

I am a multilingual manager with a diverse blend of successful and innovative leadership work across multiple fields of finance, accounting, and management; economic development and attainable housing; public works and utilities; IT; labor; Public Safety; strategic planning and municipal governance; and K-12 educational entities. I am seeking opportunities to pursue new public service - Capital Improvement Programs Manager or Management Deputy, Assistant, or CEO - positions within municipal or non-profit entities. In addition to accomplishing a unique breadth of professional work, academically I have completed the required coursework for a PhD in an interdisciplinary program at Purdue University focused on the collaboration intersection between management of Government Systems and Education Systems. This study and research is supplemented by the completion of two master's degrees – one in Public Administration and one in Finance (completed simultaneously at a separate university during PhD program).

Just as a brief introduction of myself.... My Father is a retired Army General Officer, and my Mother whose family is from Central America was a PhD and career Special Education Teacher and College Professor – my parents retired in the DC area. I believe my parents' legacy created a natural tendency towards leadership, an inherent depth, and a well-rounded variety in a personal, academic, and professional background that is **now built on the foundation of their commitment to public service**. It is this interpersonal flexibility and resilient resolve that helps make me an ideal candidate to tackle the most complex challenges of public service. Above all, **I hold Honor, Loyalty, Ethics, and Character** in the highest regard. I am someone who is self-motivated and sees and understands the big picture, but also has the ability to analyze and assess the critical pieces necessary to help make the Managers and the Team's vision become reality. I am highly adaptive and flexible with years of cross-disciplinary experience, creating departments, strategic and general planning, developing policy, structuring, and implementing new innovative ERP technology initiatives. I am a "Can-do" out-of-the-box thinker and highly energetic manager who listens intently, rolls up his sleeves, and leads by example. My success often stems from the ability to assess departments, empower staff, and rapidly activate high quality service delivery to our residents.

I have the kind of versatility that has helped me in achieving broad and diverse community engagement, and the right balance of attainable housing, infrastructure improvements, tourism, and business needs in growing diversifying communities to advance the directives of the administration, advocate for inclusive and restorative policies and practices, and further expand service networks to meet the needs of the city's underserved or immigrant populations. My team achieved this through **intentionality in transparency, inclusiveness, and sustainability**. To achieve this required having distinct competence and a passion for people coupled with a willingness towards having difficult conversations and making courageous decisions. I have worked in, and led, infrastructure operations and facility construction in one of the more economically diverse counties in America. In fact, I worked as a police officer to pay for college prior to joining Miami-Dade County (MDC) as a MDC WASD engineer, so I understand the value of safety and security to long-term prosperity. Subsequent to Miami-Dade, I worked as the Deputy Chief of Staff (mentioned above) for the regional water authority (SFWMD) where I gained **County and Regional** collaborative experience, managed Board Operations, Grant Writing, the Clerk's Office, IT, **the District's \$1.07B Budget**, and Public Works. And in addition to my senior **leadership experience with IBM** (in state, local gov. sectors) my teams have always delivered phenomenal service, **never compromising transparency or integrity**.

And... with regard to my academic and professional research (temporarily on hold), I am working to center my analysis on the importance of community engagement using collaboration regime theory (breaking down and bridging silos) – techniques to maximize productivity thru the 3 spaces of... education,

government, and stakeholder engagement to achieve equity, attainable housing, and efficiencies in emerging communities. These areas of exploration that **focus on DEI integrated teamwork and empowering staff in participatory decision making** are designed specifically to enhance **interdepartmental efficiency and interorganizational collaboration**.

As for **my leadership style**, I am a forward-thinking principle-based, team-oriented, hands-on, strong, servant-leader who believes passionately in the value of investing in, and building, **genuine, authentic, non-transactional relationships with staff and stakeholders**. My approach to leading is well noted as being open, engaging, friendly, good humored, and consistently invoking of a sense of calm, yet action-oriented demeanor. Though I hold staff accountable, I don't work from behind a desk and yet I don't micro-manage. I believe my expertise and success in a wide range, allows me to add value in communities seeking assistance from creative, **innovative**, bridge-building, systems and process operations managers. As a skilled generalist, able to rise above criticism yet listen to input, I have a commanding depth in the key areas identified. My **passion for challenges drives my eagerness for rounded continuous personal growth**; it spurs my desire to create a positivity that invests in staff development and mentors growth. As a mantra, I strive for both – to be a *great manager* who must maintain organizational stability, while always raising the bar in customer service, and to be a *great leader* who must embrace the value of change, build on current success, and address acute deficiencies.

But overall, my candidacy is **more than what I have done**, it is also **so much more about who I have grown to be**. Through a career of success *and* limited setbacks, life has taught me how to manage and to lead, but *not to be afraid to seek input or assistance*. I have **experienced and overcome considerable adversity** and many instances of discrimination where I had to face down gross untruths with grace and fortitude while maintaining a commitment to the Code of Conduct. In this process, I learned to garner resourcefulness and exhibit the resilience needed to get up, dust myself off, only to grow stronger *because* of the learning experience. **This is the spirit I endeavor to impart to the organization and community I serve; this is the edge that I feel enables me to be a more effective manager than most other candidates**. Because of this spirit to succeed, I have worked to become a skilled communicator, effective at collaboration, and successful at developing strong inclusive partnerships with staff and colleagues. Thus, throughout my career I have been extremely effective in fluid, fast changing, and high-pressure environments. Whether managing hierarchical or matrix-styled organizations, I lead my employees with integrity and “all-ways” value internal/external stakeholders. To this day, the collaborative efforts of staff working with or under my leadership reflect high morale and good customer service.

My goal is always to provide the **highest quality of performance** to support the vision of the organization and the leadership team. It is very important to me to drive exceptional excellence in the organization and the community by doing my part to deliver **extra ordinary professionalism, competence, and top-notch service** to the team, and those I may lead. Thus, with the leadership style and focus on teamwork that I hope to have in this role, my goal is to create the necessary **thought-partnership to be efficient and effective**. I am confident that I have the knowledge, experience, and “what it takes” to academically, professionally, and personally excel at any challenge my team and I may encounter. *Hence, I humbly request the chance to interview for this role, to share more about myself, my family, and my leadership style and to show how I believe I can be a great fit for this position.*

# Darryl LeTroy Bell (aka Troy Bell)

LeTroy.Bell@gmail.com • (317) 410-4500

## Summary

Multilingual manager with a diverse blend of successful and innovative leadership work across multiple fields of finance, accounting, and management; economic development and attainable housing; public works and utilities; IT; labor; Public Safety; strategic planning and municipal governance; and K-12 educational entities. Seeking opportunities to pursue public service Manager or CEO positions – municipal or non-profit entities. In addition to the unique breadth of work, I have completed coursework for a PhD in an interdisciplinary program focused on the collaboration intersection between management of Government Systems and Ed Systems from Purdue University. This is supplemented by the completion of two master's degrees – one in Public Administration and one in Finance (completed simultaneously at a separate university during PhD program). A sample of these areas of expertise and experience include:

- City Management, ICMA Credentialed
- Executive Leadership Training Certificates
- Housing, Community/Economic Development
- Water District Deputy/IBM - IT Professional
- Multiple Executive Leadership Roles for Schools
- Water and Sewer/Infrastructure Management
- Finance and HR Management Professional
- Former Police Officer

## Education

- **Purdue University, West Lafayette IL.** Coursework completed for PhD interdisciplinary program in education and government management, **2017-** (yet to complete prelim exams and dissertation).
- **University of Miami, Coral Gables FL.** Master of Science-Finance (A+), **2019.**
- **City University of New York (CUNY) – Bernard Baruch, New York NY.** Master's degree in Public Administration (MPA), 2012.
- **University of Miami, Coral Gables, FL.** Dual Bachelors - Major: Economics and Sociology (2005) w/eq in Applied Phys, Mechanical Engineering, and Finance. (Student Body President)
- **Miami Dade College, Florida Law Enforcement Academy, Miami FL.** Graduated top of the class. State Certification Exam Completed (Jan 1996)

## Short-Term CM Turnaround Assignments | Sept 2023 – Sept 2024 |

### **City Manager**

City of Palatka, FL | 201 N 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, Palatka FL 32177

Managed a city of 11,000 residents with \$72M budget, 10 direct reports (incl City Attorney, Airport and Golf Course) and 144 city employees. Responsible for Full-service water front city - budget direct management and all services, departments, and city divisions.

