

# TANYA M. EARLEY

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## PERSONAL

Address: NA

Contact: Phone: (954) 214-0537  
Email: [tanya.earley@yahoo.com](mailto:tanya.earley@yahoo.com)

## EDUCATION

Juris Doctor - 2007  
University of Miami School of Law, Coral Gables, Florida

Bachelor of Arts, English - 2000  
Georgetown University, Washington, DC

## SUMMARY OF RELATED EXPERIENCE

2019 - Present	<u>CITY OF FORT PIERCE, FLORIDA</u> Population 41,600
2021 - Present	Interim City Attorney
2019 - Present	Assistant City Attorney
2014 - 2019	<u>OFFICE OF THE STATE ATTORNEY</u> Kissimmee, Florida
	Assistant State Attorney
2012 - 2014	<u>OFFICE OF THE STATE ATTORNEY</u> Miami, Florida
	Assistant State Attorney
2011 - 2012	<u>DONNA M. BALLMAN, P.A.</u> Davie, Florida
	Associate
2007 - 2011	<u>OFFICE OF THE STATE ATTORNEY</u> Miami, Florida
	Assistant State Attorney
2005	<u>THE HONORABLE ADALBERTO JORDAN,</u> <u>UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE</u> Miami, Florida
	Intern
2000 - 2004	<u>UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE</u> Washington, DC
	Paralegal Specialist, Civil Division, Torts Branch

**TANYA M. EARLEY, ESQ.**

[Tanya.Earley@yahoo.com](mailto:Tanya.Earley@yahoo.com)

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August 12, 2021

Via Electronic Mail

Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Commission  
Care of Mr. Robert E. Slavin  
100 North U.S. Highway 1  
Fort Pierce, FL 34950

Dear Mayor Hudson and Members of the City Commission:

I am honored that you have asked me serve as your Interim City Attorney. Please accept this letter as my formal application for the position of City Attorney.

Since joining the Fort Pierce City Attorney's Office in 2019, I have successfully litigated cases involving labor and employment, code enforcement, animal custody, civil forfeiture, mental health/risk protection, and actions for declaratory relief. In addition to providing legal counsel to staff informally and on an as-needed basis, I have processed hundreds of formal requests for legal services.

Over the past two years, I have practiced before Fort Pierce's boards and committees, cultivated effective professional relationships with staff, and worked daily to ensure that the City's Code of Ordinances is correctly interpreted and applied. Moreover, having served Fort Pierce as the Assistant City Attorney *and* the Interim City Attorney, I have a unique understanding of what is required to promote efficiency, productivity, and stability within the Office— all while providing excellent legal service.

Despite the challenges that world events have wrought, Fort Pierce has been resilient. The City is poised for incredible growth and a brilliant future. There is no other community that I would rather serve.

Sincerely,



Tanya M. Earley

## **TANYA M. EARLEY, ESQ.**

[Tanya.Earley@yahoo.com](mailto:Tanya.Earley@yahoo.com)

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### **EDUCATION**

**University of Miami School of Law**, Coral Gables, FL

Juris Doctor, *cum laude*, May 2007

Honors: Dean's Honor Scholarship; Award of Distinction, Litigation Skills Program

**Georgetown University**, Washington, DC

Bachelor of Arts, English, May 2000

Honors: Dean's List

### **EXPERIENCE**

**CITY OF FORT PIERCE, FL**

Interim City Attorney, July 2021-Present and Assistant City Attorney, May 2019-Present

- Attend all meetings of the City Commission and the Fort Pierce Redevelopment Agency and provide legal counsel as needed
- Render written and verbal legal opinions to City officials, charter officers, department heads, and staff
- Review, approve, negotiate, and/or draft a vast array of documents, including contracts for goods and services, agreements for the lease, sale, and development of City property, union contracts, proposed resolutions, and proposed ordinances
- Advocate for the City in all Code Enforcement and Animal Control hearings
- Advocate for the City in matters before the Civil Service Appeals Board
- Coordinate and assist in the defense of employee grievances from inception to arbitration
- Prepare, file, and prosecute civil forfeiture and risk protection order actions on behalf of the Fort Pierce Police Department
- Represent the City in litigation at the trial and appellate levels, including filing pleadings, motions, briefs, and making court appearances
- Oversee all administrative functions of the City Attorney's Office
- Supervise and train legal support staff

