Miami-Dade County, FL	Results Pending
St. Lucie County, FL	Results Pending
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 expect for:  
Coral Gables (2012 – Present)

**Social Media**

Nothing of Concern Found

**Background Check Summary for  
RAMON TRIAS**

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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  
RAMON TRIAS  
Personal Disclosure**

Name of Applicant: RAMON TRIAS

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?  
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. LINKEDIN - RAMON TRIAS
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: Ramon Trias  
Signature of Applicant

Please email this form via PDF DOCUMENT to [Lynelle@cb-asso.com](mailto:Lynelle@cb-asso.com) or via fax to (561) 621-5965 **no later than 5:00 PM PST 07/30/2021.**

(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

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*CB&A Reference Notes*

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Reference Notes  
Ramon Trias

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**Arceli Redila – Principal Planner, City of Coral Gables, FL 305-460-5212**

Ms. Redila has reported to Mr. Trias since around 2017. Mr. Trias provides clear direction to the team and is very enjoyable to work with. He is good at his job.

Land use and zoning are difficult issues, and the public generally only attends community workshops when they are very angry. Mr. Trias does very well in these situations. When citizens are being difficult, he responds by thanking them for the question, or commenting that they bring up a good point. He is really good with the public and stake holders.

Mr. Trias is not a micromanager, he is more involved with the coordination. He makes good decisions both when hiring personnel and in general. He maintains an organization at a high performance level. He keeps employees informed on a daily basis.

Their department is in a studio and Mr. Trias leads the staff every day in exchanging ideas to resolve issues. He manages the budget well. He is very responsive. He responds well in challenging circumstances because he has a mellow personality.

While Mr. Trias has been involved in controversy related to planning and zoning, he has not personally been involved in anything controversial.

Ms. Redila would definitely hire Mr. Trias. She believes he would be a good city manager. He has done well as a top-level manager for Coral Gables.

**Words or phrases used to describe Ramon Trias:**

- Great manager,
- Organized,
- Good with time management, and
- Knowledgeable.

**Strengths:** Knowing how to dance around the issues and facilitate a good conversation between stake holders. He achieves end results others are in awe of and did not consider possible.

**Weaknesses:** Strengths can be weaknesses. Though he is not a micromanager, he tries to manage and coordinate everything. Also, he is good at providing direction and feedback to the senior staff but could be more demanding of the admins.

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Reference Notes  
Ramon Trias

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**Dennis Beach – Former City Manager, Fort Pierce, FL 772-971-5767**

Mr. Beach has known Mr. Trias since the mid 1990s and they worked together for ten years. Mr. Trias reported to Mr. Beach.

Mr. Trias is a genius, and quite a capable individual. Some of the better employees in the department were hired by Mr. Trias. He makes good decisions generally. He is definitely a change agent, and he is innovative as well.

In Fort Pierce Mr. Trias was very active in the community. He led the effort to involve the community in the decision-making process. He was excellent with the public. He led a series of planning workshops that resulted in the direction that the community has followed since.

Mr. Trias kept Mr. Beach informed. Mr. Trias was a leader who rallied the staff around the vision of the elected body. He was very capable of handling the budget for his operation. He completed tasks on time. He created more stress than he received because he is a very demanding individual who expects the best from both colleagues and the people he works with in the public.

As an architect and planner Mr. Trias sometimes was at odds with other professional architects and planners because he was certain that he was correct and wanted to do it his way. Nothing in his conduct or behavior would concern a reasonable person. He left Fort Pierce to start his own consulting business.

Mr. Beach would absolutely hire Mr. Trias. Mr. Beach cannot say whether Mr. Trias would be a good City Manager because it requires a different skillset, attitude, and flexibility. However, if he approaches the position the way he approached his role in Fort Pierce, he will do just fine. He was really good at his job and really made a great difference in the community. He may be able to accomplish more as a manager because he will have more authority.

**Words or phrases used to describe Ramon Trias:**

- Very determined,
- Tenacious,
- Intelligent, and
- Leader.

**Strengths:** Training and education have prepared him well for what he does, very focused, determined, gets the job done.

**Weaknesses:** Like others who are extremely capable, he does not communicate as well as he could and can be assertive at times. Some may see this as a weakness and others a strength.

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Reference Notes  
Ramon Trias

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**Venny Torre – Builder / Developer, Coral Gables, FL 305-442-9494**

Mr. Torre has known Mr. Trias since around 2014. Mr. Torre is a builder and a developer in the community, and they have interacted in this regard. In addition, Mr. Torre has served in many roles in the city. He is president of the business permit district, and he has served on the park preservation board, the planning and zoning board, and more.

Mr. Torre values his interactions with Mr. Trias and rates him high in terms of job performance. While people may be frustrated and complain that they do not get what they want, Mr. Trias is right on point in his decisions. He is good about keeping others informed.

The staff in Mr. Trias' department are top notch, they are very highly regarded in the community. He is often out in the community, and he does a good job with residents. He gives presentations and explains projects. When he becomes frustrated with another's lack of understanding, he keeps his cool and has always been respectful to them.

The code is subject to interpretation. For example, zoning interpretations on how to park a car in a specific zoning type vary. Mr. Trias works through the fine print to determine how it all can work. He is amenable to working with individuals to arrive at solutions. He is not robotic, and he does not see matters in black and white.

Mr. Trias has not been involved in any matters of large consequence, though he has worked in controversial situations because of his role in the city. However, nothing occurred that put him in the spotlight in a negative way.

Mr. Torre does not know of anything related to Mr. Trias that is concerning. Those who complain about Mr. Trias say that his ideas are too old fashioned or rigid.

Mr. Torre would hire Mr. Trias. While Mr. Torre is not sure whether Mr. Trias would be a good city manager, that role takes a different skillset, he is not saying no to the idea. Mr. Trias is a good person.

**Words or phrases used to describe Ramon Trias:**

- Thoughtful,
- Helpful,
- Visionary,
- Flexible,
- Professional, and
- Straight up person.

Reference Notes  
Ramon Trias

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**Strengths:** Good vision for what the city should be and what is needed to move the vision forward, very scholarly and makes decisions on his knowledge of architecture and planning rather than being swayed by the politics.

**Weaknesses:** None identified.

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**Miriam Ramos – City Attorney, City of Coral Gables, FL 305-460-5084 305-733-0216**

Ms. Ramos has worked with Mr. Trias since March of 2015. Mr. Trias is extremely knowledgeable and is always improving his skillset. He attained a higher degree in architecture or planning.

Mr. Trias makes good decisions. He is innovative, a change agent, and he maintains an organization at a high performance level. He always keeps others informed.

Often out in the public Mr. Trias was very visible in the community. He worked with the public generally well but could be a little impatient at times. He is responsive and his responses are timely. In stressful situations he can come across a little strong, but he always finds a way to collaborate and resolve the issue.

One project Mr. Trias led was the update of the entire zoning code which had not been revamped since 2007 so it was a significant undertaking. The process lasted over a few years, and he was at the helm.

Everything in zoning is controversial but nothing embarrassing or controversial comes to mind in relation to Mr. Trias specifically. His conduct would not embarrass an employer.

Ms. Ramos would hire Mr. Trias. She only knows him as a Planning Director and has not evaluated him on other attributes needed for a City Manager role.

**Words or phrases used to describe Ramon Trias:**

- Committed,
- Responsible,
- Responsive,
- Knowledgeable,
- Intelligent, and
- Confident.

**Strengths:** Work knowledge, knows the code, applies processes and procedures.

**Weaknesses:** He can be a little impatient.

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Reference Notes  
Ramon Trias

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**Marshall Bellin – Architect, Coral Gables, FL 305-447-1927**

Mr. Bellin is an architect in the community and he has worked with Mr. Trias in this capacity. They met in 2012 when Mr. Bellin was hired.

Because his allegiance is to the community Mr. Trias makes good decisions with respect to his work. He is very involved with the community. Mr. Bellin has enjoyed their interactions. Mr. Trias answers questions and they talk about the issues at hand.

Coral Gables has a very complicated zoning code and sometimes issues come up that are not easy to decipher. Mr. Trias' guidance in these situations is good. He is always very responsive and he is timely in his responses.

Decisions made with respect to zoning can be controversial and Mr. Trias has been involved in the conversations, but he has not personally been involved in any controversy. Mr. Bellin is not aware of anything concerning about Mr. Trias' behavior, nor does he know anyone who has a negative opinion of Mr. Trias.

Mr. Bellin would hire Mr. Trias, though he is not sure what the responsibilities of a city manager are. Mr. Trias does his job well and is a good candidate.

**Words or phrases used to describe Ramon Trias:**

- Presents well,
- Conscientious,
- Easy to work with, and
- Great communication.

**Strengths:** Planning.

**Weaknesses:** None identified.

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**Prepared by:** Lynelle Klein  
Colin Baenziger & Associates

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*CB&A Internet Research*

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**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Ramon Trias**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Miami Herald, The (FL)  
March 2, 2021

**Coral Gables commission forges deal on contentious Miracle Mile rezoning. Will it fly?**

Author: Andres Viglucci

Coral Gables officials looking for a key to unlocking redevelopment on ailing Miracle Mile without obliterating its small-scale charm say they may have found it: A consensus measure that would cap new construction at four stories.

That's taller than most existing buildings on the Mile, but two stories shorter than current rules permit. At the same time, city commissioners and planners appear to have settled on an outright ban on parking within the footprint of any new buildings on the retail street. Together, they say, the contemplated new rules will protect the Mile's pedestrian-first ambience while promoting mixed-use development at the right scale to revitalize one of South Florida's signature streets, long plagued by vacant shops and a lack of foot traffic.

That fresh compromise, forged during a two-hour public city commission workshop last week, may resolve a sometimes heated, months-long debate over the fate of the Mile that was sparked by a broader update of the Gables' stringent zoning code. The commission is scheduled to take a first vote on the Miracle Mile measure March 9. A second and final vote would follow on March 23.

Commission members were at pains to point out that the consensus reached will lower height caps on the Mile compared to what's allowed now. "We are lowering the height on Miracle Mile — that's h, e, i, g, h, t," Gables Mayor Raul Valdes-Faui said during the Wednesday workshop, adding later: "Whatever we get, it's going to be an improvement over what we have today."

Commissioners approved the broader, mostly technical zoning update on Feb. 8 by a 4-1 vote, with vice mayor Vince Lago dissenting. But they agreed at the time to put off a final vote on proposed tweaks to rules governing Miracle Mile, by far the most contentious piece of the zoning rewrite, to consider alternatives. The Miracle Mile measure has become a bone of contention in a crowded city election with few other issues to fire up voters.

Candidates for two open commission seats have dominated public hearings and community meetings on the question, accusing incumbents of ramming through the rezoning proposed by city planners while ignoring public consternation over an intense development boom in the city.

The original Miracle Mile proposal developed by city planning director **Ramon Trias** and consultant Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, a noted architect and University of Miami professor, sought to tweak existing zoning on the street to spur small-scale redevelopment.

The key, they concluded, is to allow owners of the often obsolete, one- and two-story buildings on small lots that dominate the street to redevelop while providing required parking somewhere

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Ramon Trias***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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else nearby. The small lots can't accommodate the required parking, effectively encouraging any owners wanting to redevelop to aggregate property and build big with on-site parking garages — something city officials want to prevent.

To avoid litigation from property owners over potential downzoning claims, that original plan kept height limits at currently allowed levels of 70 feet, or six stories, while requiring new buildings to step back at four stories to preserve the street's intimate feel. Nothing has been built at that height on the street, however, in part because of the difficulty in accommodating on-site parking on shallow lots.

The proposal raised the hackles of residents and preservationists who feared it could lead to a uniform, 70-foot-high "concrete canyon" along the Mile — a concern some commission members, including Lago, seconded. The debate boiled down to precisely how tall any new construction on the Mile should be, a question that's anything but straightforward because it depends on complex technical and legal variables.

All five commissioners agreed on allowing developers on the Mile the option of so-called "remote parking" within a 1,000-foot radius of their property. Ample parking is available near the Mile in both public and private garages, and the supply will be enough to meet demand for about a decade even as redevelopment occurs, city administrators assured commissioners.

Lago and Commissioner Patricia Keon, both vying for the retiring Valdes-Fauli's seat, each released an alternative proposal, as did Commissioner Michael Mena. At this week's workshop, Coral Gables' five elected officials weighed four proposals, including a slightly tweaked plan from city planners, before settling on the four-story compromise substantially along the lines of Mena's alternative. This time, only a handful of people turned up on Zoom to oppose the Mile changes.

The proposals were designed to avoid directly downzoning the Mile, something Gables City Attorney Miriam Soler Ramos warned could open up the municipality to property-rights lawsuits. To keep a lid on heights, all proposals banned the use of additional "air rights" on the Mile. Those development rights can be purchased by developers from owners of historically designated properties to add stories to projects in the downtown Gables over what basic zoning allows, but their use must be approved by the commission. Because the approval is discretionary, Soler Ramos said barring them doesn't constitute a property "taking."