### **Interim City Manager**

City of Charlotte, MI | Charlotte, MI 49444

Managed a city of 11,000 residents with \$20M budget, 13 direct reports and 122 city employees. Responsible for direct management of budget and all services, departments, and divisions of city. **Offered permanent CM position.**

## PhD Research Assignment | Sept 2019 – Jan 2023 |

**City Manager** (Completed over 3yr Contract During COVID)

City of Muskegon Heights, MI | 2724 Peck St, Muskegon Heights, MI 49444

**Research:** Underserved Community with School District in receivership.

Managed a city of 11,000 residents with \$15M budget, 7 direct reports and 77 city employees. Responsible for direct management of budget and all services, departments, and divisions of city.

## Education Sabbatical | Jan 2017 – Spring 2022 |

**PhD degree program, Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN Courses | Summer 2018 – Spring 2022 |**

**Master's degree program, University of Miami, Coral Gables, FL | Summer 2018 – Summer 2019 |**

**Consulting & Executive Member | January 2017 – Fall 2019 |**

The Diversity Roundtable (Non-Profit) | West Lafayette, IN

**Unpaid Non-profit Leadership and IDEA** (Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access) Consulting

## City Manager Experience | Jul 2016 – Nov 2016 |

### **Deputy City Manager, Treasurer, and Acting City Manager**

City of Walla Walla, WA | 15 N. 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, Walla Walla, WA 99362

Responsible for helping manage a city of 35,000 residents with \$60M budget. I had 5 direct reports and 275 city employees. Managed all departments in Chief of Staff style Deputy City Manager role for 3 weeks. Served as Interim City Manager for 4 months with direct oversight of Latino Outreach, Parks and Recreation, Libraries, Human Resources, Public Works, Planning, and Police and Fire. Served as Deputy City Manager for only 3 weeks before manager went on emergency leave.

Served as Interim City Manager, terminated only when City Manager returned from emergency leave. Received positive support from Mayor and Council member, e.g., “I found him to be knowledgeable and a pleasant fellow to deal with...”

## Senior K-12 Education System Experience | Feb 2012 – Jul 2016 |

### **Chief Academic Officer**

Pathways / Legacy Academies | 302 E Linebaugh Ave., Tampa, FL 33612

Leading a nonprofit organization that manages with over 80 schools across the US with 24,000 predominantly poor and minority students to promote educational success and equity. I served as Superintendent of schools for academies in Michigan, California, and Florida. Responsible for developing and managing K-12 range charter schools. Led strategic and operational activities. Managed Human Resource, Curriculum and Instruction, Information Technology, Fleet, Facilities, Public Safety, Capital Improvement Growth/Development Plans, Libraries, and Recreation Programming.

Departed to accept another position.

### **Deputy State Director, Outreach and Legislative Advocacy for Florida | March 2013 – June 2014 |**

StudentsFirst | Orlando, Florida

\$10M operating budget, 5 direct reports and 2030 staff and volunteers, plus 2000 contracted FTEs. StudentsFirst was a grassroots political action organization dedicated to public education reform. I was a registered lobbyist, responsible for state of Florida community outreach; directed field staff operations across Florida and led social-media, paid media, and earned media campaigns. Managed statewide community outreach and Intergovernmental Relations at state, regional, and local levels.

Florida state entity was dissolved. Departed after funding was cut.

### **National Director of Governmental Affairs | February 2012 – March 2013 |**

Charter Schools USA (CSUSA) | 800 Corporate Drive Suite 700, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33334

\$70M budget. Across 16 states, managed 4 direct reports, 70 staff, and 55 contracted FTEs. Responsible for Economic and Business Development, market expansion strategies, advocating favorable legislation, and cultivating relationships with State and Local Legislators, Boards, Councils and Non-profits.

Position was outsourced.

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## **National Urban Fellowship - Master's Public Administration degree program, Baruch-CUNY, Manhattan, NY | February 2012 |**

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## Municipal Management | Sept 2010 – Nov 2011 |

### **Assistant to the City Manager, Beverly Hills, CA**

National Urban Fellowship Placement | 455 N. Rexford Drive, Beverly Hills, CA 90210

Responsible for 5-yr financial forecasting. Participated in developing multiple initiatives.

#### **Major Accomplishments:**

- Developed Bicycle Street Plan; Designed city-branded credit card program;
- Created the City's first 5-Year budget forecast; Created Employee Green Commuter Incentive Plan.

Relocated to Beverly Hills, received National Urban Fellowship. Fellowship completed May 2011. Continued to perform and complete projects for City until November 2011. Departed Beverly Hills when fellowship ended and my CM announced retirement.

## Economic Development and K-12 School | Nov 2007 – Sept 2010 |

### **COO and Regional Director**

New School Economic Development Program | 723 E 53<sup>rd</sup> St., Indianapolis, IN 46220

Responsible for developing new school concepts, school operations and school safety, capital improvement plans, and working with the Mayor's office. I located, helped arrange financing and purchase of land and helped to re-zone properties as needed for school properties. Managed project approvals, facility design and construction; vendor selection and management, procurement, facility maintenance and repair, inventory control, fleet management, transportation management, technology plan and implementation. Managed human resources, curriculum selection, student recruitment, community outreach, parent engagement and all State and Local government relations.

Departed after **3 years** to accept National Urban Management Fellowship.

## Municipal Private Sector Tech Solutions | Aug 2003 – Oct 2007 |

### **IBM Public Sector Business Manager – Complex Solutions Consultant**

IBM | HQ: Miami, FL and Smyrna, GA

Responsible for IBM business process solutions in State and Local governments, education, and healthcare sectors. Helped clients optimize systems and processes through strategic planning, organizational development, and designing technology workflow complex solutions (involving hardware, software, and services). Managed 50 Matrix-styled team reports and 1250 staff plus 25 FTEs of contracted staff. Helped staff Florida Office of Professional Regulations and Massachusetts Universal Healthcare Initiative.

Departed after **4 years** to accept new position.

## Municipal City/County/Regional Water Experience | Jan 1992 – Jul 2003 |

### **Deputy Chief of Staff**

South Florida Water Management (SFWMD) | Gun Club Road, West Palm Beach, FL

Held positions of increasing responsibility: Compliance Director (6 months), Public Works Director (2 years), and Deputy Chief of Staff (3.5 years). In my last role, I managed a budget of \$1.07B, and federal/state grant processes had 4 direct reports with staff of 794. Was responsible for the Board's annual gala, all operations of the Board's intrastate meeting rotations, and multiple departments: Public Works; Budget and Finance; Procurement; Clerk's Office, Board Agenda and Board Operations and Business Management; Project Management Office; Emergency Management and Disaster Response.