**OFFICE OF THE STATE ATTORNEY, Kissimmee, FL**

Assistant State Attorney, March 2014-May 2019

- Prosecuted crimes for the State of Florida with an emphasis on economic and violent crimes
- Supervised and trained legal interns and attorneys
- Appeared in circuit court daily for motions and calendar calls
- Deposed witnesses, defend depositions, and prepare discovery responses
- Drafted and respond to pretrial motions

**OFFICE OF THE STATE ATTORNEY, Miami, FL**

Assistant State Attorney, August 2007 – October 2011; and September 2012-March 2014

- Prosecuted crimes, including vehicular homicide, armed robbery, and narcotics trafficking
- Served as lead counsel for jury trials, bench trials, and probation violation hearings

**DONNA M. BALLMAN, P.A.**, Davie, FL  
Associate, October 2011 – September 2012

- Litigated employment law claims including labor, discrimination, and non-compete disputes
- Negotiated and drafted settlement agreements
- Drafted legal documents, including pleadings, discovery motions, and summary judgment motions
- Appeared in court for motions, evidentiary hearings, and case management conferences

**THE HONORABLE ADALBERTO JORDAN, UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE**, Miami, FL  
Intern, Summer 2005

- Drafted orders addressing: summary judgment, choice of law, and the pleading requirements of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE**, Washington, DC  
Paralegal Specialist, Civil Division, Torts Branch, July 2000 - July 2004

- Supported attorneys in the defense of claims filed under the National Vaccine Injury Compensation Act
- Compiled data in response to Congressional inquiries

#### **BAR MEMBERSHIP**

Admitted to the Florida Bar, member in good standing since 2007

**CITY OF FORT PIERCE, FLORIDA  
CITY ATTORNEY  
SEMI FINALIST CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE**

Name: Tanya Marie Earley

Home Address: [REDACTED]

Home/Work/Cell phone numbers: 321-914-3376/772-467-3042/954-214-0537

E-mail address: tanya.earley@yahoo.com

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1. Why are you interested in becoming Fort Pierce's next City Attorney and how does this position fit into your overall career plans?

I am proud to say that Fort Pierce is already my client. Although the advertised position would represent a high point in my legal career, it is also a tremendous opportunity to continue my professional growth while bringing much-needed stability to an office that has seen 100% attorney turnover in three years. I am fortunate to have met incredible people and discovered a growing city with a bright future. If I am your next City Attorney, I will dedicate myself to building an office that is competent, reliable, and responsive to the City's needs.

2. What is the largest number of employees that you have managed and where? What is the largest annual operating budget that you have managed?

As Interim City Attorney, I supervise a legal assistant and manage a budget that exceeds \$500,000. As an Assistant State Attorney in Miami, I assisted in the supervision and training of two junior attorneys. In Kissimmee, as the lead attorney in my division, I worked with newly barred attorneys in the office and in the courtroom. They were assigned to me one at a time. However, due to their level of experience, I was involved in nearly every aspect of their hands-on training and constantly evaluated their progress, from bringing them up to speed on office procedures to helping them through their first jury trials.

3. How do you stay professionally current and on top of issues with the potential for significant impact on your jurisdiction? How do ensure that your employees stay current?

I have attended multiple continuing legal education (CLE) seminars in the past two years. This is a great opportunity to learn from colleagues and to strengthen professional contacts. I also participate in online CLEs, webinars, and conference calls with other local government attorneys to discuss changes in the law. I have joined listservs for police legal advisers and municipal law attorneys. These connections have been particularly helpful in navigating the many novel legal issues that sprang from the pandemic. Finally, if there is an issue of import to Fort Pierce, it is likely that other jurisdictions on the Treasure Coast and beyond have wrestled with it also. Therefore, I review the meetings, resolutions, and ordinances of other cities and speak with their legal counsel when appropriate.

4. Describe your leadership and management style with your employees.

An effective manager sees the potential in his or her team and motivates them to perform optimally. The key to this is providing hands-on training, communicating well, and trusting the team enough to assign progressively difficult tasks. When people are treated as professionals and given commensurate responsibility, they almost always rise to meet the challenge. When work product does fall short, it is an opportunity for redirection and education rather than reproach. Disciplinary matters should be addressed swiftly, progressively, and in accordance with the City's Personnel Rules and Regulations.

5. Have you ever worked directly for a policy making body?

Yes, as an attorney for the City of Fort Pierce.

6. Are you a member in good standing of the Florida Bar?

Yes.