Lago, however, proposed also prohibiting the use on the Mile of the city's so-called Mediterranean bonus, a measure that allows developers who adopt the Gables' trademark architectural style to add stories to downtown projects. That ban would effectively reduce development capacity and limit heights to four stories on the street. Lago also proposed still allowing developers to build a garage if they chose to, providing them flexibility to skirt property-rights concerns. But Lago's plan ran into concerns from other commissioners that it would still encourage developers to aggregate property and build street-killing garages and access ramps fronting the Mile.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Ramon Trias**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Keon proposed no hard-and-fast height cap, saying small lot sizes effectively would keep most new building heights under six stories, since development capacity is dependent on the property footprint. Avoiding a hard cap also preserves creative flexibility for architects by not constricting a building's shape, she argued. Keon persuaded fellow commissioners to embrace city planner's proposal for ground-floor stories of up to 15 feet to satisfy requirements from high-end retailers.

Mena proposed a strict four-story cap, or about 50 feet, with a step-back at the fourth floor. That means building owners could have terrace restaurants or other uses on the fourth floor, promoting activity on the street, he said. Mena also proposed requiring remote parking for new buildings on the Mile instead of making it optional, an idea other commissioners appeared to embrace along with the four-story height limit.

**Trias**, the planning director, said the proposal will work if the city also eliminates building setbacks on the Mile. The ability to build to the property line means redevelopment or expansion projects could still use the full capacity allowed under current rules while hewing to a 50-foot cap, avoiding any takings issue, **Trias** said. Again, commissioners agreed.

Commissioners noted that there is ample precedent on the Mile for 50-foot heights — such as the large building at 55 Miracle Mile that houses the new Gramercy restaurant, among other businesses. The building, which occupies multiple lots, was the last significant construction on the street, made possible because required parking is in a garage in a companion condo high-rise at its rear.

At roughly that same 50-foot height, Mena said, the cap in his proposal respects property rights and the Mile's modest scale while encouraging new development that enhances and modernizes the street. "I appreciate the fundamental concern about the Mile, that it not be developed into something that is out of scale with what residents expect Miracle Mile to be," Mena said in an interview before the workshop. "But we have to be cognizant of the property rights of those owners. We can't just come in and say, 'Hey, you can only do two stories now.' "

But Mena said he wanted to avert the possibility of parking decks on the street by any means possible. "I think that would be a travesty on the Mile," he said. "No one wants to see development on that scale. What I'm trying to do is foreclose this possibility."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Ramon Trias**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Miami Herald, The (FL)  
November 29, 2020

**coral gables - 'Miracle Mile is sick': Coral Gables looks to redevelopment - to save iconic street - Coral Gables wants to lift parking requirements for new construction to spur redevelopment on Miracle Mile, which is beset by vacancies and lack of foot traffic.**

Author: Andres Viglucci

Looking to rejuvenate an ailing Miracle Mile, Coral Gables commissioners say they're ready to embrace a zoning tweak that could carry big repercussions for one of South Florida's most iconic streets: significantly easing rules that require on-site parking in new construction on the strip. The measure, a small piece of a wide-ranging update of the Gables' famously strict zoning code, could pave the way for extensive redevelopment of the Mile, the city's premier shopping street.

The proposed new rule would make it far easier for developers to provide "remote" parking for tenants and customers - that is, make a deal for them to park elsewhere in downtown Coral Gables. Studies show that parking across the business district is both plentiful and severely underused.

Backers say that simple expedient would unlock the potential for new retail, office and even residential development along the Mile by essentially lifting requirements for on-site parking within the envelope of new construction. Those requirements, they say, now make redevelopment along the Mile and its narrow, shallow lots physically and economically unfeasible.

The parking proposal appears to enjoy broad support among elected officials, city administrators and business leaders, who say the Mile is in desperate need of modernization. They contend the street has been hobbled by property owners' inability to replace or expand the one-story storefronts - in many cases tiny and obsolete - that were built after World War II and still dominate the Mile.

Despite a recent \$25 million streetscape makeover that widened sidewalks and beautified the street, the Mile is plagued by vacant storefronts, a longstanding issue that has only been worsened by prolonged street reconstruction and the COVID-19 pandemic. A recent count by the Miami Herald found 37 empty shopfronts along the half-mile-long street. "Miracle Mile is sick," Coral Gables Mayor Raul Valdes-Fauli said at a recent commission debate over the new zoning rules. "Miracle Mile is in deep trouble. And unless we do something to stimulate it, it is going to go down."

But exactly how much new development should be encouraged on the Mile as parking requirements are eased, and at what scale, has become a sharp bone of contention among commissioners as the city undergoes a sustained wave of new construction in and around its increasingly dense downtown.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Ramon Trias**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Though all five Coral Gables commissioners say they support the remote-parking measure, a debate between two mayoral contenders, commissioners Vince Lago and Patricia Keon, over related limits to new development on the street became so heated that board members unanimously agreed to break out the Miracle Mile plan from the broader, largely uncontroversial zoning rewrite. With Valdes-Fauli opting for political retirement, Lago and Keon are seeking the mayor's seat in elections next year.

Expanded remote parking would offer property owners and developers on the Mile far greater flexibility to build up to a height of 70 feet, or about six stories - the current cap, established by a previous zoning rule that would remain in place. Keon says she's satisfied that the height cap and requirements for buildings to "step back" at 45 feet will be sufficient to preserve the street's pedestrian-first feel and intimate scale. But Lago wants to restrict the size of new buildings further, saying he fears the result otherwise could be a "monolithic" new six-story scale along the entire Mile, a prospect other critics have likened to a concrete canyon. He argues developers should be willing to accept further limits on size in exchange for the right to forgo building costly parking decks.

The commissioners will hash out the remote parking measure and some possible tightening of restrictions on new Miracle Mile development at a special virtual workshop Nov. 30, before a final vote on the full zoning rewrite that's scheduled for Dec. 8.

Developers with holdings on Miracle Mile, including the street's largest property owner, Terranova Corp., have been quietly watching the debate. The group's plan for a boutique hotel on the prominent corner of Miracle Mile and Ponce de Leon Boulevard stalled in 2019 amid issues with provision of off-site parking and some public and political blowback over its proposed seven-story height.

Terranova Chairman Stephen Bittel said he supports the remote-parking measure, developed as part of the broader zoning update by city planners and its consultants, the Miami firm of Duany Plater-Zyberk. "Miracle Mile, as a result of COVID-19 and changed retail patterns, is at a low point of the last 20 years," Bittel said in a brief interview. "City staff and their consultant Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, a renowned urbanism expert, have come up with an enlightened plan for the future." "The definition of insanity is to do the same thing again and again and expect different results," Bittel added, alluding to critics who oppose changes on the street.

To bring desperately needed attention to the Mile and generate some activity, Bittel and the city teamed up in October to temporarily turn over a half-dozen vacant storefronts for use as working studios and galleries for artists. The artists will remain at least through the end of the year, depending on when shops are leased.

The studios are open to the public. Artists say the experience of working with other artists has been good. But business has been light, though some curious pedestrians do drop in. "It's been slow, but people are happy that this is going on," said ceramicist Laura Mármol. The debate over the Mile's future could be consequential beyond Coral Gables' borders. The city's busy

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Ramon Trias***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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downtown is a major regional office hub but has found itself increasingly in a losing competition, at least pre-COVID-19, for retail and dining customers with newly vital entertainment districts in Wynwood and nearby Coconut Grove, among others.

And how the city, famed for its careful planning, handles the parking question could provide new impetus to efforts by some planners and activists in the Gables and elsewhere in Miami-Dade County. Some have called for easing of what they describe as onerous on-site parking requirements that block needed new development on small lots and foster over-scaled construction and lot aggregations, inflating housing and other costs.

Miracle Mile property owners holding at least 200 feet of frontage can already apply for remote parking. But most have single lots of small holdings and don't qualify, one reason nothing new has been built on the street in 15 years. New construction under current rules would require aggregating lots and building big with parking decks and ramps - something the city wants to discourage.

The new rule would make remote parking available to those small property owners, who could then build to three or four stories, Plater-Zyberk said. The hope is those upstairs floors, where retail won't work, will be offices or apartments, boosting foot traffic to help sustain the shops and restaurants at street level, she said. The measure would encourage development of a modest, pedestrian- and neighborhood-friendly scale that's economically sustainable and largely missing in the city, she added. "It will be kind of an urban street that's developed incrementally. Hopefully it would be an interesting, varied streetscape, rather than one long building," Plater-Zyberk said. "The city has lots of big, tall buildings, and some little, small buildings, and nothing in between. We're hoping to bring in that missing middle."

Anthony De Yurre, a partner at Bilzin Sumberg who represents some Coral Gables developers, said some limits could work if carefully calibrated, but he said the remote-parking measure is essential if Miracle Mile is to thrive. "It depends on what you think the vision of Miracle Mile should be," said De Yurre, who has no clients with property or a project on the Mile, but represents developers bidding on a stalled city project to redevelop obsolete public parking garages next to it. "It comes down to a pedestrian scale. That to me is what the debate is about. They're really going to get granular with it on Monday. They know it's going to have a tremendous impact on the Mile. I think you will see a new Miracle Mile in the next 10 years."

At the November workshop, commissioners will also consider a second zoning change that would expand the city's downtown. The broad zoning update doesn't affect single-family or residential-only neighborhoods, but this proposal would be an exception. It would rezone an anomalous, two-and-a-half block island of single-family homes and duplexes that's surrounded by larger-scale residential and commercial development.

That change comes at the request of a majority of property owners in the section, who signed a petition asking for it to be upzoned for commercial or mixed use so they can sell out. Originally part of a plan by city founder George Merrick for a crafts section that was never realized, the



**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Ramon Trias**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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small neighborhood is today plagued by cut-through traffic and increasing density around it, including the massive Plaza Coral Gables under construction two blocks to the east.

The city plan is to classify the area under a new category under the zoning rewrite that's designed to foster more of the "missing-middle" development Plater-Zyberk describes - in this case, low-scale development mixing residential, retail and office uses.

But Commissioner Michael Mena called for a recalibration of the proposed upzoning, citing concerns over the impact on the abutting, historic San Sebastian Apartments, rising four stories at their highest point. Mena doesn't want any new development to overwhelm the building or residential areas across LeJeune Road. "This is unique because it's a three-block area in our downtown. I view it as a blank canvas," Mena said. "So rather than just come out and upzone and see what comes along, I want to be a little more thoughtful."

City commissioners have few quibbles with the larger zoning rewrite. Plater-Zyberk and Gables Planning Director **Ramon Trias** said it mostly streamlines and reorganizes the code, making it easier to navigate and understand. It also introduces defined zoning categories that mix commercial and residential uses to the code for the first time. Although numerous large mixed-use projects have been built, approval for each one has until now involved a laborious process of negotiation. Adding a set of tailored rules should result in a simpler review process and better buildings, Plater-Zyberk said. But Miracle Mile has been a sticking point. Lago and Keon both agree on the need for remote parking and more residential development downtown.. But they differ, at times acerbically, on the particulars.

Keon suggests Lago's concerns are overblown. Most property owners with small holdings would be unable to build to the maximum of 70 feet, or about six stories, she noted. "You would have to have a certain footprint to do that. Not everything will go to that height. You could have some buildings at three or four stories. You would still have a varied roofline," Keon said in an interview. "I think what's important is the scale and the viability of the Mile. You can leave it at two stories, and if all the stores are empty, that's not a pretty picture."

But Lago wants to further restrict development capacity to ensure that not every property is built out to the maximum 70 feet. That could be done by barring from the Mile measures that provide additional building capacity to downtown Gables developers - a "bonus" for hewing to Mediterranean style, and the purchase of unused "air rights" from designated historic properties. "You need to ensure that out-of-scale projects are not built on Miracle Mile, that you're not allowing developers to build every square foot of the envelope," Lago said in an interview. "The idea that additional height will solve the problems of Miracle Mile is wrong. Let's protect one street, and that's Miracle Mile."

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<https://www.vice.com/en/article/xwnykg/luxury-housing-is-threatening-to-wipe-out-miamis-trailer-parks>

**Luxury Housing Is Threatening to Wipe Out Miami’s Trailer Parks**

By Alexandra Martinez

When Miguel Castro moved into his Little Gables trailer home, his backdoor neighbor gifted him a potted schefflera tree. It was a welcome gift, but Castro quickly saw a more practical use for the umbrella tree—he would plant it as a barrier to discourage trespassers. Today, Castro’s rectangular lot is a tropical oasis from the encroaching concrete on Miami’s southwest Eighth Street. But the verdant refuge could soon be demolished. For the past three years, the wealthy city of Coral Gables has been pushing to annex a 205-acre, unincorporated area of Miami-Dade County that includes the Little Gables trailer park and its 225 residents. It’s a move that would subject them to higher taxes and most likely, displacement—recently re-elected Mayor Raul Valdes-Fauli has openly said the trailer park would have to “disappear”, adding that the new development would be built for young couples. The mayor’s words mirror a national trend of trailer park owners selling their long-time investment to new investors who drive up the rent and eventually wipe the trailer park off the map, adding to a nationwide housing crisis where only 37 affordable homes exist for every 100 low-income renters. And there’s plenty of incentive for local politicians in charge: During the recent election in Coral Gables, Mayor Valdes-Fauli received \$29,500 in March alone from developers, real estate firms, contractors and construction companies.