Departed after **6 years** to accept new position.

### **CSO Federal Consent Decree Portfolio Program Director**

Miami Dade Co Water and Sewer Dept. (WASD) | N. District - Interama Waste Water Treatment Facility  
Managed \$880M of work. My last role involved managing the Federal Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) Consent Decree Program, which was high visibility, time sensitive, with multiple regulatory interests, and had ambitious MWDB goals. Prior to this role, I served as Public Works/New Construction Division Director for 3 years where I managed all new construction, engineering, renovation and operations for treatment plant systems and buildings.

Departed after **5 years** to accept new position.

## **Certified Sworn Police Officer | June 1997 – August 1998 |**

El Portal Village Police Department | 500 NE 87th Street, El Portal, FL 33138  
(Certified Officer until January 2004)

## Selected Trainings and Certifications

- Univ. of Minnesota - Humphrey School of Pub. Pol.: Policy Analysis
- Univ. of Kansas – School of Public Affairs and Administration:
  - Performance Budget 2.0
  - Police Professionalism and Social Equity
- Duke University – Sanford School of Public Policy: Sustainability
- Syracuse U. - Maxwell School of Pub. Admin.: IBB Labor Negotiation
- University of Louisville – Legislative Policy Advocacy
- Southern University – Social Justice Advocacy
- ICMA Mid-Career Manager’s Institute
- ICMA Gettysburg Leadership Institute
- ICMA Credential Manager
- Pi Alpha Alpha, National Honor Society for Public Affairs and Administration
- NFBPA - Executive Leadership Institute Distinguished Graduate

## Professional Organizations and Affiliations

- International City/County Managers’ Association (ICMA)
- American Public Works Association (APWA)
- American Society of Public Administration (ASPA)
- Council of Minority Public Administrators (COMPMA)
- American Association of School Administrators (AASA)
- Vice President – University of Miami, BAS Alumni Organization
- FEMA - Long Term Recovery Cadre
- Local Government Hispanic Network (LGHN) member

## Mobility Relocation Statement

My passion has always been a commitment to public service and a desire to find creative ways for a sustainable quality of life in the communities I serve. In pursuit of these objectives in local government, I have unfortunately run into multiple glass ceilings. To overcome these barriers, I have pursued additional education and credentialing in order to be competitive for a chance to work in an environment where I can learn and grow. Since completing the educational sabbatical to pursue the PhD, I have been afforded limited short-term chief executive roles in turn-around communities under the most difficult work circumstances. Please don’t misunderstand these assignments or my NUF Fellowship in Beverly Hills as a lack of stability; as I want to return to municipal management, these assignments should be weighed against the long-term roles in my initial local government career. Thus, I am eagerly seeking a long-term role that will allow me to work with, and in, an environment that values teamwork and my knowledge and ability to further the success of the organization and its leadership. My family and are looking for a long-term engagement in a location, yet with growth challenges and learning opportunities, but that would allow my kids to finish elementary, middle, and high school without additional relocation.





THE SENATE  
STATE OF MICHIGAN

JON BUMSTEAD

32ND DISTRICT

P.O. BOX 30036

LANSING, MI 48909-7536

PHONE: (517) 373-1635

FAX: (517) 373-3300

senjbumstead@senate.michigan.gov

February 14, 2023

To Whom it May Concern,

This letter is written in the recommendation of Mr. Troy Bell. As the Michigan State Senator for the 32<sup>nd</sup> Senate District, I have had the pleasure to work with and interact with countless municipal leaders around the state, but few measure up to what Mr. Bell has brought to the communities he has served.

For several years I have had the opportunity to get to know Mr. Bell and work hand in hand with him to serve the City of Muskegon Heights. Mr. Bell has always been a strong advocate for the communities he has served. In his previous role, he displayed an overwhelming commitment to the betterment of the community and found ways to make meaningful and lasting changes for those he served through his vast knowledge and connections.

Over the past three years, Mr. Bell has been a champion for the City of Muskegon Heights. During his time, Mr. Bell has never been concerned about politics, instead he has attentively demonstrated profound ethics and achieving the success of the community. As City Manager Mr. Bell secured millions of dollars in grants from all levels of government and secured partnerships to the city that would not have been considered without his leadership. With his leadership, the City has seen monumental changes in infrastructure, community development, and economic development in addition to the first new homes being built in the city in 20 years.

Mr. Bell's profound commitment to public service is not complete, whenever and wherever he is called, Mr. Bell will bring excellence and devotion to that community as he has done in years past. For these reasons and many more, I highly recommend you consider Troy Bell for this position.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact my office by phone at (866) 305-2134 or by email at [senjbumstead@senate.michigan.gov](mailto:senjbumstead@senate.michigan.gov).

Best regards,

Jon Bumstead  
State Senator  
Michigan Senate District 32





01/26/2023

Honorable Mayor and Council,  
2724 Peck Street  
Muskegon Heights, MI

Honorable Mayor and Council,

We respect your work to lead the City and appreciate you taking the time to read this letter of support and concern. As a Leadership Team, Mr. Troy Bell is crucial to our current potential growth and we are concerned for the City of Muskegon Heights. We all have worked closely with Mr. Bell over the last several years and have seen his commitment to excellence and growth in the City of Muskegon Heights. He has sometimes challenged our thinking and pushed us to move past antiquated systems to serve the community better. He has taken time to educate us on the pieces of the puzzle that will help our City grow and prosper.

Currently, the City of Muskegon Heights is on the edge of a critical transition on the road to success. If we miss our transition, we may not crash immediately, but we will run out of road. Unfortunately, as an underserved community, we must build our ramp to get on the highway. While creating our ramp to the success highway, there are corrections we are making daily in the ramp design along the way.

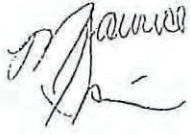
The engineer for our on-ramp to the highway of success is Mr. Troy Bell. He has the knowledge, skills, and abilities that are critical to finish building our ramp. In addition, he has the respect of the business community, which allows us to access things we do not always have access to as a City. He has built the relationships needed to keep us on the right track to reach a New Muskegon Heights.

There are multiple complex items in motion where Mr. Bell's skill set is critical. The blend of formal education, experience, and relationships he has developed gives us what we need right now to make things happen. With multiple projects just starting and new contracts being recently signed, his daily leadership and familiarity with our current status is essential.

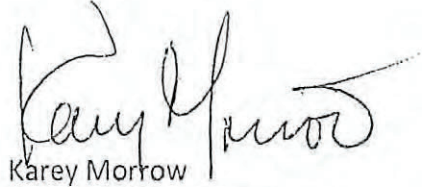
As a Leadership Team, we feel that the retention of Mr. Troy Bell is critical to our current success as a city. We are concerned about the disruption that Mr. Bell's leaving would cause to the City of Muskegon Heights. The team works daily to ensure the functioning of the City alongside Mr. Bell. His support helps us accomplish the business of the City. The absence of Mr. Bell will make our work much more difficult for our small team, not to mention fractured by his absence. Several key projects could prove vulnerable, in lieu of his departure, including one critical project, like the \$7 Million-dollar water project that just kicked off which potentially could fall apart.

We ask that you consider all available options a, including short-term contract to keep us heading toward the highway of success.