7. Describe your workload tolerance.... what type of office hours do you typically keep?

Effective lawyering requires hard work and long hours. As an Assistant State Attorney, I managed heavy caseloads and rarely ended my workdays at five. I have waited until 10pm for a jury verdict, given legal advice to on-scene police officers in the pre-dawn hours, and spent countless Sunday afternoons reviewing files. As legal counsel for Fort Pierce, my job description has changed, but my work ethic is the same. I am committed to working until outstanding tasks are not just completed but completed well. Furthermore, because technology connects us all now more than ever, it is my responsibility to make myself available to City officials and staff beyond traditionally defined work hours and even if I am not physically in the office.

8. What would you hope to accomplish the first 30 days on the job; the first 6 months; and the first year?

**First 30 Days:** Priority one will be to advertise for a new Assistant City Attorney. Next, I would meet with City officials and staff to gather information. From there, I will consider what changes I can make to provide optimal service. Any such changes would be contemplated, not in a vacuum, but in light of the resources that will be available to the office in the upcoming fiscal year.

**First 6 Months:** Six months in, I would like the new Assistant City Attorney to be on board and adequately trained to work efficiently and independently. I would hope to see a measurable increase in the processing time for requests for legal services. Finally, I would plan to meet with the City Manager and Director of Finance to discuss potential adjustments, including cost-saving measures, for the next fiscal year.

**First Year:** One year in, the office should be appropriately staffed, and I would like to work on longer-term goals such as building on institutional knowledge and fostering stability and consistency in terms of leadership and in terms of the quality of services we provide.

9. What experience do you have with organizational and/or performance analysis directed at identifying issues in need of change?

I have the advantage of having worked in this office for two years. That said, performance analysis in this legal setting is more than counting litigation wins and losses. The City Attorney's Office serves every department of the City. Its role as advisor and counselor is difficult to quantify, but it should be evaluated on an ongoing basis by regularly checking in with department heads to ensure that their needs are met.

As applied to evaluating employee performance, I am familiar with the City's performance review forms and will be ready to use them appropriately to memorialize progress over the course of the review period and to set specific, realistic goals for improvement. If I am performing well as a manager, nothing that goes into a performance review should be a surprise. Successes and mistakes should be addressed in real-time; they should not go unmentioned until the next review period. I would likewise welcome frequent feedback from the City Commission on how I can provide better service to them as a charter officer.

10. Please describe your experience in dealing with intergovernmental entities. Specifically, how do you work with the City Manager and other sections/branches of the City government while maintaining your independence?

In Fort Pierce, the City Clerk, the City Manager, and the City Attorney are distinct charter officers with coequal status. The City Manager executes and implements policy. The City Attorney ensures that policy goals are executed in a manner that protects that City from liability. Conceivably, the two offices can share the same goals but disagree on how to achieve them. Establishing mutual respect and a good line of communication can help resolve such disagreements before they reach impasse. Ultimately, my responsibility is to the City and not to any one officer or coworker and I will honor that responsibility.

11. Tell us how you communicate with your governing body and its individual members.

I speak with the City Commissioners individually in scheduled meetings and on an as-needed basis. For more urgent matters, I telephone them. I recognize that their time is precious and strive for efficiency in my communications. If necessary, I will schedule shade meetings to obtain a consensus on how to move forward with ongoing litigation.

12. How would you handle situations where the Commissioners wish to take actions that you do not consider lawful?

During my tenure as Interim City Attorney, this issue has not presented itself. Faced with this scenario, I would offer legally viable alternatives. In the absence of such, I would be direct and advise the Commissioners in an appropriate manner that their desired course of action could expose the City to liability. As an attorney, I have an ethical obligation to steer my client away from legally questionable practices and to refrain from assisting in the commission of same. I will act accordingly.

13. How would you handle questions of law, including issues relating to public safety, that may be viewed differently by an ethnically and economically diverse community and

Commission?

When I was a prosecutor, my ethical obligation was not to zealously represent the state, but to secure justice. If justice demanded that I decline to prosecute a case on constitutional grounds, I did. Likewise, if justice demanded that I recommend a harsh penalty, I did. In providing legal advice to the Fort Pierce Police Department, I have applied the same philosophy. By giving sound legal advice, particularly on constitutional issues, I can contribute to the Police Department's goal of fostering trust between law enforcement and the community while reducing the City's exposure to liability. Looking ahead, I would like to increase the frequency of meetings and training opportunities to optimize the provision of legal services to the Department.

14. Please provide a copy of a legal opinion that you have authored. (You may provide a redacted copy.

15. Have you ever been found to have committed any acts of discrimination, sexual harassment, or creation a hostile work environment? If so, please explain.

No.

16. Do you have any unusual personal consideration(s) that would need to be resolved before you could accept this position? If so, please explain.