The Little Gables trailer park opened in 1931 when the Great Depression plunged the economy into scarcity. Since then, Miami’s population has grown from 143,000 to 2.7 million, and the average rent for a one bedroom apartment has reached \$1,700, with only more growth expected. At \$500 a month for the lot rental, tenants said the trailer park offers a reprieve. For residents with fixed incomes, disabilities, or who have recently immigrated to this country, there is often no other option—applications for public housing in Miami are closed and people are still being called off a 2008 waitlist intended to alleviate Miami-Dade’s affordable housing crisis. The annexation would weigh heavily on the residents of Little Gables. Many tenants have spent their whole lives here, and have cultivated a community in those decades. They have families, doctors and jobs nearby, and relocation would upend all of it. Their trailers, which most spent at least \$4,500 to purchase decades ago, would be too expensive to take with them, and would have to be demolished. And for those who are in critical health conditions, the physical strain of moving would put them in an even more precarious situation.

Filiberto Llerena, 81, said he doesn’t want to leave. He has owned his trailer for over 30 years. His days are spent taking care of his ailing wife, Julia Edith Llerena, 82, who is confined to her bed after open-heart surgery, a fractured hip, and a stroke three years ago landed her in a fragile condition. “I’m going to wait until they find me somewhere to live if they have to demolish this,” Llerena said. On a typical day, the residents at Little Gables Mobile Home Park sit on patio chairs in front of their homes, sip café, and check in with their neighbors. Castro’s spot, particularly, is a hub of community. Patchouli incense and Marc Anthony on the radio waft

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through the air. Inside, his pets create a symphony: parakeets chirp against their cage's metal bars, ping ponging with the rooster's crowing. The humble space feels like a slice of his native Cuba. "Every morning the neighbors drink coffee with me, sometimes we smoke a cigarette here. If I barbecue, I go give them some, we have a sense of feeling, of connection," said Castro. But that sense of peace is limited—Castro is also president of the homeowners association, formed in response to the sudden onslaught of penalties for code violations.

In 2014, the County Regulatory and Economic Resources building department, a local agency that oversees housing, started running random sweeps on the property owned by Burleigh Kaplan of Gables Trailer Park INC and found over 70 code violations in Little Gables, mostly illegal additions to their homes that the tenants rented out for extra income. In an attempt to get the tenants off the land, the agency slapped them with substantial fines and forced them to take down the additions, but the property was finally up to code.

A year later, when tenants heard that the property owners were interested in selling, they sought out the help of the nonprofit organization, Legal Services of Miami. As owners of the trailers, but renters of the land, they attempted to use their right of first refusal to purchase the park. An angel investor was willing to provide a mortgage, but it wasn't enough. The property was sold to Jay Suarez of Titan Development Partners LLC, a real estate and property management company. "After I cleared up the violations, everyone is suddenly interested in the park, I got an offer for \$8 million," said Suarez, who insisted he wanted to keep the trailer park as it is. "The bottom line is, I turned that down. That's not my interest."

If the annexation passes, the trailer park would still be subject to Coral Gables' notoriously strict code enforcement, which includes painting your home a palette of muted colors approved by the Board of Architects, and not parking a pick-up truck in your driveway. The affluent city's higher property taxes would amount to an increase of \$1.21 per thousand in taxable value or \$500 to \$1,000 annually for homeowners, in addition to \$405 more for solid waste removal. Suarez, who already raised the rent \$40 in October, admitted that the increases would have to come out of rent spikes for the tenants. Regardless of development plans, annexation would mean stricter regulations and an increase in rent. Relocation would be inevitable.

Coral Gables is not waiting for him to get on board. In November 2017, the City of Coral Gables sent out official consent petition forms to see how many residents in the Little Gables neighborhood, which houses roughly 5,400 people, of which the trailer park houses only 225, were actually in favor of the annexation. Out of 1,607 registered votes, they received 400 in support of the annexation. But according to the residents' lawyer, Nejla Calvo, no one at the trailer park received the notice.

Once they had the minimum requirement to submit the application at a city commission meeting on December 2017, the city retained a planning consulting firm to be available to redevelop the park. And City Commissioner Patricia Keon proposed that the commission pass an ordinance to make trailer parks illegal upon annexation. Other officials advised the Commission to find

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adequate places for mobile homeowners to relocate, such as Orlando, for example, four hours north of Miami.

This wouldn't be the first time that government officials in Miami-Dade make a deal with developers to wipe their property clean of trailers. In 2016, Chinese company Wealthy Delight agreed to a deal with the Village of El Portal, a community slightly north of Little Haiti, to buy the Little Farm trailer park on the condition that they demolish the park. Two hundred and forty residents were displaced, some were sent to Orlando, while others remained homeless.

The Director of Planning and Zoning, **Ramon Trias** says nothing has been decided and plans are still in a very preliminary, conceptual level. "I think we can have some, let's say row houses, small apartments, some way to keep the streets where they are but enhance the landscaping," **Trias** said. "The idea is not to displace people, but to provide better ways to develop the land. But, is there a willingness to do it?"

For now, it's a waiting game. The application for annexation was submitted in February 2018. By December 2018, it passed in the County Planning Advisory Board. It will ultimately come down to a vote by the roughly 5,400 Little Gables residents of which the trailer park houses only a fraction of that.

At the end of the day, Castro's partner washes dishes inside their recently renovated trailer. The couple stripped the walls of mold and redid the kitchen, totaling a near \$4,000 investment. Now, Castro's only hope is that he can keep his labor of love. "I would have to cry and declare a state of misery because where would we go?" says Castro. "That would be like a hurricane coming and destroying everything."

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Miami Herald, The (FL)  
February 18, 2019

**A high-rise building boom put Coral Gables on steroids. Will it remain the City Beautiful?**

Author: Andres Viglucci

Just five years short of a century ago, developer George Merrick conjured up a Mediterranean fantasyland on his family's holdings of scrub pine and avocado groves just outside the backwater city of Miami. He called it Coral Gables, and it was good.

The city beautiful that Merrick romantically baptized "Miami Riviera" would have it all: Charming Spanish-style homes and gracious Italian villas masterfully laid out amid gardens, lush boulevards and golf courses; imposing formal entrances; a university and a thriving business district. In promotional brochures, its crown jewel, the Biltmore Hotel and its 300-foot tower, rose out of the humid mist like a mirage in Washington Irving's "Tales of the Alhambra".

Merrick's vision, and the master plan and strict controls he drew up to realize it, have endured through boom and bust, firmly establishing Coral Gables as one of the most desirable, stable and envied communities in Florida. Now it's gone on steroids.

Enthusiastic backers of a new wave of high-rise, mixed-use development, including city leaders, say it's re-invigorating the city, enhancing Merrick's vision and turning its once-stodgy downtown into a lively urban neighborhood. But some residents fear that what's made the Gables special could be obliterated in a rush to build big. No visitor to the Gables can miss its redrawn face. The city's downtown and commercial corridors of South Dixie Highway and LeJeune Road bristle with construction cranes erecting Mediterranean-inspired buildings of a scale and density Merrick could not have foreseen.

A dozen large-scale projects recently inaugurated, nearing completion or just now under construction are delivering around 2,000 condos and apartments, hundreds of hotel rooms and hundreds of thousands of square feet of retail, restaurants and offices to the Gables in the span of a few years. It's a surge likely not rivaled since Merrick began building his city in earnest in 1924.

The biggest by far, Agave Ponce group's massive, \$600 million The Plaza Coral Gables, will spread across seven acres and three city blocks on Ponce de Leon Boulevard, just south of the recently revamped Miracle Mile. The project, the largest in Coral Gables history, will encompass 242 hotel rooms, 164 apartments and lofts, 160,000 square feet of retail, 445,000 square feet of office space and 2,000 parking spaces.

And that's after city planners and commissioners scaled back an initial plan during three years of stringent review — and after the developers trimmed it again, redesigning and renaming the former Mediterranean Village project, in response to changing market conditions following

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approval in 2015. Agave finally began construction on the first of two phases last year, with completion expected in May 2020.

The tweaks include less retail space and more office, reflecting a downturn in the fortunes of brick-and-mortar retail and unflagging demand for workspace in downtown Coral Gables. Agave also scaled down a hotel tower that would have exceeded the usually strictly observed height cap of 190 feet for usable space in the city, not including spires and cupolas. A development wave is redrawing the face of Coral Gables. Backers of a new wave of high-rise, mixed-use development in Coral Gables say it's re-invigorating the city, but some residents fear that what's made the Gables special is at risk of being obliterated in a rush to build big.

The Agave project's shifted footprint now places the bulk of construction around a one-acre plaza with a historic building — the turreted, three-story studio of Merrick's noted city designers, architect Phineas Paist and artist Denman Fink — at its center. The new plaza opens up to Ponce Circle Park. Agave executive Gregory Schwartz boasts the project, designed by the international firm CallisonRTKL, is so consequential it will shift the center of downtown south. "It's going to open right up to the park, shift the center of gravity towards the park, and create the new social, civic center for the city," Schwartz said. "The plaza embodies the spirit of the project."

An architectural rendering shows how The Plaza Coral Gables mixed-use project on Ponce de Leon Boulevard will look when completed. The project's first phase is now under construction. An architectural rendering show how the completed The Plaza Coral Gables mixed-use project on Ponce de Leon Boulevard will look when completed. The project's first phase is now under construction.

A few blocks west, a new mid-rise Aloft hotel introduces a sense of walkable urbanism to the traffic-choked gash of LeJeune Road, with arcades along the ground floor, a garage that's concealed within the building and a street-facing restaurant and outdoor cafe. The change in scale and approach that it represents is abundantly clear. The Aloft building comes right up to the sidewalk and goes straight up to create an arcaded street wall, an approach that planners say creates a welcoming, sheltered space for pedestrians. The hotel's suburban-style neighbors, by contrast, are set back, often behind a parking lot and a fringe of scraggly greenery — an approach that planners say is less inviting.

Abutting the downtown's western border on Douglas Road is the curving hulk of Gables Columbus Center, a newly opened 200-unit apartment building designed by Behar, Font & Partners that backs directly up to the quaint, stucco three-story La Palma Hotel from 1924. One of the earliest surviving commercial buildings downtown, and protected as a historic landmark, it's now hemmed in by towers.

Farther south, in the former industrial district south of Bird Road that's gradually been converted into a mid-rise residential neighborhood since the 2002 launch of the Shops at Merrick Park, the latest addition is about to open. Crews are putting the finishing touches on Astor Companies' Merrick Manor, a 227-unit, 10-story condo, also designed by Behar, Font, that fills nearly an

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entire block and overlooks LeJeune Road and Coral Gables High. Its value at sell-out is estimated at \$160 million.

Just north of Miracle Mile, a nearly finished deluxe 33-unit condo building, Giralda Place, stretches nearly the full length of a block on Giralda Avenue, with a new art gallery on one corner. A gym and Bread Cycle, a health-conscious Mediterranean restaurant, are among other planned sidewalk amenities. The building, which varies in height but is 90 feet high at its tallest point, replaced a strip of nondescript, low-scale modern storefronts.

The \$65 million project, with a clean, updated Mediterranean design by architect John Fullerton, also encompasses a renovated bank building on the corner of Ponce de Leon Boulevard that houses 700 WeWork shared-office desks. WeWork joins competitor Pipeline, which opened a shared workspace floor in the downtown Gables in 2015. That's a fresh wrinkle for the formerly buttoned-down Gables workplace aesthetic that Giralda Place developer Christopher "Cristo" Brown says portends the broader sea change in store for the neighborhood. "In the next six months, it's going to be a very different feel here, a more energetic one," Brown said. "You're going to see more and younger people out and about. There's going to be buzz and you're going to see people coming in from other areas who would not have made the drive before. People want walkability and all the Gables has to offer."

That a city of 50,000 should be in line to absorb so much new development is the result not just of its lasting desirability, but the redevelopment tsunami overtaking much of neighboring Miami. A seemingly insatiable, pent-up demand for urban, walkable places across the region has dovetailed with a determination by Gables leaders to turn the city's downtown — long a regional business center where sidewalk cafes were banned and streets quiet after office hours — into a denser, full-service, live-in urban hub.

The thinking is straightforward: Build dense to bring in enough residents and workers to support a variety of shops, amenities and activities in close proximity, and people will happily walk more and drive less. Planners say that creates an appealing alternative to sprawling auto-dependent development of the kind that has dominated South Florida for decades, fostering desirable growth while keeping a lid on traffic congestion. There's another big benefit for the city. Downtown properties already account for as much as 40 percent of the city's tax base, said Gables Mayor Raul Valdes-Fauli. That allows the city to boast of one of the lowest property-tax rates of any city offering full fire and police services in Miami-Dade County, he said.

While he could not provide a precise figure for how much new development will add to the city's bottom line, Valdes-Fauli said it's substantial and will help preserve those low rates while producing "a very livable Coral Gables." "We have measured development, rational development," Valdes-Fauli said. "I see it as a continuation of what Coral Gables is and has been. We don't want a Brickell."