Respectfully,



Maurice Sain  
Police Chief



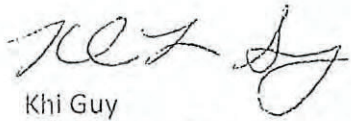
Karey Morrow  
Chief Building Official



Carolyn Cook  
Community Development Director



Christopher Dean  
Fire Chief



Khi Guy  
Deputy Public Works Director

February 2023

Most Honorable Members of Council

I am the current and presiding Mayor of the City of Muskegon Heights. I was a member of the original Council that voted to bring Mr Bell to Muskegon Heights and I would be the first to sing his accolades in recommending him for any position for which you may be considering him.

Mr Bell has a tremendous background, and I am truly sad to see him leave. His work in much larger cities and larger communities is exactly what we were hoping would turn our community around. He began by steering us through the difficulties associated with addressing the extraordinary COVID contamination rates in Muskegon and helped us handle the respective regulations. He managed the City through virtual and in-person charrettes, the creation of the 1<sup>st</sup> Downtown Vision Plan, the revamping and restoration of the Downtown Development Authority (DDA), the creation of the 5-year Recreation Plan, and the first operations lease to restore our Mona Lake Park lakefront pavilion facility. Troy created the Reserve Police Officers' program to address the huge overtime expenditures incurred by the police department, while also positioning the City to recruit officers from the community for the 1<sup>st</sup> time in 20 years. He also incorporated a fleet management program vendor, "Enterprise", that assisted the city in the replacement of all its vehicles (some dating back to 1990) and created an all-new fleet that capitalizes on lower gas costs, lower maintenance costs, and higher resale values as a means to save the City money.

Troy Bell was the architect of the Reaching New Heights Plan (RNH). This plan began with a Council policy focused on the steps necessary for the City to keep *residents and seniors* from losing their homes. It allowed the City to exercise its right of refusal on foreclosed property and make those same properties available to residents for purchase or for homeownership rehabilitation. RNH included a documented commitment by residents and others to fashion these homes for resale within 2 years. It also required, as never before, that property purchasers keep the properties clean, acquire the necessary inspections, and offer a "Bridge" for renters to become homeowners - downpayment assistance, credit repair, and homeownership mentorship for 1<sup>st</sup>-time home buyers. The RNH Plan was the umbrella for this program; it makes homes attainable and available through Mr Bell's grant funding from the State Housing Authority.

The programs he has created and the enormous amounts of grant funds he has shepherded into Muskegon Heights are designed to finally establish our downtown as a destination. The vision for this destination leverages the donation of new public art and a new skating/splashpad facility in the park – all grant funded. He worked to create a bike-share reservation process at our downtown library, so residents and children without bikes could enjoy cycling in the summers. Mr Bell understood that the Councils Vision of prosperity meant that he had to figure how to take care of the most vulnerable, the senior citizens, the children, and the least of the community - all while saving the city money. Amazingly, he was able to accomplish this feat. Troy coined the phrase in the community that we "cannot favor profit over people", realizing that by investing in all people and businesses, we can revive the whole community.

Mr Troy Bell's resignation is inevitably a huge loss to the City. Bell is ethical, courageous, disciplined, and a tremendous hard worker, yet he is easy going approachable, humble, and friendly. He is the kind of person that collaborates well with staff, the leadership team, and stakeholders and the type person you would want to lead your organization! He has my unequivocal endorsement and recommendation.

Sincerely,

Mayor Watt

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matt Watt". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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February 2023

Honorable Commission Members

I would like to take this opportunity to offer my strong support and recommendation for Troy Bell. I have known Mr Bell for several years now and I have known his family for many more. Mr Bell has been a beacon of class and integrity in all my interactions with him. As I review the numerous accomplishments that he has accomplished in his most current municipal role I cannot help but be impressed. Mr Bell has done more for the community than any individual I can think of in the last 20 years.

I was in all honesty quite surprised when Mr. Bell chose to take on the role as City Manager in this community, given his many accolades prior to coming to the Muskegon area. I understood the importance of this community to his research and study and I understood the closeness this community had to his spouse's childhood home not 50 minutes away. I however did not realize the overwhelming commitment Troy had to the pure practice of public service. In my many informal and even personal conversations with Mr. Bell, he has shared his deep passion for making the spaces where people live, meet, greet, share and grow the type of spaces where people can enjoy themselves, feel happy, prosperous, and fulfilled. As a testimony to his work – Troy lives his mission. He is always available to the people; he is always warm, friendly, welcoming, approachable, and even-keeled.

As a community within my jurisdiction, I have had the pleasure of watching Mr. Bell closely and see the relationships that he has poured into and developed over the last 3 years. I can say he has not been concerned about politics; he has been focused on demonstrating profound ethics and achieving the success of the community. He has built numerous non-transactional relationships with the wide range of stakeholders in the region. Change was not coming to this area without a sense of stability and a keen respect for his ability to create a sense of expertise and experience that can professionally manage a community. Please know that no one can outwork Troy and he brought all of that and more to his community – proof that the work he has done in the past is veritably extraordinary in its own right.

I can say that due to Mr Bell's sincere commitment to his community and his work, the City is the recipient of millions of grant funding that otherwise would not have happened in that community. The City is cleaner and safer, the City is more secure, much more stable, and healthier. The organizational processes are streamlined and more transparent. Roads are being paved, lead service pipelines are being replaced, the first new houses are being built in the past 20 years, and economic development is underway in multiple sectors of the community.

For these reasons and many more, if you are considering Troy Bell for your community or organization, I highly recommend him to any position.

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*Marshall D. Cook*



## Candidate Questionnaire

Candidate Name: Troy Bell

Position: City Manager

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1. Please list your previous jobs/positions going back at least 10 years, plus any previous jobs/positions beyond 10 years that is related to the position of City Manager. Please include the following: **See attachment**
  - a. Position start and end dates.
  - b. Position title and organization.
  - c. To whom you directly reported.
  - d. Ending salary.
  - e. Population of community served.
  - f. Total number of employees in the organization.
  - g. Number of employees supervised (directly and indirectly).
  - h. Total budget of the organization.

### 2. Why are you interested in pursuing this position?

Fort Pierce was within the jurisdiction of the government agency for which I previously held a leadership role. During that time, I had an opportunity to visit and spend time in the City and see its potential. I was initially interested in this role because as a leader, I relished the chance to return and work with the Commission to tap into the very same great potential I saw in this community and this city. But as I dug deeper, I found there were many more reasons why I desired to pursue the chance to lead the City under the guidance of the Commission. **Geographically**, i.e., I am naturally drawn to the mid-size of this community that serves as the County Seat, is in close proximity to urban areas, and that yet offers a connectedness and active community feel. I have had the good fortune to manage coastal communities and understand the unique impacts and challenges. Also, since I have an Elementary School-aged family, I am seeking an area with quality school options, where we can find a home that will serve our family at least until our kids graduate from High School. This area would be a great environment for raising our young family. And, it is also in a great proximity for my wife who is a University Dean, because the location is prime to give her easy access to multiple opportunities with many various Universities that have already expressed interest in her joining their academic team. And given my career in management was previously centered nearby, it seems only apropos that I might have the privilege to manage here and make a difference in the future of this community..

**Organizationally**, I am also interested in this role at Ft Pierce because of the specific challenges facing the City and the organization.