No.

17. Should you become a finalist candidate, we will perform education, credit, civil, criminal and motor vehicle court records, internet search and reference checks on you. In doing so, will we find anything that you need to explain in advance?

No.

18. Is the resume you submitted accurate and current? If not, please explain any discrepancies.

Yes.

19. Are you currently employed?

Yes.

20. Have you ever been fired or resigned under pressure from a job? If so, please explain.

No.

21. Have you ever sued an employer or been sued by an employer or employee? If so, please explain.

No.

22. What are your compensation expectations?

I would request to start at \$155,000.



TO: Danny Visconti, Director, Indian Hills Golf Course

FROM: Tanya Earley, Assistant City Attorney

THROUGH: Peter Sweeney, City Attorney

RE: Indian Hills Golf Course

RLS FILE: 19-58

DATE: September 30, 2020

*TUE*  
*PS*

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I have reviewed the attached request for legal services related to the release of potential claims arising from the use of the Indian Hills Golf Course and its equipment, including golf carts.

I have made minor revisions to the existing golf cart rental agreement. The revised document is attached.

In its current form, the golf cart rental agreement provides that renters must defend and indemnify Fort Pierce and the Golf Course in the event of injury to persons or property. Although the indemnity clause provides some potential legal protection, the "blanket" or general release that you suggested would be more comprehensive in that it would apply to all patrons and cover all activities on premises.

If the decision is made to proceed with a general release, the following language could be utilized:

In consideration for the use of the Indian Hills Golf Course ("Golf Course"), I, for myself and on behalf of my heirs, assigns, personal representatives, and next of kin, agree to release and hold harmless the City of Fort Pierce and the Golf Course, their officers, officials, agents and/or employees, other participants, sponsoring agencies, and if applicable, owners and lesser of the premises ("RELEASEES") FROM ANY AND ALL CLAIMS OF INJURY, DISABILITY, DEATH, OR LOSS OR DAMAGE TO PERSON OR PROPERTY OF ANY NATURE, THAT MAY ARISE FROM MY OWN NEGLIGENCE OR FROM THE NEGLIGENCE OF THE RELEASEES, OR OTHERWISE, AS A RESULT OF THE USE OF SAID GOLF COURSE AND/OR ITS GOLF CARTS OR OTHER EQUIPMENT both known and unknown EVEN IF ARISING FROM MY OWN NEGLIGENCE OR FROM THE NEGLIGENCE OF THE RELEASEES or others, and assume full responsibility for my use of the said Golf Course and/or its golf carts or other equipment.

Although any judge reviewing such a general release must do so within the context and unique facts of the given case, it is important to note that Florida's courts generally disfavor and frequently invalidate these types of agreements. To increase the likelihood that a reviewing court will enforce the general release, staff should ask patrons to sign the receipt/paperwork containing the general release, the release itself should be in a font that is easy to see and read, and patrons should be given sufficient time to review it prior to signing.

If you have any questions, please contact the City Attorney's Office via phone or email.

Thank you.

TE/mm

cc: Nicholas C. Mimms, P.E., City Manager  
Linda Cox, City Clerk

***Reference Summary***

IN PROGRESS - AWAITING RETURN REFERENCE CALLS.

**QUALIFICATIONS APPRAISAL GUIDE**

**Tanya M. Earley**

	Very strong evidence that skill is present (5 Points)	Strong evidence that skill is present (4 Points)	Some evidence that skill is present (3 Points)	Strong evidence that skill is not present (1-2 Points)	Very strong evidence that skill is not present (0 Points)	Insufficient evidence for or against skill (0 Points)
<b>GENERAL IMPRESSIONS:</b> Behavior and appearance appropriate to the job; poise, tact, neatness and grooming and professional maturity.						
<b>BACKGROUND:</b> Type of and quality of experience, appropriate education and reasons for job changes.						
<b>PRESENTATION:</b> Communication skills; ability to understand implications of questions and to make clear and direct replies; ability to select, organize and present ideas; clarity of speech and appropriate use of language.						
<b>JOB EFFECTIVENESS:</b> Ability to perform the duties of the job; industrious, dependable and properly assertive; ability to deal effectively with practical problems of the job; interpersonal skills appropriate for the job.						
<b>ADMINISTRATION:</b> Ability to perform in an administrative capacity; understanding of the principles and practices of management and leadership; ability to lead, direct, and coordinate the work of others; understanding of the political process and ability and willingness to work within it.						

Total Points \_\_\_\_\_

**Comments**

Interviewer Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