**Umbrella Sky in Coral Gables** More than 720 bright umbrellas will sway gently over the newly transformed Giralda Plaza through September 17, 2018, the pedestrian promenade located at the

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100 block of Giralda Avenue. There's a way to go to reach the critical mass that will fill the new buildings and generate the level of street life and retail revival the city wants, said Bill Kerdyk Jr., a former Gables commissioner and CEO of Kerdyk Real Estate. But it's starting to work. Many of those now renting and buying downtown are empty-nesters who don't want to deal with car commutes to work, dine out or see a film or a play, said Kerydk, who represents the new Gables Columbus Center apartment tower.

"That was once a foreign concept, having people living downtown," said Kerdyk. In the mid-1990s, when developer Armando Codina built the first apartment building in the business district on the old bus station site, that project, too, faced considerable skepticism. "Now you come down on a Wednesday night, and it's hard to find a place to park, and there is a buzz about being downtown. "I think having people living downtown will reinvigorate the retail. It comes back to quality of life. That's what the city of Coral Gables offers."

To many residents, though, the increased mass and density is jarring. So is a longstanding city code requirement that requires buildings and entryways that come right to the edge of the sidewalk, something which planners say creates a true walkable city environment and fosters pedestrian activity. All that some critics see, though, is concrete, increasing traffic and a loss of the modest neighborhood scale that once characterized the Gables' urban districts. "These big buildings are consuming the streetscape," said Ellen Ugucione, a longtime resident and former historic preservation chief for the Gables and neighboring Miami. "I think it overwhelms. The downtown district in the 1920s was small-scale buildings. We have to evolve. But that evolution needs to take into account what buildings existed before and pay homage by stepping back. "We need to be more astute and ask, 'What is the essence of Coral Gables?' "

Ugucione stressed that the city has so far managed to protect its residential areas from intrusive or inappropriate development. But longtime Gables resident Sue Kawalerski watches the march of the cranes down South Dixie Highway and, like many of her neighbors, is afraid. Very afraid.

Like many in the Gables, they fear that what they describe as a developer-friendly city commission will turn Coral Gables into a facsimile of Miami's high-density, high-rise Brickell district, and downtown and U.S. 1 into concrete canyons. "They have absolutely no regard for what residents want," Kawalerski said.

To be sure, Coral Gables has seen waves of large-scale development before. The real estate bust of the late 1920s brought Merrick's dream to a close with much of his city yet unbuilt. Things didn't pick up until after World War II, when Miracle Mile was built and Modernism was the style of choice. By the time Mediterranean architecture came back into vogue in the 1980s, many original downtown Gables buildings had been replaced with a new run of taller, modern office buildings.

Some more-recent Med-style buildings have come under fire for mediocre architecture and ungainly proportions unbecoming of Merrick's handiwork, but city planners say they have cracked down and sharpened the quality of design. Most of the new buildings eschew pastels and



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pasted-on detailing for whites and a pared-down, contemporary version of Mediterranean design that may be more appealing and sophisticated. But what's also different about them, critics say, is their sheer bulk and in-your-face presence.

The two most attention-drawing and controversial of the new projects loom on South Dixie. The mixed-use complexes by NP International, now under construction, represent an obvious shift in scale for the corridor, now dominated by mostly low-scale, suburban-style strip malls.

Hugging the sidewalk between the elevated Metrorail tracks and the traffic-choked highway, the 504-unit Gables Station extends all the way from LeJeune Road to the intersection of Ponce de Leon and South Dixie, requiring no fewer than five cranes for construction. The apartment complex is designed to capitalize on adjacent transit and the planned Underline, the 10-mile bike and running trail connecting to downtown Miami. A public plaza lined with shops and food will connect to the Underline through a colonnade.

Farther south, on the site of a former Holiday Inn across from the University of Miami, NPI's Paseo de la Riviera will include a 10-story, 252-room hotel, 224 apartments in a 13-story tower, and retail around a plaza. An imposing arch leads out to Jaycee Park and the residential neighborhood behind it.

Both NPI projects, designed by Coral Gables architect Jorge Hernandez and architectural giant Gensler, required changes in zoning to accommodate greater density and height, prompting complaints that the city was not hewing to its code. The height of the Paseo tower matches that of a 1971 office tower next door that's now owned by the University of Miami. The UM tower, though, is slimmer and set back behind parking because its footprint is suburban.

City planners and elected officials see both projects as a new, transit-oriented and pedestrian-friendly model to replace the strip-mall mode of development along that stretch, extending the Gables brand of Mediterranean architecture to the nondescript, auto-dominated corridor. But Kawalerski, president of the Riviera Neighborhood Association, sees high-density development and its impact, like increased traffic and blocked skies, starting to encroach on the garden-like tranquility of her single-family neighborhood. The association bitterly fought the Paseo project, which won commission approval by a 4-1 vote.. "It's right on top of U.S. 1, and it's a big block of cement," she said. "How could you allow that to happen?"

Commissioner Vince Lago, considered a voice for moderation in development on the body, favored the Paseo project after it was scaled back, but voted against Gables Station because he thought it was too big for the location and would generate too much traffic at what's already a choke point. He said the city needs to be "prudent" and some projects need to be scaled back. But he also noted that most are built to what the city code allows, giving commissioners little ability to alter them.

Still, he defended the city's overall strategy, noting that it's already bearing fruit downtown. "It's very welcoming," Lago said. "You see a lot of families and young professionals enjoying

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downtown, which is what we envisioned." Lago said the city has also been astute in developing transportation alternatives in tandem with the more intensive redevelopment. Those include a growing bus-trolley circulator network, an experiment with shared electric scooters that appears to be succeeding, and establishment and expansion of the on-demand Freebee electric golf-cart system in the city.

The current Gables boom has been simmering for at least five years, when City Hall was flooded with development proposals at the height of the real-estate expansion that's now in retreat. But projects were slowed in part by drawn-out, painstaking review by city planners and, in the case of Paseo, unsuccessful litigation by unhappy residents. The Agave project, for instance, could not win approval until it was shrunk and the developers agreed to donating millions of dollars worth of public amenities, including incorporating a stop for the city's expanding system of free bus trolleys as well as paying for new vehicles for the service.

Another major project, a long-contemplated proposal for redevelopment of two obsolete city parking garages on Andalusia Avenue, has been under negotiation while undergoing substantial revisions and downsizing for two years. The Allen Morris Company and Related Group were selected in a competition by the city with a plan that would combine public parking with retail, residential and office space. The Coral Gables commission will consider the plan in March, though critics concerned about overdevelopment are pushing for the city to finance and build new garages on its own, at a cost of around \$40 million, without the developers. "We've been trying to find the right balance," said Anthony De Yurre, an attorney for the developers, describing the city review. "We have made a significant number of concessions. They have been very collaborative with us. You can't do anything that's not world-class in Coral Gables."

City officials say smart planning, adherence to the 190-foot height cap, rigorous review of new designs by planners and the Gables board of architects, and close attention to what happens at street level together ensure new development hews to Merrick's plan while fostering greater urban density where it's called for. The city's long-established Mediterranean bonus rules grant developers greater density than allowed by the basic zoning code if they adhere to Mediterranean design precepts like arcades and courtyards. "In my opinion, we are fulfilling the original vision," said Coral Gables planning director **Ramon Trias**, who hung framed, blown-up architectural drawings of city landmarks such as the Biltmore throughout his department to show applicants the high bar they must clear to win approval. "This is very rare in American cities, that something was that well thought-out and has been carried out for a century. "Merrick had a very clear vision. The people who crafted it were very professional. We have the history, the tradition, and people who really care. What other city gets to this level of quality?"

All mixed-use buildings in the city require commission approval, even after they have been closely vetted — and usually significantly modified — by planners and review boards. All get a public and sometimes contentious airing, especially when developers seek variances. Those few that are approved, **Trias** argues, usually improve a building because a zoning code can't anticipate all circumstances. "I've never worked with a commission that gets so involved in design," **Trias** said. "Sometimes there is conflict, but that's a very good thing. Always, the

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projects get better. It's that kind of passion that makes Coral Gables Coral Gables." The type of design quality the city demands can add 25 percent to the cost of development, **Trias** said, but he contends it pays off both for developers and residents.

Veteran developer Armando Codina agrees wholeheartedly. Codina, who built some large commercial buildings on LeJeune road in the Gables in previous booms in addition to the first downtown apartment building, says the city has the approach and the downtown scale about right — though he, too, disagrees with the rules requiring no building setback from the sidewalk. "I happen to like the scale of Coral Gables, and I like how careful they are," he said.

Codina went an extra mile or two in conceiving and building his newest project, built on a former parking lot just north of Alhambra Circle. The newly inaugurated 2020 Salzedo consists of a five-story office building with a stately rotunda, an expansive public courtyard that will hold tables for a new bakery and restaurant by star Lebanese-Puerto Rican pastry chef Antonio Bachour, opening Friday, as well as a 213-unit apartment tower. Codina said he personally "went after" Bachour, who will teach other chefs in a glassed-in kitchen once a month.

The building, where Codina moved his headquarters, is clearly a labor of love. So is the masonry front of the rotunda, which also bears the Codina name discreetly etched in the concrete. He commissioned well-known Miami artist Naomi Fisher to design elegant black terrazzo floors in the lobby and elevator landings of the building. Each features a different design with native palm fronds and plants. Fisher also designed metal gates that open to the courtyard. The office building balconies, meanwhile, have Cuban-tile floors. His architects at Nichols Brosch Wurst Wolfe took special care to get details and proportions right, so that the building echoes the skillful and evocative Mediterranean design that Merrick's architects were so good at. "I care," Codina said. "We view this as our second home."

The city has been carefully laying the groundwork for the downtown transformation since the 1990s, when it acquired the Miracle Theatre movie house and renovated it for use as a live drama venue by Actors' Playhouse. Since then, it created an arthouse cinema on the ground floor of a new parking garage across from the storied Books & Books shop. It converted and expanded the original fire and police station, an Art Deco landmark by Paist in coral rock, into the Coral Gables Museum.

After years of debate and planning, the city also embarked on a thorough makeover of downtown's main street, Miracle Mile, dramatically expanding sidewalks and restoring entry plazas and fountains.

Since opening last year, along with a companion conversion of the Giralda Avenue restaurant row into a pedestrian plaza, the \$20 million project has been credited with luring new dining spots and shops and boosting street life and foot traffic. Drawn-out construction, however, also claimed some longtime merchants and restaurateurs who did not survive. "Those two years really crushed a lot of existing tenants," Kerdyk said. "It's only now coming back."

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The shake-out may not be done. Last week, Tarpon Bend restaurant, a 15-year-old mainstay on the mile, closed abruptly. The owner blamed higher taxes and maintenance costs passed on to the business by the landlord. But Tarpon Bend also faced increasing competition from new bars and restaurants catering to the young professional crowd he relied on.

Some skeptics are concerned that the Gables has not yet refreshed its stale image sufficiently to attract the necessary big numbers of those young people, many of whom see Mediterranean architecture as their parents' speed and might instead prefer to patronize a resurrecting Coconut Grove or Midtown Miami. But some seem willing to gamble on it. The former Scientology building on Giralda, the city's original post office, is now being renovated and expanded by a developer to house several restaurants and a rooftop lounge, for instance. The building sat on the market for two years until the Giralda makeover was approved, said Kerdyk, who handled the sale. "It's going to take Giralda a little time to retool with some more restaurants, but it's going to be a really nice scene," Kerdyk said.

The combination of public foresight, the emphasis on culture and the encouragement of mixed-use development downtown is attracting new developers to the Gables who might not have considered it previously, said Rishi Kapoor, founder of Location Ventures. Kapoor is now seeking to raise the ante exponentially on downtown Gables condo living. He's won city approval for Villa Valencia, a lavishly amenitized, 13-story condo on the edge of downtown where the top penthouse will be priced at \$10.5 million. Kapoor expects a sellout will yield \$111 million. The average size of the 39 units is an expansive 3,000 square feet, he said, and the building is designed for affluent, downsizing Gables couples who don't want to give up the space of a house — and want to spend less time in a car while enjoying an urban lifestyle.

The retooled, upscaled downtown Gables fits the bill perfectly, and he expects other developers to follow suit at that very high end, he said. "Coral Gables has gone through this beautiful rejuvenation," he said. "Look at Miracle Mile and Giralda. It's unrecognizable from 10 years ago. Now people are seeing it as a hub for an elegant lifestyle. We think the Gables market is hungry for it." Yet it's that feeling of not recognizing the Gables anymore that gives many residents an uneasy feeling.

Despite its famed zeal for architecture and preservation, the city has at times failed to guard its legacy in the face of development pressure, said Karelia Carbonell, president of the Historic Preservation Association of Coral Gables. Last year Carbonell led a drive to save the last standing building from Merrick's original business district, the LaSalle cleaners building. The city had a deal with the owners to demolish it and replace it with a parking lot but backed off under public pressure. But the city decided earlier this year not to purchase the building because the owners were asking too much, leaving its fate in limbo. "It would be a sad day in Coral Gables if that building came down," Carbonell said.

Carbonell is now tilting at an even more unlikely windmill. She is urging the city to reconsider its decision to tear down its existing fire and police station, a 1970s example of severe, sculptural Brutalist architecture that many in the city deride as "The Thing."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Ramon Trias**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The city approved a deal to swap the station property with Codina. He owned a lot catty-corner from his 2020 Salzedo where the city is now building a \$34 million, 190,000-square-foot new public-safety building, designed by international architectural and engineering firm AECOM in a modernized version of Mediterranean style. Codina said he has not decided what would replace the old station. But Carbonell, who organized a panel of noted architects last month to highlight the historic value of the Brutalist style, said the station represents a modern phase of the city's evolution that's as much worth preserving as the LaSalle.