Ticking off the key challenges stated in the recruitment: transparency and accountability – I have been under the microscope and have repeatedly chosen the ethical route even when it meant the threat of losing my job. Regarding policing, my approach to changing the focus of law enforcement is informed by community engagement and personal hands on experience as an officer. Successfully dealing with budget constraints and the need for new revenues sources is reflected in my track record on grants and working on the continuum from resource rich to fiscally distraught communities and having the resourcefulness and resiliency to chart an innovative path to thriving vibrancy from conflict and financial discord. I am experienced in hiring, retention, and labor negotiations. And through uniquely effective community engagement, I have created some of the most innovative Attainable Housing initiatives and Economic Development plans/programs tailored to the communities I served. And finally my experience developing effective evaluation systems and standards, redesigning job descriptions and rightsizing compensations has led to high performing operations and exceptional employee performance under difficult circumstances. In short, I am an Engineer, former Police Officer, with construction management and neighborhood/community development experience and expertise who has a love for people and solving difficult problems. I have a Master's in Finance. I not only have experience in *each* of these areas but I also have been extremely blessed to achieve success by skillful consensus building and community collaboration.

**Professionally,** I want to be one of the architects, leading the very solutions the City is looking for to ensure a vibrancy that generates revenue and supports creating more and better services for the community. Leadership entails an almost intangible quality where you feel a drive to apply your knowledge, skills, abilities, and expertise in a way that represents transformative change. Public service is doing *that* in a way that makes the lives of people better. I am seeking the chance to build a team, and to be a part of the team that has ground-floor influence on the development of programs, policy, practices, and structures that address the most difficult issues for the City, based on the Commission's vision. This is what makes me excited about this position, and as I fancy leadership as one of my qualities, like any truly dedicated public servant, I am inspired by situations where I have the *specific* tools and experience to make a difference – ultimately to leave what I find better than when I found it. So because I believe I have the necessary talents in the areas the City may need the most, I know I can have a positive lasting impact here, and so it follows then, that **this is precisely where I am interested in being!**

### 3. How would you describe your management style?

I would describe my management and leadership style, as forward-thinking, principle-based, team-oriented, hands-on, strong, servant-leadership. I am one who believes passionately in the value of investing in, and building, genuine, authentic, non-transactional relationships with staff and stakeholders. My approach to leading is open, engaging, friendly, good humored, and consistently invoking of a sense of calm, yet action-oriented demeanor. Though I hold staff accountable, **I don't "work from behind a desk"** and yet I don't micro-manage. I believe my expertise and success in a wide range, allows me to add value in communities seeking assistance from creative, innovative, bridge-building, systems and process operations managers. As a skilled generalist, able to rise above criticism yet listen to input, I have a commanding depth in the key areas identified. My passion for challenges drives my eagerness for rounded continuous personal growth; it spurs **my desire to create a positivity that invests in staff development and mentors growth.** As a mantra, I strive for both – to be a great manager who must maintain organizational stability, while always raising the bar in customer service, and to be a great leader who must embrace the value of change, build on current success, and address acute deficiencies. And as I stated in my cover letter, it is my brand of management to become an active part of the communities where I manage. A good Manager wants to "eat what they cook" (perse); I believe they cannot be a leader of a people that he/she does not know and understand. Transparency and accountability begin with being visible and accessible. This has opened the door for me to become excellent at consensus building, engendering collaboration, driving economic development, human resources, and fiscal budgetary responsibility and management.

But my candidacy is more than what I have done, it is also **so much more about who I have grown to be!** Through a career of success and limited setbacks, life has taught me how to manage and to lead, but not to be afraid to seek input or assistance. I have experienced and overcome considerable adversity and many instances where I had to face down gross untruths with grace and fortitude. In this process, I have learned how to garner and exhibit the resilience needed to get up, dust myself off, only to grow stronger because of the learning experience. This is the spirit I endeavor to impart to the staff and community I serve through the programs we deliver. This is the edge that I feel enables me to be more effective than most other candidates. I have worked to become a skilled communicator, effective at collaboration, and



successful at developing strong inclusive partnerships with staff and colleagues. Whether managing hierarchical or matrix-styled organizations, I lead my employees with integrity and “all-ways” value internal/external stakeholders. And my approach to management is always open, engaging, friendly, good humored, and continuously invoking of a sense of calm, action-oriented demeanor.

My commitments to building non-transactional relationships, transparency, accountability, consensus building and collaboration, and a desire to work as a thought partners with the Commission will help me in fostering a positive relationship with the Commission. My even-keeled demeanor will serve to engender confidence in my knowledge and ability to perform under stress. I believe my experience with adversity shows a quiet courage to face obstacles with dignity and determination. And I believe my style of openness and approachability will allow me to provide guidance without stepping on toes, and permit me to engage with my staff in dialogue to support a focus on coming together as a team.

**4. Describe your approach to managing personnel issues such as hiring, discipline, ethical violations, labor relations, and performance evaluations.**

Through reading, ICMA credential training, and experience, I have learned how to promote positive work culture in my local government roles by operating with compassion and clarity. James Q. Wilson argues that clarity is crucial to a successful organizational culture. A lack of clarity comes from a failure to understand the organization’s critical activity (reason for being). I have worked effectively to address clarity by ensuring that my organizations have a clear and easily articulable Mission, Vision, and Value (MVV) ethos. This ethos should identify the critical activity, gain consensus on how that activity is to be conducted and ensure that the resources are there for staff to be successful in achieving the activity. With the MVV foundation in place, I revise job descriptions to align with goals and objectives and implement 360-degree evaluations to provide constructive feedback to encourage improvement and not punitive assessment. We focus on team and teamwork as the best means for achieving our goals most efficiently – success and failure rests with the efforts of the team to succeed. Based on MVV goals my team and I are intentional about identifying exemplary effort, recognizing it, and rewarding it. People want to be seen for the work they do and appreciated for it as well. Compensation studies ensure that we are competitive for the objectives we are asking staff to accomplish. Yet, a “thank you” can go a longer way toward letting employees know they are appreciated. All these factors come together to create a positive work culture, and such a culture is attractive to hiring great staff for the right fit in the organization with regard to extraordinary team culture and exemplary work competency.

That said, Hiring starts with a robust HR department, with an innovative on-boarding system that emphasizes developing the right culture and hiring the right person for that high performing organizational culture based on the comments above. Identifying staff with the right culture and shadowing those persons should be a part of the on-boarding process which should also offer a chance to rotate throughout the organizations multiple departments. This assists in cross training which is the ultimate foundation of succession planning. Discipline should be managed through a progressive process that is built on revised and clear job descriptions (aligned with any relevant contract), clearly defined career tracks, and a 360 degree evaluation system (supers, equals, resident feedback, subordinates) that defines strengths and weaknesses and designs training goals and means. An employees failure to meet that should be met with clear communication and the opportunity for correction and if necessary a PIP. Job descriptions should be aligned with the strategic plan process mappings for each department and each process and clearly supporting the MVV. These process maps should be referred to in any PIP as a means of tying expected performance back to organizational MVV/goals so that all disciplinary efforts are actually continuous improvement efforts to achieve higher productivity. Any unfortunate terminations are an articulated aspect of high performance efforts. Ethical violations cannot be tolerated and the policies must be written to reflect that. Policies should require that employees take affirmative action to comply with ethics requirements on a regular basis and failure to do so should be deemed a violation of ethics protocols and addressed accordingly. Labor relations should be tied to organizational goals and must be build on clear expectations, transparency, and mutual accountability. As a former labor representative myself and having negotiated numerous labor agreements, I have had tremendous success in labor relations with honest straightforward relations before during and after agreements based on repeated references to clearly defined organizational goals. My philosophy is that Organizational Goals cannot be achieved without organizational health and the health of the organization depends on how well the agreements we make are tied to organization’s goals and well we do in sticking to those commitments. Performance Evaluations (and respective evaluation criteria) have to be





clearly and graphically tied to organizational goals, have to be done timely, have to be meaningful, and have to be constructive in their use with a primary focus on how to enhance productivity.

## 5. How would you deal with city budget constraints and identify new revenue sources?

**My Budget Mechanics:** The city must operate within the budget constraints and each month the Commission should receive a “budget-to-actual report” and I like to also provide a listing of all expenses (checks written or charges to accounts) for the previous fund month. Upon review by Commission, this information should also be published on the city website for budget transparency and accountability.

As a budget is a projection of expenses and revenues, Finance will need to create for each Departmental expense and revenue category, a reliability factor in the form of a percentage (%) to be presented to the Commission that indicates (based on the factors known to the staff) whether the budgeted amount is projected to be accurate or not at years end. When and if a expenditure is out of order (unless otherwise required - depending on city purchase and budget policy) then it should be presented to Commission for a modification to the budget to be voted on and accepted by the Commission. If we/staff expect shortfalls in revenues (or unavoidable unexpected expenses) then I provide a plan for Commission consideration and approval to address options for necessary temporary or permanent changes in expenses for the remaining annual budget period – reductions in programs, purchases, or staffing broken down with a statement of non-optional “must pays” verses optionals.

**My Budget Philosophy:** The budget should reflect the will, priorities, and objectives of the Commission and based on projected revenues should identify what CIP projects should be undertaken and what expenditures should be executed to carryout programs and services. The budget should be a further pronouncement to staff on how to, on a day-to-day basis, execute the strategic plan and achieve the annual goals and objectives of the Commission in service of the community based on the City’s Mission Vision, and Values.

To consider how to identify new revenues, new revenues can come from new categories of revenue, new sources of revenue within existing categories, or increased amounts in exiting streams of revenue. I would work with Commission, community stakeholders, chambers of commerce, and finance to conduct and review trend analyses on existing revenues and revenue categories to identify the performance over the last 3, 5, and 10 years juxtaposed against any known shifts that may have affected the economy permanently or temporarily. The analysis must identify key sources of revenues and assess opportunity/threat margins for expansion. Generally speaking, utilizing my background in grant writing, acquisition and management, I would look for grant opportunities from federal and state agencies and federal and state legislative actions. I would look at the appetite for public safety funding initiatives and temper any efforts to increase revenues with the installation and/or review of performance metrics to articulate cost benefit productivity assessments. Within the realm of economic development, I would engage discussions with stakeholders on the development of new industry – retail/industrial/attainable housing – to determine the potential for marketing and incentives that may include renewable energy sources, the formation of colocation micro industries suppliers, and EVTOL opportunities. Other options for dialogue are around any reduction of income that may be associated with the City as the county seat. How does that impact the property tax receipts within the city limits. Finally, though not truly revenues, but there may be new opportunities for significant reductions in cost or expenses that may be achieved through innovations approaches in waste management - collection and handling, reduction in City fleet costs (fuel, vehicle, maintenance), reduction in electrical usage or pursuing methods for dampening electrical usage spikes to lower pricing tiers.

## 6. How will you prioritize competing demands for resources within the city?

As the city manager, as measure of my experience is grounded in having been responsible for the success or failure of all organizational initiatives. This was a natural transition for me because of my hands-on personal exposure working in almost every discipline of municipal management. It was very much like in the military going from company grade officer to a field grade officer with knowledge and experience in all the tactical functions required to execute a field level event. As with a field level event, a city operates with limited resources and as such there are always competing demands for resources.



In an organization or community, as a new leader I have learned, in order to most effectively and rapidly improve efficiency and customer service, I start by listening. I listen to the Commission, to staff, to the residents, to stakeholders, and to the Data. Listening is a segue to more generally surveying staff and the public on services and issues of concern. From the listening feedback I begin to learn the organizational perceptions (internal and external), needs and realities. Working with staff, I perform an initial quick and dirty abbreviated SWOT analysis, to identify and understand the key weaknesses or threats to baseline operations. This gives a swift assessment of what to prioritize and where to reallocate resources in order to build resiliency in the baseline operations of the City. At the next step I work with a broader group of staff, leadership team members, and stakeholders to perform full SWOT analysis that includes process mapping for all city processes and services. It is here that we collectively look at 4 basic areas - Staff Levels, Facilities (Attributes/Conditions), Vehicles and Equipment, and Operations Org Structure Process/Systems/Practices. The resulting full analysis yields priorities required for resources needed to maintain *baseline operations*, priorities requiring resources needed for *changes in state* required to meet annual immediate goals and objectives, and demands for resources that are not aligned with short-term (annual cycle) goals and objectives. This becomes the foundation of the strategic plan.

Once all city processes are mapped, we identified trouble spots affecting performance inputs and outputs. Based on the SWOT process mapping initiative, we create a strategic plan that aligns all other existing plans (Rec, Comp, Eco Development). It identifies missing plans, or where existing plans conflict. When existing plans that were created prior to my arrival conflict, this is where I seek guidance from the Commission on how to remedy those conflicts with the strategic plan. In addressing the necessary demands to meet critical and short-term priorities I rely on the Leadership Team. Once the strategic plan is established and any immediate conflicts resolved, I like to develop a team of front-line staff who can meet on a periodic basis with the leadership team to help monitor processes and the strategic plan and determine if the plan is optimal or needs to be amended. I also developed a dashboard to assess performance against metrics that are mutually agreed upon by Commission, staff, and the community. This performance data then gets published to the City's website for transparency and accountability.

## 7. Describe a successful initiative you have led as a City Manager.

At the start of and through COVID, I led the charrette process with city staff, residents, and councilmembers to create the innovative and comprehensive Reaching New Heights Initiative. This 2030 Vision project based on a Target Market Analyses (\$240K housing and retail study I grant funded) incorporated a 2 part Economic Development Plan (Downtown Development Revitalization Plan and Industrial Development Plan), a Public Art Plan, an Attainable Housing Plan, and a state of the art Mobile App Communication Plan, and a Funding Plan. (The Downtown development plan can be seen on-line at

As a result of the Charrette Process I was able to acquire the funding to perform the charrette and just over \$51M (as part of the funding plan) in grant funding, \$11M via ARPA, \$12M of which were through direct legislative action and \$28M through competitive applications through state and federal agencies. As part of the Downtown Economic Revitalization Plan, Economic Development funds were allocated to address renovation and restoration of key downtown properties, the central parks and badly needed road infrastructure for the purpose of attracting business and retail enterprise to the downtown. Using the historic theatre and the adjacent central park as the anchor for restarting the downtown, funds were identified for both facilities located on the main street just a block from City Hall. Funding was also acquired to study and develop a second and more modern industrial park area on the edge of town.

The Industrial Development included infrastructure funding for 10G highspeed industrial fiber optics and the new water and sewer infrastructure designed to incentivize a micro digital economy to augment the burgeoning recycled battery practice, the manufacturing of solar shipping containers, EVTOL and vehicle charging station and equipment, and the assembly of solar farm equipment. Ancillary funding was also acquired through the state economic development agency to support the revitalization and renovation of the City-owned waterfront park and facilities. This included upgrade of facilities the installation of water front restaurant and the creation of a water park amphitheater.

The Public Art plan was initiated with the \$400K donation of a 12' Bronze statute installed in the central down park followed by funding for an adjacent splash pad. Additional funding was acquired as seed funding for



additional visual art installations, fireworks shows, as well as, for downtown entertainment music and movie productions during the summers.