Meanwhile, she said, the newest buildings are not only much larger than what they replace, but often architecturally bland, without the sense of grace, creativity or proportion of the Mediterranean style that inspired Merrick. It's instead "faux Med," as she put it. "The developers get credit for having a little fountain out front, so they just plunk it down. We start losing that authenticity," Carbonell said. "Coral Gables is not the sleepy town it used to be. It's lost that pleasurable feeling. It's very dense. Parking is an issue. Getting around has become complicated. Miracle Mile has changed. You feel it as you go about your day. I know we can't just live in the past. But it has not been well curated."

Architect Jose Gelabert-Navia, who helped write the original city ordinance providing the zoning bonus for Mediterranean architecture, says it's often been misused. The rules were meant to encourage architectural variety by allowing modern design that incorporates Mediterranean features such as arcades, colonnades, plazas and balconies, he said. But, he told a full house during a lecture at the Coral Gables Museum last month on the design of cities through the centuries, the city has mostly succeeded in its quest to build on Merrick's "unique" vision. "The plan is there, and for the most part it survives," Gelabert-Navia said. "I think the city is getting better and better."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Ramon Trias**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Miami New Times  
February 14, 2019

**Coral Gables: If You Must Use Fake Grass, Hide It**

Author: Brittany Shammas

When Miami city officials decided to tear out grass along Brickell Avenue and replace it with artificial turf last fall, residents were not pleased. A days-long protest ensued, complete with "Save me! I will die soon" signs on trees the protesters said would be smothered by the fake sod.

Now, commissioners in notoriously code-happy Coral Gables are making sure that kind of turf war never happens in the City Beautiful. This week, they voted to require permits for artificial grass and to largely limit it to backyards or floors above ground level. The new rules apply to both residential and commercial buildings throughout the city.

The idea is about limiting the spread of turf — and keeping it out of sight. "It doesn't look great in the context of Coral Gables, which is about authenticity; it's about landscape," planning and zoning director **Ramon Trias** said in January. "If all of a sudden everything is artificial turf, then pretty soon we lose some of the most important qualities of the city."

Miami's fake grass debacle started in October when contractors suddenly glued artificial turf on the swale along Brickell Avenue between SE 15th and 25th Roads. Residents complained trees wouldn't get the water and nutrients they need and that dog poop wouldn't disintegrate. They said the city was being "plastified." Filmmaker Billy Corben called it "beautification fraud."

Mayor Francis Suarez initially defended the change, saying the swale looked "dramatically better." But eventually, he surrendered and ordered the removal of the fake grass.

In Coral Gables, permits for fake grass may be issued for children's playgrounds, recreational ball fields, rooftop gardens, or open joints in pavements. For residential areas, even backyard artificial turf comes with the requirement that it be hidden by a "buffer," such as a fence or wall. Other locations will be allowed only if landscape options are limited by the lot conditions.

The new rules, which passed on second reading Tuesday, went into effect immediately.

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Ramon Trias**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Sun Sentinel (Fort Lauderdale, FL)  
September 19, 2018

**Live-work-play growth spurt for Coral Gables**

Author: Lisa J. Huriash

Coral Gables is in the midst of a growth spurt of mixed-use residential projects. Apartments, hotels, restaurants and more are being planned that will make "the city more active," said **Ramon Trias**, the city's Planning and Zoning director. One is at the doorstep of the Metrorail, within walking distance of shops and restaurants. Another will be outfitted with generators, thinking ahead to hurricane season. Many of the mixed-use projects are in "areas that in the past used to be mostly commercial," he said. "It's high-quality growth." Among the projects, according to the city or developers, are:

Giralda Place, a nine-story, mixed-use project of 33 condos on top of retail space. It's adjacent to a nine-story tower of Class A office space.

Closings will begin this month on the condos at 255-275 Giralda Ave. Building amenities include 24-hour concierge service and electric vehicle charging stations. Prices start from the \$900,000s. Units range from one to three bedrooms and have custom Italian cabinetry by Snaidero.

The Plaza Coral Gables, a 16-story project that is under construction. The 7-acre project will have 150 rental apartments, a 220-room hotel, 161,000 square feet of retail space and restaurants, and 465,000 square feet of office space.

Gables Station, a 499-unit rental apartment project that is under construction. The building, on Federal Highway from Ponce de Leon Boulevard to Le Jeune/Grand Avenue, will rise 14 stories tall and include commercial and office space. It will be 30 feet from a Metrorail station.

Paseo de la Riviera, an 11-story project that is under construction. It will feature a 249-room hotel, 211 apartments, retail space, and a large public open space in the form of a classically designed "paseo" (which is the Spanish word both for a leisurely walk and a walkway).

Merrick Manor, a 10-story building at 301 Altara Ave. that is expected to be completed by year's end. The project, by the Astor Cos., will have 227 condominiums, ranging from one- to four-bedroom units. Prices will range from \$374,900 to \$2.5 million. The project will also include 19,000 square feet of ground-floor retail and restaurants.

It is next to Merrick Park, which is an upscale shopping mall. "This area needs good condominium housing," said developer Henry Torres, of the Astor Cos. Among the perks: emergency generators for the amenities floor, which includes the fitness center area.

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Ramon Trias**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Stuart News, The (FL)  
June 20, 2018

**Mediocre won't do for Fort Pierce's crown jewel - For plant site, patience better than so-so plans**

Author: Anthony Westbury

I don't think it sends the message to the development world, ... that we can't make up our mind. I think it says just the opposite: We have a very special place here and we insist on only the best. Fort Pierce Community Redevelopment Agency board members made the first move Monday evening by giving the go-ahead for a new round of bids to develop the former H.D. King power plant site in downtown.

As I've written before, this is – or should be – the city's crown jewel. It's the last major undeveloped parcel that overlooks the Indian River Lagoon. It could be a visually stunning centerpiece for the city. Unfortunately, two recent proposals for the site were not, as Mayor Linda Hudson noted Monday, very "exciting." "I was struck by the lack of (public) enthusiasm for either proposal," Hudson said. "I'd hoped for a lot of excitement." We all did, but we didn't get it in the plans submitted.

CRA members voted unanimously Monday to re-do the city's request for proposals for the King site in the hope the city will receive better ideas next time. The timeline for a new RFP process is a little daunting. It'll take about 18 months all told, but several community members spoke in favor of getting the process right this time rather than settling for second-best, or worse. "We're not a third-rate community," resident Holly Theuns argued from the podium. "We deserve and can get better as a city. We're obliged to get the best (proposal) we can. Let's have community forums and make the third time the charm."

A former city commissioner, Eddie Becht, agreed. "We can do better," he said during public comment. "This is a unique centerpiece for Fort Pierce: It's on the water, it's right next door to the city marina where you've just invested \$20 million. "Why the rush (to approve inferior plans)? Three years ago we couldn't get a hotel; I believe if you put out another RFQ you'll get better proposals." Becht, a lawyer who specializes in real estate, said the market for commercial real estate in Fort Pierce is "hot" right now, and that we should take advantage of that trend.

City Manager Nick Mimms outlined an 18-month timeline for a fresh RFP process. One of the first tangible steps, Mimms said, will be a community planning forum slated for July or August. That is the community's chance to be heard (again), to tell city staff and prospective developers what we want to see on the King site.

As Commissioner Tom Perona noted, "we need a clearer message. We should have three or four absolutes we have to have in place." I'd go one step further. We need more than a list of major components for the site; we need a vision, a picture of how it all could look. I recall then-



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Commissioner Becht speaking from the dais in 2005 about shortcomings in the city planning department.

While then-Planning Director **Ramon Trias** had transformed downtown with some truly imaginative architecture and streetscape additions, other "nuts and bolts" planning regulations and an update to the city's comprehensive plan had gone neglected. "I need a planner," Becht said. "I've got a world-class urban designer, but I need a planner."

It wasn't long before **Trias** left the city. He's now planning director for the city of Coral Gables. We have a planner now, the competent Rebecca Grohall, and no disrespect to her abilities, but Fort Piece needs an urban designer again, even temporarily. We need someone who can articulate the community's vision for the King site, put it on paper to inspire developers who want to buy the land and fulfill the city's dreams.

The visionary could be a consultant, it could be a team. In the past, designers from the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council re-imagined Harbortown Marina as a Mediterranean fishing village. They illustrated ideas for the wastewater treatment site on South Beach. Maybe we should ask them back?

Having a do-over on the King site can be a very good thing for Fort Pierce. I don't think it sends the message to the development world, as a couple of commissioners feared, that we can't make up our mind. I think it says just the opposite: We have a very special place here and we insist on only the best. We've been given another chance to get the King site right. Let's utilize all the talent we can muster to make it a crown jewel that truly dazzles.

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**Ramon Trias**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Miami Herald, The (FL)  
January 27, 2017

**What sort of college dorm can \$155 million buy? UM students will find out.**

Author: Andres Viglucci and Lance Dixon

The University of Miami plans to spend around \$155 million on a major new dormitory complex on Lake Osceola, further cementing the institution's transition from a college with a majority of commuting students to a school increasingly centered around a traditional on-campus undergraduate experience. Construction of the elaborate 1,100-bed dorm would also carry side benefits for residents of surrounding Coral Gables by markedly easing auto traffic into and out of campus, long a sore point in the City Beautiful, UM and city officials say.

The dorm plan, which is now under review by the city but is expected to be greenlighted, is also designed to reduce automobile use on campus. It would convert a nearly nine-acre expanse at the center of the UM campus that's now occupied mostly by parking lots, a roadway and lawns into an activity-filled, pedestrian-friendly hub for student life, planners say. At ground and mezzanine level, the plan, which encompasses 23 interconnected buildings, includes retail space, a "launch pad" for student businesses, a 200-seat auditorium and a flexible "curated warehouse" that could accommodate special programs such as exhibits or dramatic productions.

The plan, designed by Miami-based architectural giant Arquitectonica, would in addition advance the greening of the UM campus by creating an expansive lawn and a tropical garden on the lakefront. The dorms, raised on thin columns and arranged in the shape of a lasso, would be set amid green-bedecked courtyards, plazas and outdoor spaces. Green roofs — that is, roofs literally covered by cooling green grass — would top the dorms. "As the institution continues to attract brighter and more talented students, the living space in this new facility is being designed to meet the needs and expectations of the next generation of University of Miami students," said Jim Smart, director of UM housing, in a statement. "By adding programming space to the lower levels, the village will serve as a gathering space for the greater UM community."

After a meeting at the city's Development Review Committee on Friday, UM representatives and Gables officials said they were happy with progress on the dorm blueprint, first envisioned under a campus master plan approved by the city in 2010. That broad plan gave UM significant flexibility in building inside the campus in exchange for strict controls by the city along the campus borders. The dorm complex would be approved by the Gables' planning director and does not require a city commission vote. "I think the University of Miami is doing an outstanding job with the functional aspects of the project and the design aspects of the project," said Gables planning director **Ramon Trias**. "It's going to completely transform the area around Lake Osceola, and the buildings will contribute to the overall aesthetic of the campus."

The dorm complex, which also requires approval by UM trustees, would open in fall 2019, the university said. It's only the latest in an ambitious series of expansion and improvement projects launched under now-retired UM President Donna Shalala, who raised more than \$3 billion in

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donations during her 14-year tenure at the university. The unveiling of the dorm plan comes just as UM completed the new Lennar Foundation Medical Center to provide consumer health services by its doctors on the campus edge on Ponce de Leon Boulevard. The medical center will hold its grand opening on Sunday.

The dorm project better positions UM, which has a reputation for older, cramped dorms that lack the snazzy amenities today's undergraduates expect, to compete for students who rate schools in part on dorm quality. The last big new dorm project built on campus was the University Village apartments on Red Road in 2006. Since then, developers have built apartment complexes near UM in part to lure students. UM also plans to soon begin renovating its older housing facilities. "As the University of Miami continues to rise as a top-tier research institution, so too do students' expectations for a comfortable, secure and supportive living and learning environment," said Patricia Whitely, UM's vice president for student affairs, in a statement released by the university.

The new complex would substantially boost the campus residential capacity. Only 4,000 of its 10,500 undergraduates now live on campus, UM says. Freshmen, with the exception of those whose parents live nearby, must live on campus and are not allowed to have cars on campus. But UM said it wants more of its undergraduates sleeping on campus, in part "to foster a stronger sense of on-campus community," according to an explanatory letter in its permit application.

The new dorms would have scads of amenities, from the auditorium and innovation spaces to study lounges, a bike room and outdoor recreation decks, as well as a distinctive look. In keeping with UM's design ethos — the main campus, developed mostly after World War II, was the first U.S. college built entirely with Modern architecture — the dorm complex is contemporary in style, updating the climate-friendly Miami Modern aesthetic.