The attainable housing plan addressed the community concerns about gentrification by targeting the transition of existing long-term multigenerational renter residents to home owners through the Reaching New Heights Housing program. 25% of all land within the jurisdiction was municipal owned and the plan made that land available to developers at a reduced cost if they would prepay the taxes and keep the property clear of debris during development and commit to 3 primary requirements – provide access to downpayment assistance, credit repair, and home ownership mentorship for up to 3 years at no cost to the buyers. This was an innovative approach to reducing the barriers to home ownership purchases also mitigated the force of gentrification displacement and helped to maintain the fiber and character of the community during this economic and property growth. This plan also served to create new homes and thus new customers for the failing and grossly underutilized city owned water treatment facility which was operating at 20% utilization and a stagnate customer base.

Finally, to augment transparency and accountability we beta tested a state of the art **mobile communication application**. This App was pushed out to every household receiving water in the city and ostensibly gave the city direct access to communicate with each active household in the city. It also gave the residents the ability to communicate with the city from their phones and for various organizations throughout the city to communicate with each other through the app. We leverage the App keep residents and stakeholders up to date and to communicate the status and progress of the charrette and the resulting Plans developed from the charrette. The App allowed for users to be able to pay city bills at a discounted rate and earn rewards as a result of the usage of the App for shopping or purchases in the city or for visiting city owned sites. Also the budget and other key information was pushed out and made available on the App. Residents could see the monthly “budget to actuals” and expenses, as well as the status of any workorders or service requests submitted.

## 8. Describe a time when you had to manage a crisis situation in a city setting.

I started in the role as city manager 3 months before the COVID crises hit which was particularly difficult for me as a new manager new to the community. It was difficult because it did not give me a chance to get to know the community or for the community to get to know me. The City was in dire need of change and improvement and in order for change to be successful the stakeholders need to want change and feel there is no way but up or have a level of trust in the leader's ability to implement successful change. In the community I served there was a significant portion of the population that had resolved that life was hopeless and thus had no inherent desire for change, but among those who desired change in order for them to trust me to led that change they needed to see me and get to know me. COVID made that almost impossible, especially considering my style of leadership is based on building consensus, engaging community and stakeholders and inspiring collaboration as a mechanism for joint problem solving.

When COVID hit, just less than 3 months into my tenure as Manager I was barely grasping the routines practices and process of the City and with no permanent Finance Director in place I had a very small insite into the financial difficulties of the city. As the virus spread and incidents were reported the county emergency management mechanism reported that the highest incidence of the virus appeared in my community. Though our population was less than 1/8 the population of the county, we reportedly had more than 10 times the County's COVID incidences. As a result, I had to make the difficult choice to enact the City's first City Manager directed state of emergency. This state of emergency by ordinance discouraged residents from non-critical travel and enforced a curfew on late-night non-adult travel. It closed city hall to public engagement and also closed city facilities. The state of emergency per statute too effect immediately and was subject to reauthorization by the Council after 14 days. The Council reluctantly reauthorized the state of emergency at the end of the 14 day period. Unfortunately during the State of Emergency residents were still gathering at the parks and at the basketball courts specifically, I was forced to have DPW remove all rims from the parks. As we progressed through the horrible effects of COVID, the number of incidents in my community fell to an amount that was more in alignment with the population proportions in the county and surrounding areas.



## 9. What steps do you take to ensure transparency and accountability in city operations.

I try to ensure the highest levels of transparency and accountability through the development of a comprehensive **Communication Plan**, as follows...

- Key elements of the plan that ensure transparency are the implementation of a **published workorder management system** that is built on the City's asset management program. By utilizing a work order management system, we can develop metrics and assess performance that enhances accountability. To achieve greater transparency stakeholders must have the ability to submit work order requests and track the status of those requests against the condition of the assets or services in question.
- All service interactions with stakeholders (Police, Fire, Public Works, HR, Planning, Parks) should come with or give the opportunity to stakeholders to provide **digital or manual feedback surveys** on the quality of that interaction. This helps to create greater accountability for increased quality in customer service and assess staff performance on the backend.
- I use **digital newsletters** sent via signup and email lists that highlight activities by the city on a weekly basis.
- I use a **project management software** accessible by staff organization-wide to keep staff on the same page with the status of projects and initiatives.
- **Regular staff meetings** for key progress updates, dissemination of information, and problem-solving purposes. I share my schedule and calendar with staff, Commission and the Public so that my actions are as transparent as possible.
- Enhanced efficiency and effectiveness in service and the productive use of stakeholder revenues should be the target of every manager. Citizens should be able to see that and track it through budget to actual reports published to the web and through check registry expenditure reports. I achieve the highest level of transparency and accountability through the implementation of the **Mobile Communication App** mentioned above. Giving stakeholders access to direct validated 3-way communications and targeted/Geo-Fenced data helps keep residents informed, helps keep the application and information relevant, and helps the city stay attuned to the thoughts and feelings of the stakeholders in as structured and protected format, unlike most social media platforms
- Under a comprehensive communication plan, we also must provide for those who may be on the **other side of the digital divide**. To the extent that funding is available I like to use monthly print newsletters pushed out to various outlets, postcard mailers, and regular unearned media publications run through the local news outlet. All publications should be sensitive to the need for *translations or the use of multiple languages* based on the desires and needs of the Commission and the community.
- Another way to augment both transparency and accountability, is by providing a **weekly call in radio show** to talk about the city – past and upcoming issues or activities.
- It is also important **for me and my staff** to be active and **visible in the community**. For me that is by family involvement and presence at activities such as *Rotary, Kiwanis, Chamber etc.* By being accessible and visible, stakeholders have an opportunity to engage with the manager and staff directly and also to gain a feel for who I am on a personal level. In the beginning, I schedule a *weekly public Coffee Meetups* that after the initial greetings then becomes a bi-weekly activity. I also like to meet regularly with community leaders or other area CEO's - typically this has been achieved through the use of *monthly luncheons*.



**10. Please describe your experience working with unions.**

I was a union representative when I was an officer which gave me my first insight into the labor negotiation process. Subsequently I was a lead team member with the City of Beverly Hills in the negotiation of labor agreements with the City's employee associations. As the Chief Academic Officer (School Superintendent) I worked regularly with teachers unions on contract issues. Working as a city manager I have managed close to 20 labor unions and negotiated as many agreements and renewals over multiple years. I have worked with the transition from volunteer fire to professional fire and organizations where there was a hybrid professional/volunteer contract. I have also worked with dedicated public service millages as part of labor union contracts.

**11. Please describe your experience managing or overseeing a police department? What do you see as your role in guiding the police department?**

In all of my management roles I have had oversight of the police departments and I have been blessed to leverage my experience as an officer to help mold the nature of the departments and how we serve and protect our community. I believe that many of the more recent chiefs are responsive to the challenges of policing today and thus have a shifting perspective on how policing appropriately should be and can be accomplished. I see my ultimate role as a manager as one who is responsible for ultimately achieving the role of government to endear a sense of safety and security among residents and to protect the rights of residents to hold and maintain property. (In a larger conversation with my police colleagues, this requires a more thoughtful introspection of what that means for the rights of segments of the population who don't own much and versus the rights of those who do own much) Safety, security, property rights are the foundation of economic development, but that can't be at the cost of an empowered constituency. The two are not mutually exclusive. That said, the question becomes how can we, the manager and the police department leadership, best achieve the goal set for a sense of safety and the protection of rights?