The dorms would have slanted roofs, ranging in height from 50 to 70 feet, and three different facade designs — one in wood, another in metal, and a third in concrete and stucco. Planning documents promise lots of natural light and interconnecting, shady breezeways and airy colonnades at ground level. The project would entail the loss of parking, some of which would be replaced with the addition of parking lifts at UM's Pavia Parking Garage, as well as the closure of a roadway, eliminating some vehicular traffic in favor of a pedestrianized "car-free zone" connected with the surrounding campus by a network of new walkways, the application says.

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**Ramon Trias**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Miami Herald, The (FL)  
May 16, 2016

**New plans proposed for Coral Gables' North Ponce area at community meeting**

Author: Lance Dixon

As more change, modernization and development come to Coral Gables, city staff is working to find a balance between the old and new in the North Ponce neighborhood. The city is considering the creation of two zoning overlay areas that would both encourage commercial development on Ponce de Leon Boulevard and preserve the residential character of the neighborhoods around the road. Gables staff welcomed about 25 residents to the St. James Evangelical Lutheran Church for a community planning meeting May 5 to present them with the proposed zoning changes and receive their feedback. Similar meetings held last summer partly shaped the latest plans for the area. The North Ponce neighborhood is bounded by Alhambra Circle, Southwest Eighth Street, Douglas and LeJeune roads. "We would really like to see this remain a residential community of a scale that is very livable and walkable," Commissioner Patricia Keon said.

Staff's proposal is for a conservation district in the two neighborhoods off of Ponce, on the east and west sides. The city would then create a North Ponce mixed-use overlay for the land along Ponce and in the city's business district. The conservation district would encourage the development of small businesses like bed and breakfasts and home offices. Buildings in the area would be capped at 20,000 square feet and three stories high. The district also includes proposals like matching every car parking space with a bicycle parking space and providing a bicycle rack for each new building.

Meanwhile the mixed-use district along Ponce would encourage larger buildings with a minimum of 20,000 square feet and mandatory step-backs from both the main street and the residential district. In addition to the potential zoning changes, the city hopes to do additional studies and create pedestrian and bicycle mobility plans for the area while also exploring the creation of residential permit parking. Staff is also considering the addition of new park spaces in the area and the use of vacant lots to develop community civic spaces or build larger apartments along Ponce.

Residents at the meeting seemed encouraged by the idea of protecting the residential areas, but some expressed concern about large development on Ponce. "Once you have everything going up you can't tell one developer no if you did it for the other one," Mayra Diaz said.

Staff said that the plan is a work in progress and finding a balance between new commercial growth and conserving the residential feel of North Ponce will be their challenge. "I do think when we get done, this area is going to be very similar to what it is now," planning director **Ramon Trias** said. Staff will take the residents' feedback and present an updated plan to the City Commission at a future meeting.

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**Ramon Trias**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Miami Hurricane  
April 13, 2016

**City Commission of Coral Gables hosts public hearing for Gifford Arboretum**

By David Ufberg

After nearly two hours of discussion Tuesday morning, the City Commission of Coral Gables approved the University of Miami's request to alter the plans of the internal road to be built through the northern part of campus so that it does not run through the Gifford Arboretum. The City Hall hosted a public hearing on Tuesday regarding the construction of the road through the arboretum areas. The decision is not yet finalized and is subject to change before final approval. In the current plan, the proposed road would connect the two parking lots adjacent to the arboretum, connecting the northeast side of campus to the northwest by road. UM's request for the road, however, entails the pavement being laid around the arboretum as opposed to through it, preserving it in its entirety. The proposal for the road first arose in 2007 due to a large amount of complaints from nearby residents about traffic and was subsequently postponed.

City of Coral Gables Planning Director **Ramon Trias** spoke to the commission about UM's proposed redesign of the construction project, which would include not building through the arboretum. "The [primary] condition is the improvements around Campo Sano ... The ones that enhance the aesthetics around the campus," **Trias** said. "The University has committed to fund \$1 million in public projects for the neighborhood [should its request for the internal road be fulfilled]."

One of the potential resolutions includes UM's funding of \$1 million worth of public works projects to benefit the neighborhood. Another would see an expansion of the arboretum.

Maria Cruz, a representative of the residents around UM who are concerned about student traffic in their neighborhood, questioned why it took so long for "the neighbors" to get what they want and deserve. "[In 2007], we felt that we needed the internal road to alleviate the traffic in our area. We fought it and fought; we finally got the city to give us an agreement that it would be built," Cruz said. "Somehow, the university found ways to postpone, extend ... to not have to complete it. And this is where we are today. It should have been completed years ago ... It's very hard to walk on San Amaro and look at cars parked there, where you felt that the area should be open."

Stephen Pearson, the director of the arboretum, explained how crucial the area is to the community. "We have programs throughout the school year; every single one of these programs are free and open to the public," he said. "We fought very hard to reciprocate to the community and to educate the community."

Commissioner Vince Lago agreed with Pearson that the garden is a mainstay of the community; he lives on San Amaro Drive and sees the arboretum every day. On Wednesday night, Pearson and approximately 50 people gathered in the arboretum to observe Arbor Day as part of Earth

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**Ramon Trias**

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Week and to celebrate the Coral Gables campus's designation as a Tree Campus USA by the Arbor Day Foundation. The designation honors universities that effectively manage trees and engage students in doing so. The jazz ensemble from the Frost School of Music, the Zack Zebley Trio, performed at the event. At the event, Pearson, who has been director for four years, said he knows many residents who are in favor of expanding the arboretum rather than constricting it.

The video of the public hearing at the commission meeting will be available on the City of Coral Gables website on Thursday or Friday.

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**Ramon Trias**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Miami Herald, The (FL)  
July 5, 2015

**Redevelopment wave to hit Coral Gables**

Author: Andres Viglucci

Until now, Coral Gables - unflashy, uncool, a Mediterranean-themed bastion of affluent suburban stolidity - seemed a bulwark against the wave of redevelopment that's swept through neighboring Miami and Miami Beach, turning derelict areas from South Beach to Brickell and Midtown into dense urban enclaves a-glimmer with the young and hip.

Not that anyone in the City Beautiful was complaining. And not that there wasn't the occasional big new residential and commercial project downtown, or some hot restaurants opening amid the bridal shops, to enliven the worn sidewalks of Miracle Mile, its once-sleepy main street. But wander a couple of blocks off the Mile, especially after office hours, and the Gables still seems more City Quiescent than City Beautiful. That may be about to change.

An avalanche of high-density projects, some with towers pushing up against the limits of the city's famously stringent zoning rules, could reshape the landscape of central Coral Gables, filling in its downtown and surrounding neighborhoods with new hotels, hundreds of condo and apartment units, and an array of office, restaurant and retail space that measures out in the hundreds of thousands of square feet.

The roster of projects, many approved and some already under construction, has stirred impassioned debate among Gables residents and elected officials. Some fear the surge imperils the city's proud tradition of meticulous planning and tightly controlled development - a regime well known for regulating construction down to the color you may paint your house. Others say it will bring welcome growth and rejuvenation while hewing to city father George Merrick's picturesque vision of a subtropical Mediterranean Eden, thanks to those strict rules and a series of planning and quality-of-life initiatives by the city that include a total makeover of Miracle Mile. One thing's for sure: This is not your grandfather's Coral Gables.

Earlier this month, after three years of intensive review and revision, Gables commissioners approved the biggest single development in the city's 90-year history - the Mediterranean Village at Ponce Circle, comprising more than one million square feet of hotel, condos and shopping layered into 6.7 acres of long-vacant land three blocks south of the Mile on Ponce de Leon Boulevard.

In embracing the project blueprint, which contains nearly as much retail space as exists along the entire Mile, commissioners broke with longstanding Coral Gables practice: They allowed a significant markup in density even after trimming the project's size. And, by a narrow 3-2 vote, they approved a controversial restaurant above the hotel tower's 19th floor, up to now the strict cap for habitable space in the city. Only the cupola above the city's fabled Biltmore Hotel will top the tip of the Mediterranean Village's 297-foot-high spire, and just by a couple of feet.

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That's hardly the end of it. Some 16 projects of substantial size are in the city development pipeline. They range from an outpost of the budget-friendly, youth-oriented Aloft Hotel chain now under construction on busy Le Jeune Road to a proposed 16-story residential tower, 33 Alhambra, that would occupy most of a city block behind Coral Gables Elementary School, which is on the National Register of Historic Places.

Gables Mayor Jim Cason acknowledges that's quite a bit for a city of 50,000 that he says had seen just 13 major new developments since 1999. But he's not sure all the contemplated projects will actually get built or go as big as proposed. Speculators and inexperienced developers often give up when they run into the first critical design review from the city, he said. "There's lots of people who say they want to build in Coral Gables," Cason said. "People say the tall buildings are coming. Well, maybe, maybe not."

It's not just tall buildings, though. Developers have filed applications for more than half a dozen infill residential projects, mostly rowhouses and small apartment buildings, that would replace modest and sometimes rundown duplexes and apartments dotting neighborhoods west of downtown. The wave extends to the old industrial section surrounding the upscale, 13-year-old Village of Merrick Park shopping mall, an area south of downtown that's being gradually transformed into a high-density mixed-use district. Ugo Colombo, owner of The Collection auto dealership on Bird Road, purchased the adjoining block and, with developer Shoma, recently won approval for the Collection Residences, a 10-story building with 270 luxury condos and 40,000 square feet of ground-floor retail. That's just one of six large projects approved or proposed for the district.

Developers are even looking to build tall on South Dixie Highway, the strip-mall-dominated corridor that bisects Coral Gables. A contentious proposal to replace the old Holiday Inn across from the University of Miami with two towers, a 15-story residential building and a 13-story hotel, has divided residents of the single-family neighborhood behind it. The project would feature shops and restaurants on the ground floor and a pedestrian passage connecting to the adjoining neighborhood. City officials insist they're equal to the challenge.

They've put the brakes to the Holiday Inn project while they study its impact and develop a broader vision for the Dixie corridor - one of two such planning efforts now underway. "We're not going to allow anything to get out of hand," Cason said. "We want to preserve Merrick's vision. There's always people who want to build more than we want. But we're never going to be Brickell. We don't allow buildings that tall." But the stream of plans has strained the resources of the city's small planning department and raised concern among some residents over the ability and willingness of administrators and elected officials to protect Coral Gables' historic scale, look and feel. Many also worry about the impact on traffic, which already becomes congested at peak times.

Downtown Coral Gables, a regional corporate and employment center that attracts tens of thousands of commuters, is certainly no stranger to height or density. Most developers working there today already take advantage of zoning bonuses that allow them to build bigger if they



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*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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adopt the city's trademark Mediterranean look. But, like the approved Mediterranean Village, many of the proposed new developments result from big lot assemblages and may require rezonings, variances or special large-area plans that strike some as more go-go Miami than conservative Coral Gables. Critics say it would be unwise for the city to stray from the plan Merrick developed in the 1920s. The city founder adopted the tenets of the late-19th Century City Beautiful movement, which sought to bring elegance to gritty American cities by erecting grand civic buildings in a garden-like setting of squares, fountains, boulevards and plazas - a template Gables leaders have mostly preserved and enhanced in the decades since. "The people who want to come in and get exemptions ought to be building according to our code," resident Jim Hartnett told city commissioners as they debated the Mediterranean Village plan. "Sooner or later, it will not be Coral Gables, the City Beautiful, but Coral Gables, the city of concrete."

Recently installed Gables commissioner Jeanett Slesnick, who ran on a slow-growth platform, contends the city had become too lenient in granting what she called "spot zoning" to developers seeking to supersize projects. "It's why I ran for office," said Slesnick, whose husband, Don Slesnick, preceded Cason as mayor. "I got angry that this was happening in my town. I want people to take a second look at what they're doing. You have to have some change. But you need quality change, change that reflects the community."

The development pressure on the Gables, developers and city officials say, results from spillover from Miami's real-estate boom and a pent-up appetite among Millennials and empty-nesters for urban-style living in the suburbs. The central Gables, with its urban grid layout, a burgeoning dining and cultural scene, stable governance and a well-to-do population, but also antiquated, non-historic commercial buildings on small lots, is a natural draw for redevelopment, they say.

To be sure, nothing in the Gables development pipeline approaches the scale of the newest megablock skyscrapers in Miami. But dense Miami-style development has been creeping up to the Gables border at both Bird Road and Coral Way, where the municipal dividing line runs along or close to Douglas Road. "The whole market is hyperactive," said veteran developer Armando Codina, who has built several mixed-use buildings in the Gables in past years and has started construction on his newest, a 16-story residential building with a companion four-story office building, on an acre and a half at 2020 Salzedo Street. "What's happening inside the Gables is simply that the market is overheated."

Codina, who stressed that he has never asked for a variance from the Gables' height cap, said he believes the city's code for downtown has it about right, encouraging an urbane and consistent scale of development. "I think we have the right scale," he said of his new buildings, which will be separated by a broad, public interior courtyard for dining and lingering. "It's a very human scale. It's a Coral Gables scale. I like their code. I like their controls. I know someone's not going to come and build something crappy next to me."

City commissioners and planners have been at pains to stress that the Mediterranean Village, which supplants a never-completed Spanish Village development, presented unique circumstances because of its size, and set no legal precedents for other developers. They note the

### Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

#### Ramon Trias

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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city stood its ground when the Mediterranean Village developer, Agave Ponce, an offshoot of the Mexican family that controls the Cuervo brand of tequila, initially filed plans that many thought too big and mall-like. Planners and elected officials got Agave to scrub more than 100,000 square feet from the project, including an entire residential tower, a gym and a cinema, which the city said would have cast a shadow over a single-family neighborhood to the east and overwhelmed an important historic building that's to be incorporated into the village. Agave also reshaped the village to put pedestrian-friendly street-level retail and a pedestrian-only "paseo" entrance on Ponce de Leon Boulevard.

The result, the city says, is an urbanistically cohesive, well-designed set of buildings and public plazas and streets that will bring fresh commercial and pedestrian life to what's been a dead zone for too long. "That took three years and the developer was not happy, but that's what it takes," said **Ramon Trias**, the city planning director. "Every step of the way, it got better."

City planners have also scrambled to get ahead of the development wave, embarking on rapid studies of two broad areas of the city where development pressure is building - the South Dixie corridor and North Ponce, the mostly low-scale residential neighborhood that extends north from Alhambra Circle downtown to Southwest Eighth Street along Ponce de Leon Boulevard.

In North Ponce - a hodge-podge of historic apartment houses and nondescript buildings edging up to more-recently built residential towers on Ponce - the goal is to develop rules for congenial new development that preserves and enhances its urban-village texture and economic diversity, city planners and consultants say. No fewer than nine projects have been proposed for the North Ponce area, one of the few relatively affordable neighborhoods in the Gables. "We will set the parameters as to what we accept and what we want up there," Cason said. "We don't want spot zoning."

On South Dixie, where Merrick's zoning was changed in the 1940s to accommodate auto-oriented strip development, the idea is to set the table for a gradual transformation of what's now a funnel for cars into a more walkable, Gables-like boulevard - perhaps by returning to Merrick's original conception, which Gables planning director **Trias** says called for tall buildings. On the west side, the city is actively supporting plans for the Underline, a contemplated bikeway and linear park that would replace the bare-bones path beneath the elevated Metrorail line.

At the same time, the city will soon break ground on a long-contemplated, \$20 million streetscape makeover of Miracle Mile and neighboring Giralda Avenue, the popular but faded block-long restaurant row, that's designed to beautify and make both much more welcoming for pedestrians. Now in the last stages of planning and design, the project will expand the width of sidewalks along the Mile to 23 feet, from the current 15 1/2 feet, to accommodate pedestrians, outdoor cafes and a dense thicket of shade trees, all by slightly narrowing auto travel lanes and supplanting angled street parking with parallel parking, a controversial idea that will eliminate numerous spots. The restaurant row, meanwhile, would be rebuilt in a curbless European design so it can better accommodate events like the popular Giralda Under the Stars, a seasonal monthly event in which restaurants set up tables in the street. Retractable bollards would make it easy to

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****Ramon Trias**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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close the street for such special events. The draft plans for both streets, by noted New York firm Cooper, Robertson & Partners, feature artsy design elements - pavers tinted to resemble clouds and blue sky on the Mile and, on Giralda, a street design consisting of concentric circles that resemble ripples in a puddle, and above it, suspended LED lights shaped like raindrops. Thick copses of trees at either end of Giralda will create romantic, formal entranceways. A related city project would replace the two big obsolete parking garages on Valencia Avenue, just behind Miracle Mile, that create a dead zone for pedestrians. The city is looking for developers to build a total of about 500 parking spaces within architecturally fitting, sidewalk-friendly building envelopes, and with some mix of uses, possibly including condos or apartments. Merchants and property owners on the Mile say the streetscape improvements are long overdue, pointing to its stained, uneven sidewalks, cracked paving tiles, patches of bare dirt in open tree pits and the non-functional historic fountains at either end of the street.

They say the Mile needs to regain its luster if downtown Coral Gables is to hold its place in the increasingly competitive urban ecology of Miami-Dade, where new and resurgent neighborhoods like Midtown Miami, Wynwood, the Design District and even adjacent South Miami's downtown are drawing away well-to-do shoppers, diners and residents by amping up the pedestrian, dining and shopping ambience. "Miracle Mile is the absolute face of the city," said Stephen Bittell, chairman of Terranova Corp., a real estate firm heavily involved in the revitalization of Lincoln Road Mall in Miami Beach that now owns multiple buildings on the Mile. "It just needs to reclaim its glory and kind of go back to the future. To do that you gotta bring people to the street. That turns on everything else there."

Bringing people to the street, in fact, aptly sums up the city's development strategy and its response to the traffic issue. Mixing condos and apartments with offices, shopping and dining, attracts young professionals to boost commerce and helps keep a lid on auto traffic, officials say. "They can live near where they work and walk and bike," Cason said. The city is also installing new bike lanes routes and expanding its popular trolley-bus system. Under the Mediterranean Village approval, Agave will put up \$37 million towards neighborhood and street improvements and for expansion of trolley service. The developer will spend \$1.3 million to buy four new trolleys and \$626,000 annually for 25 years towards operations. The city also required Agave to incorporate significant bike-parking facilities and showers for bike commuters.

Such meticulously planned projects, supporters say, distinguish development in the Gables. The Mediterranean Village faced little resistance in the end because neighbors and Miracle Mile merchants and property owners, initially wary of its impact on homes and businesses, were won over by its benefits, noted Agave's land-use lawyer, Marcio Garcia-Serra. "At one point people were very resistant to change, but that's changed. They see that development done the right way can lead to benefits for their daily lives, such as a more walkable city," he said.

Cason said he intends to ensure that review of forthcoming projects will be exacting. "We want to preserve the great things in Coral Gables, and that means controlling what goes on downtown and in the residential neighborhoods," he said, before adding with a laugh: "No purple houses."

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**Ramon Trias**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Indian River Press Journal/Sebastian Sun/50 Plus Lifestyles/Florida Fairways (FL)  
February 2, 2006

**Vero panel to interview firms for zoning codes**

Author: KEONA GARDNER

VERO BEACH -- Almost a year after the City Council approved a plan to help manage the future growth, city officials will interview firms to help direct the process. Starting on Friday and continuing on Wednesday, four firms from as close as Fort Pierce to as far as Jacksonville will vie for a chance to help write the city's future zoning codes.

The selection committee's suggestion will be given to the City Council for approval. The committee is composed of Deborah Daige and Keith Pelan, members of the Vision Implementation Team; Planning Manager Nancy Carter; Finance Director Stephen Maillet and Monte Falls, Public Works and Engineering director. The winning firm would be charged with rewriting the city's zoning code to mirror the Vision Plan and creating master plans for several of the city's commercial districts.

Pelan said Tuesday consultants are needed because the implementation process is a time-consuming task for city staff and the 21-member implementation team to undertake. "I don't have the expertise and the time and neither do they (the team) have the time," Pelan said.

The Fort Pierce-based **Trias** and Associates will be the first firm to interview. The firm's principal is former Fort Pierce Planning Director **Ramon Trias**, who facilitated September's community forum on design changes to the Twin Pairs. So far, the city has paid **Trias** \$15,000 for the forum.

If selected, **Trias** will work with local architect Michael Wangen, who is a city Planning and Zoning Board member, to rewrite city code. By working with **Trias**, Wangen -- who could not be reached for comment -- may create a conflict of interest because board members are prohibited from having any contact with any party that may go before the board on an issue.

Assistant City Attorney Wayne Coment said Tuesday he hasn't researched the issue fully, but the conflict could be avoided if Wangen recuses himself from voting on the zoning changes proposed by **Trias's** firm. What: Interviewing firms to help implement the Vision Plan.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**Ramon Trias**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Sun Sentinel  
January 16, 2005

**DOWNTOWN FORT PIERCE SET FOR BUILDING BOOM**

Author: Brandy Swartz

Recent building plan approvals might signify the beginning of a boom for downtown Fort Pierce. Cheryl Asklof's eyes light up when she talks about the condominiums that will be built behind her shop, Bangz, a hair salon in the historic P.P. Cobb building. "I cannot wait to see condos right there and over there," Asklof said as she pointed toward lots where future projects are in various site plan stages. She has owned the business for six years and said she chose the location because she believed in the downtown area. Four downtown projects are in different stages of development, including Marina Square, the city's JC Penney parking garage, the Renaissance and now One Marina Place -- the most recent to have its preliminary site plan approved -- and will allow people to live downtown. One Marina Place is a five-story project featuring 41 condominiums and retail space on a 1.2-acre lot. The lot is located in an area that allows the city to control development.

City commissioners approved plans on Jan. 3 for more units per acre and a taller building than other downtown structures, although they asked that the height be brought down from 84 feet to 75. The building is being developed by Location Development of Boynton Beach. "It's a long time coming," Commissioner Christine Coke said, adding the city's enthusiasm needs to be peppered with caution. Coke criticized the city at a commission meeting Monday night, saying its plans to have shops at the street level of the JC Penney parking garage would put private retailers at a disadvantage. "A lot of people have said that the retail will be competing with downtown shops," Coke said. "I don't think it's fair of the city to compete with local citizens" who own businesses downtown or are trying to rent out retail space.

The garage would be southwest of Marina Square on Indian River Drive and add about 300 public parking spaces downtown. There would be three stories of office space and one story of retail business use, according to **Ramon Trias**, city director of development. **Trias** said he hopes to begin building the parking garage at the same time as Marina Square.

Marina Square is a 2.5-acre site across from the city marina that would house a five-story building featuring hotel rooms and condominiums, office space, retail space, a 3,600-square-foot conference center and public and private parking. The cost is an estimated \$50 million and the project might take more than a year to complete, according to the developer, Catalfumo Construction of Palm Beach County.

The Renaissance is still in the early planning stages but architect Philip Steele of Steele Design Associates, Inc. said he has a finished schematic for the lot, just over one acre. His plans are for 56 condominium units, four stories of offices on the Indian River Drive side and commercial space on the Melody Lane side, "on top of and around" a two-story parking garage. The developer is Boca Ven Land of Vero Beach.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Ramon Trias**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Stuart News, The (FL)  
November 6, 2000

**Piecing together the future, students design hypothetical**

Author: Carla Roccapriore

FORT PIERCE -- High wind, strong rain and safety alerts don't accompany all Hurricanes paying visits to Fort Pierce. Fifty-four Hurricanes swarmed the area this year, arriving from Coral Gables with a professor and guided by a local alumnus.

University of Miami students toured Fort Pierce in September, learning about its architecture and revitalization efforts from **Ramon Trias**, the city's director of development, who also traveled to the campus to speak to Dr. Joanna Lombard's students. As a result, future buildings in northwest Fort Pierce may someday be built thanks to the two-month-long efforts and creativity of several second-year UM architecture students. They built models from balsa wood and designed drawings of proposed structures for sites within three blocks of the Sgt. Willie B. Ellis Police Substation on Avenue D, **Trias** said.

An array of their work was put on display at the substation this weekend -- outlining imminent possibilities for northwest Fort Pierce. "The university has ways to test things better than the commercial market," Lombard said. "Students try to do research, legwork and test ideas. Then the professionals take over." Such concepts are common in many industries, she said.

**Trias**, who earned his undergraduate and graduate degrees in architecture at UM, led students through the city, taking them to older, historic buildings, such as the Seven Gables House and St. Anastasia School. He also took them down Avenue D, discussing possible plans -- the root of their recently completed class projects. "This is real exceptional work -- the question is whether we can learn from it and get the whole area [Avenue D] moving," **Trias** said. "They were being fairly realistic. Fort Pierce was a good laboratory for them."

Design proposals from students included a produce market, community theater, bakery, row house, apartments, music store, homes, bed and breakfast, professional offices, health clinic, community development center and a seamstress shop. The model buildings were all mixed-use - - some commercial, others Florida cracker-style, **Trias** said.

Students were graded on the general appropriateness of their proposals and how closely their plan would fit and work, Lombard said. Students also learned how building structures in urban and suburban areas differ.

Redevelopment in a city such as Fort Pierce is about architecture, mainly public space and public buildings, **Trias** said. Lombard said her students were excited about assisting the city and impressed with the high quality and quantity of urban architecture. She said she'd be interested in returning to Fort Pierce with future students.

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**Ramon Trias**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The work of the UM students opened many eyes. Avenue D was a "nice place" 30 to 40 years ago, **Trias** said. But to regain its once-vibrant spirit, help from the private sector is necessary, he said. "What we're missing are people who actually want to do it," **Trias** said. "Part of what needs to happen are people in this business need to discover Avenue D as a place of quality and opportunity."

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**Ramon Trias**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Stuart News, The (FL)  
September 3, 1999

**PSL'S COOPER BLUNDERED WITH UNGRACIOUS REMARK**

Dear Editor:

As a class member of Leadership XVII, I recently experienced the different municipal governments of St. Lucie County in action. Since this letter is coming from an individual, I cannot unequivocally say that the entire class agrees with me, but I would venture to say that at least 98 percent would concur with the following.

Kudos to Fort Pierce Mayor Eddie Enns, City Manager Dennis Beach and Director of Planning **Ramon Trias** for their professionalism, information and hospitality. They encouraged participation by the class and provided the overall picture of where Fort Pierce has been and is going. What teamwork and what a support system!

Much to my chagrin, I was incredibly taken aback by Port St. Lucie City Manager Don Cooper. I will cite only one of what I considered to be several blunders.

The most blatantly disturbing comment that I must address is when he said "my wife refuses to go to Fort Pierce for fear of being murdered."

During City Manager Cooper's presentation he provided numerous facts. He stated, "what Fort Pierce does affects Port St. Lucie and what Port St. Lucie does affects Fort Pierce." This is clearly evident to me, but I question how evident it is to Mr. Cooper and how it enhances the relationships between Port St. Lucie and Fort Pierce. I see it as a step back, not forward.

Good luck, Port St. Lucie.  
Betsy Haddock  
Fort Pierce



**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches  
Ramon Trias**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Stuart News, The (FL)  
April 23, 1999

**3 LOCAL HISTORICAL PROJECTS RECEIVE \$55,000 IN GRANTS**

Author: Drew Dixon

"They're beginning to discover there's a lot of history in Fort Pierce." **Ramon Trias** Planning Director

City of Fort Pierce

Three historical projects - two sponsored by the city of Fort Pierce and one by St. Lucie County - have received more than \$55,000 in grants from the Florida Department of State Historic Preservation. The city received more than \$35,000 in matching grants; the county received \$20,000. **Ramon Trias**, director of planning for the city, applied for the grants and called the awards a coup for the area. "They're beginning to discover there's a lot of history in Fort Pierce," **Trias** said. "Historical people are starting to pay attention now."

Of the grant money earmarked for Fort Pierce, \$25,000 will go to the Seven Gables House, a cracker-style historic home that last year was moved next to the Manatee Observation and Education Center in downtown Fort Pierce and will serve as a historic museum showcasing local architecture and lifestyle. The restoration and preservation of Seven Gables House cost the city \$230,000, and the grant from the state will offset some of that cost, **Trias** said. The house is set to open to the public later this year. The city also received \$10,927 to be used for the Fort Pierce Architecture Education program, **Trias** said. The city's planning department has developed a coloring book designed for elementary students that features the architectural uniqueness in Fort Pierce.

A test sampling of the book was distributed to fourth-graders at F.K. Sweet Magnet Elementary School earlier this month, and **Trias** said it went over well with the youngsters. "It was way beyond my expectations," **Trias** said. "They were talking about architectural terms. They were ready to conduct a course." But the overall urban renewal of downtown is what is bringing the funding to the city, **Trias** said. A couple of years ago the State Department did help with some funding of Sunrise Theater restoration. "Now they realize there's a lot of historic buildings around it. The whole downtown is what makes Fort Pierce so interesting."

The St. Lucie County Archaeological Survey scored \$20,000 in grants for projects that would make Indiana Jones proud. "It will be (used for) a survey of prehistoric and archeological sites," said David Kelly, planning manager for the county. "We are aware of a number of archeological sites that are certainly pre-written history sites. They're prehistoric Native American sites."

Kelly said a consultant will be hired to survey the sites and search for new sites. And that, he said, could generate ecotourism and heritage tourism. Beside that, Kelly said, the county has a cultural obligation to identify historical Native American sites. "We have citizens of St. Lucie

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Ramon Trias**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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County represented by these groups and I think it is important culturally." The county is kicking in \$32,000 from the general fund for the archeological research. A consultant will also be hired and the county plans to produce a video explaining the archeological significance of the area, Kelly said. The Florida Department of State distributed nearly \$1 million in grants as part of the historic preservation funding this year. In all, 58 historic projects in Florida received money.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Ramon Trias**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Stuart News, The (FL)  
June 5, 1998

**GROUNDBREAKING SIGNALS START OF EFFORT TO REVIVE AVENUE D**

Author: George Andreassi

To go along with the improvements, Fort Pierce officials have asked residents to cooperate with police on crime issues. "Needless to say, we could come in here and pave these streets with gold. That won't do any good if we can't remove the criminal element." Reginald Sessions

FORT PIERCE - Declaring a new beginning for a faded commercial corridor that has become synonymous with drugs and violence, city officials Thursday staged a ceremonial groundbreaking for a \$2 million rebuilding of Avenue D. "We're here today to remove that negative stigma on this particular corridor," said City Commissioner Reginald Sessions. "Needless to say, we could come in here and pave these streets with gold. That won't do any good if we can't remove the criminal element."

Sessions called for neighborhood residents to cooperate with police and refuse to tolerate the drug dealing and violent crime that have made Avenue D the most notorious street in the city. Avenue D has been the scene of many killings in recent years, including a fatal shooting Feb. 23. There also have been dozens of arrests this year on drug-dealing charges, according to police reports.

But city officials and neighborhood merchants hope the reconstruction of the road and the erection of a new fire station and police substation will provide the impetus for an economic revival of the once-thriving commercial strip. "Avenue D is everybody's problem," said Randolph Scott, president of the Lincoln Park Community Businessmen's and Women's Association and owner of Scotty's Deli, 1507 Avenue D. "We need to stop making Avenue D our excuse and start making it a solution."

Plans call for the reconstruction of Avenue D from U.S. 1 west to the city line at 33rd Street, said **Ramon Trias**, the city's director of planning. "It's going to be brand-new, a total reconstruction," he said. "The deferred maintenance of the last couple of decades is going to be completely taken care of."

The planning director said he could not find anyone who remembers the last time Avenue D was repaved. A roundabout is planned for 15th Street, similar to the traffic circle on Indian River Drive at Avenue A in downtown Fort Pierce, **Trias** said. He expressed support for a proposal by Scott to place a statue or monument in the center of the roundabout in honor of the black civic activists who contributed to the progress of the city's black residents.

Sidewalks also will be expanded to 10 feet wide and there will be brick crosswalks, **Trias** said. The street will be lined with cabbage palm trees and most of the overhead utility lines will be moved to other streets, he said. An important aspect of the redevelopment plan for Avenue D is

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Ramon Trias**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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the construction of a \$500,000 police substation at the intersection with Means Court, which is known as "Slay Corner." Construction is scheduled to begin in the fall.

Plans for Avenue D were formulated during a community planning session in May 1996 when city planners and community residents met to discuss their vision for the future of the Lincoln Park neighborhood, **Trias** said. But not everyone on Avenue D is happy about the way the city is handling the reconstruction.

George Porter, the owner of G&T Tires, said he thinks the city's offer of \$1.50 a square foot is too low for the commercial property it wants to acquire along Avenue D to accommodate the widening of the sidewalks. "It's not all roses," he said. "They're low-balling everybody out here. I want fair market value. It's a good location." Porter said he plans to establish a service station and convenience store on his property at Avenue D and 15th Street. He said he is negotiating with two major oil companies.

Sessions said some of the city's older residents told him about a time before desegregation when Avenue D was the heart of the black community in Fort Pierce. But as black and white people began to mix more freely, many merchants moved their businesses to more lucrative sites and Avenue D began to suffer from crime, vice and urban blight, he said.

Scott called upon the former residents and merchants who had made Avenue D a thriving commercial strip to help restore it to its former glory. "I came back to put my roots back where I came from, which was Avenue D and I'm not ashamed of it," he said. "We need the people of the community that have moved away - that grew up here, that went to the juke bars here, that danced on this street ... to come back and help us uplift the community because we need it."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Ramon Trias**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Stuart News, The (FL)  
April 29, 1996

**Top planner remembers charrettes**

Author: James L. Rosica

FORT PIERCE -- The meetings are over, the colored pencils put away, but **Ramon Trias** hasn't forgotten the importance of the city's recent community planning sessions. Residents and local business owners met last month with professional planners and designers for two separate planning series, one devoted to Orange and Delaware avenues, the other to Avenue D. **Trias**, the city's director of planning, pores over a large-scale map of the master plan developed for the Orange Avenue corridor and surrounding neighborhoods. "We want to keep the ideas alive," he said, pointing at the thin line that represents a two-lane Orange Avenue with on-street parking. Other groups, like the nonprofit Neighborhood Housing Services, have been getting residents together in brainstorming meetings.

The group's neighborhood coordinator said residents have formed work groups to check into the feasibility of rehabilitating the old St. Anastasia school or developing a neighborhood business incubator. They also sponsored the first few meetings that developed into the Avenue D Merchants' Association. "It was a wonderful process," said Linda Van Natta, referring to the planning sessions. "But we want to keep people excited" about the area's potential. But keeping up the excitement means seeing the work actually getting done. So **Trias** and other city officials met last week with representatives of the Department of Transportation about getting started on the proposed streetscape changes. The state oversees maintenance and construction on Delaware and Orange.

The DOT agreed to the changes but asked the city and county commissions for resolutions supporting them, according to City Manager Dennis Beach. Delaware Avenue between U.S. 1 and 13th Street should have two opposing lanes of traffic with on-street parking on either side, **Trias** said. Between 13th and 17th Streets, Delaware should have the same configuration with an added grass median.

Because of space limitations, bike lanes won't be built, he said. **Trias** earlier said the city wants to take over from the state the one-way section of Orange Avenue, in between Seventh Street and U.S. 1. It's possible the city could get the road within the year, state officials said. The transfer would need Transportation Secretary Ben Watts' approval. Even County Administrator Tom Kindred's interest has been piqued by last month's sessions, **Trias** said.

Kindred attended part of the meetings for the Avenue D corridor and told the audience about how his father would take him shopping on the strip when he was a young lad. Kindred was out of town and could not be reached for comment. But Philip Freeland, the county's community development administrator, said Kindred asked him to coordinate with the city on some of the road changes. Avenue D is a county road. "We certainly try to accommodate changes when it affects land within the city," he said.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches  
Ramon Trias**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Stuart News, The (FL)  
October 4, 1995

**Racial issues surround city's reorganization plan**

Author: Maryanne Murray

[CB&A Note: Only the information relevant to **Ramon Trias** is listed below.]

In a separate action, commissioners voted 4-1 to confirm **Ramon Trias**, a staff planner for the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council, as the city's new Director of Planning -- a position Drummond said Smith should have been selected for. Smith's new job will pay \$55,000 a year, about \$5,000 more than her current salary.

Under the contract approved Tuesday, **Trias** will be paid \$57,500 a year. He will start work sometime in late November, Beach said. Last January, **Trias** led a community planning session known as a ``charrette" and helped craft a master plan for downtown redevelopment. ``He has spent a lot of time in our community," Commissioner Mary Ann Bryan said. ``He knows our problems -- /and/ our potential."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**Ramon Trias**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Stuart News, The (FL)  
November 27, 1994

**Creating a sense of place, White City historical**

Author: Mark Schlueb

WHITE CITY -- Residents here want to make sure their memories don't become a thing of the past, and regional planners have taken the first steps toward helping them. The Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council this week handed over its preliminary recommendations to the county for turning White City into an historical district.

County and regional planners met with residents in September. During two brain-storming sessions, homeowners told officials they want to preserve and build upon White City's turn-of-the-century ambience. "I've been to other areas of the United States where they've been able to preserve parts of their heritage," resident Patricia Ferrick said. "I think it's possible for White City, too."

Regional Planner **Ramon Trias** said a historical district for the 6 1/2-square-mile unincorporated area is feasible but will take some hard work. "It's a very difficult undertaking. It's much easier when you have a city that's built-out with historic buildings," he said. "White City doesn't have that -- it has a lot of gaps." The recommendations **Trias** made to the county would help fill in those holes.

The most ambitious suggestion in the proposal calls for the county to establish zoning restrictions that would limit new construction in White City to certain architectural styles. Hoping to promote construction of the Florida cracker-style buildings common to White City, the proposal would require new homes to have a porch at least 12 feet long running along the front facade. Driveways would be prohibited in the front yards of new homes; automobiles would gain access through a rear alley.

Commercial buildings lining the town center would have porches that run the length of the front. Billboards would be prohibited, as would many types of businesses, including car dealerships, packing houses, scrap yards and kennels.

Officials say most residents favor turning the area into a historical district, but if architectural standards are established some might complain that the county is trampling their property rights. "I think there may initially be some opposition, but all you have to do is drive down to Stuart to see how well these districts work," Commissioner Cliff Barnes said. Barnes brought the idea for the historical district to his fellow commissioners several months ago after talking with members of the White City Historical Commission.

The draft proposal also urges the county to redesign Midway Road into White City's Main Street. The area between Oleander and Palmetto avenues would be the district's town center, with shops, offices, wide sidewalks, landscaping and on-street parking. Redesigning roads is typically

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*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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expensive, but Midway Road already is scheduled to be widened. "The redesign of Midway isn't as radical as it might seem, it's just a matter of how you build it," Barnes said. Other suggestions in the proposal would be simpler to implement:

\* Planners recommend placing signs, reading "Welcome to the Historic Rural Town of White City," at key intersections.

\* Bike paths should be built to connect residential neighborhoods with White City Elementary School and White City Park, the proposal says.

\* White City Park, which is the site of frequent arrests for solicitation of prostitution, needs additional supervision to make it safer.

**Trias** said the proposal is still in its preliminary stages. He worked on a similar plan for Lake Worth, and it was about 1 1/2 years after the proposal was completed that any historic ordinances were adopted. County commissioners have scheduled a work session to study the historical district on Dec. 12. "Right now it's just a matter of working out the technical details," **Trias** said. "It's a fairly long process, but one day you look around and say, 'We've got a nice place here.' "

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