I challenge the department and the leadership to consider (if not already) a new mindset of policing where the tactical objective is not compliance but safety and protection. This requires a shift in culture where the focus is on how to care and serve the community and not how to control and subdue it. We have to be selective in who we recruit to law enforcement and ensure that their desire is similar to that of social workers, teachers, medical professionals, and social engineers who focus on how they can give to the community they serve and not on how to lord over it. I challenge the concept that simply "browning a department" creates diversity of thought and action, but rather does not necessarily achieve that goal of diversity. I challenge the department leadership to assess how the processes and practices may discourage officers who have the right culture and mindset from continuing to exhibit that commitment. We have to realize if the system is unfavorable then anyone placed in that system can experience an undesirable change in mind set. The focus must be on finding people in and around the community that are committed to caring about the whole community and showing how law enforcement is a viable path to achieve that desire.

Some constructive measures that I pursue in order to accentuate those thoughts, include data mining calls and responses and locations to assess practices inputs and outcomes.

- I look at equipment and vehicles to support better and more refined recruitment for officers that desire to invest in community.
- I look to develop incentives for local hires who live and work in the community. I look to send local residents to the academy who commit to a minimum stay at the department, rather than hiring lateral transfers who are detached from the community.
- I seek the grant funding necessary to balance the cost disparity of local hire academy sponsorship versus the hiring of lateral pre-certified officers.
- I look to increase the community oriented policing measures like bike patrols, enhanced visibility, and having the department work closely with local schools and school teachers who have the pulse of kids, families, and parents in the community.
- I look to use PAL and officer initiated reading programs and other school engagements to achieve that.



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- I look to create a base level requirement for college education as a means to assess the commitment of officers to lifelong learning and know they can navigate processes like college that is bigger than themselves.
- And I look to establish reserve officer programs within the department where fully trained and certified officers are able to work for the department as low cost reserves for a minimum period of time in exchange for sponsorship in the academy while they maintain primary employment elsewhere. This attracts officers who are not sole dependent on law enforcement as revenue source rather than a commitment to serve.

It is my policy to meet personally with all new hires in public safety. I realize that there are two professions that are the most visible and present in the public eye of a community and that is police officers and teachers. Thus, I expect public safety personnel to see themselves as the ambassadors of the city. So, I regularly meet with front-line officers and police leadership to listen, understand the challenges, and reiterate the vision of policing that I expect to mold the department to achieve an improved approach to policing. My credibility in this capacity does not come just from being a former officer, it comes from being present, accessible, and an active listener.

## **12. How will you ensure that the city's services meet the needs of all its citizens?**

The answer to this question goes back to the importance of connecting with the community and seeking consensus and collaboration. Communication, transparency, and accountability as designed above will help ensure that the services are reflective of the needs of the community. But I believe we have to take step further and assess our culture and our operations to be certain that we are Inclusive to all, that we value Diversity in thought action and persons, that our systems and process work to ensure Equity, and that we are mindful that we provide Access to all for all we do and own especially when it comes to meeting the needs of the otherwise-abled (IDEA). The "Good IDEA" should be an element of the Strategic Plan and should be woven through all the city's process, practices, policies, and services. I have worked tirelessly with municipalities, police departments, and other entities providing consulting services to assist in developing the concept of Good IDEAS through their organizations and it is critical aspect of my dissertation learning teaching and research.

## **13. What strategies will you use to build relationships with stakeholders in the community**

As I alluded to above, I do not manage from behind a desk. When I engage in a new leadership role I begin with a listening tour. I meet, greet and listen to learn the pain and pleasure points of city services as perceived by the stakeholders. I learned from IBM that to do my job well I must understand what keeps mu customers up at night. I plan therefore to meet with and engage with the community – as a person, in and outside my role as a manager. I believe passionately as I mentioned in my cover letter that it is important here as in any honest relationship to **"invest[ing] in, and build[ing], genuine, authentic, non-transactional relationships with staff and stakeholders. Trust starts there - when and where folks can see and know that you care."** In order for us to be the most successful, we must build a consensus and that begins with trust. When people trust that may not agree, but they are more likely to give you a chance and less likely to obstruct initial incremental progress.

In addition as I mentioned earlier, I will continue the engagement and accessibility through radio, other communication, transparency and accountability, and regular opportunities to have coffee. But most importantly, I intend to maintain regular and direct accessibility via coffee, breakfast, or lunch and regular town hall meetings with staff and stakeholders.

## **14. What strategies would you implement to promote economic growth and job creation?**

My general approach to Economic Development is touched in response to the questions above. However I would add that Economic Development depends on stability. A comprehensive plan for development will not attract investment if investors are not made to fee hat there is a level of consistency backing that Plan. For a developer to put equity at risk they must be able to calculate risk and subsequent expected return. Where there is volatility, it is difficult to predict a reasonably accurate return and thus developers steer clear. I would work to re-instill confidence in the economic



development with an emphasis around a level playing field that can only occur with a Credentialed Manager committed to ethics, character, and market equity.

With this in mind, I will look for opportunities for growth in land use, the attraction of retail and industrial development, and leveraging the coastal aspects of the community leveraging the opportunities afforded by the City's several harbors. I would like to see this guided by market research on retail, housing and industry through a credible research firm, and engagement (and where possible, partnership) with the County and its economic development designs. I also expect to work with the legislature and lobbyist interested in the development of coastal communities as a common interest and objective of State associated tourism. All of these initial thoughts on economic development including, as I mentioned above in response to new revenues - to determine the potential for marketing and incentives that may include renewable energy sources, the formation of colocation micro industries suppliers, and EVTOL opportunities - contemplate the creation of jobs and revenue sources for the City.

15. Have any adverse or critical statements been made about you in print or online media reports, on social media, or any other related form? If an online search of you were completed, what would be found that you yourself would want to know about you if you were looking to hire yourself as a City Manager?

Despite my various tussles with some mean-spirited and often misdirected press (which you will see from previous positions in the press), my job performance has always been documented as exemplary, with an uncompromising commitment to ethics and forthrightness. Simply put – Do the Right Thing... even when facing personal peril. Though politically astute, my uncompromising stand on ethics has unfortunately placed me at odds in some of my previous roles. As such, I'd like to share with the hiring team that I am happy and committed to addressing any issues or questions until they are resolved to the team's satisfaction. Yet please realize, as a person of character, my policy is not to prosecute reports of media or former employers' ethical conflicts in the news or other public formats. This is why I believe the rest of the story to be of critical importance in these application processes.

[Short-Term CM Turnaround Assignments](#) | Sept 2023 – Sept 2024 |

City of Palatka, FL | 201 N 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, Palatka FL 32176  
City of Charlotte, MI | Charlotte, MI 49443

[PhD Research Assignment](#) | Sept 2019 – Jan 2023 |

City of Muskegon Heights, MI | 2724 Peck St, Muskegon Heights, MI 49444

[Education Sabbatical](#) | Jan 2017 – Spring 2022 |



PhD Purdue University, W. Lafayette, IN Courses Only | Summer 2018 – Spring 2022 |  
Master's Degree program, U of Miami, Coral Gables, FL | Summer 2018 – Summer 2019 |  
The Diversity Roundtable (Non-Profit) | West Lafayette, IN

## City Manager Experience | Jul 2016 – Nov 2016|

City of Walla Walla, WA | 15 N. 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, Walla Walla, WA 99362

## Senior K-12 Education System Experience | Feb 2012 – Jul 2016|

Pathways / Legacy Academies | 302 E Linebaugh Ave., Tampa, FL 33612

StudentsFirst | Orlando, Florida

Charter Schools USA (CSUSA) | 800 Corporate Drive Suite 700, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33334

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## **National Urban Fellowship - Master's Public Administration degree program** **Baruch-CUNY, Manhattan, NY** | February 2012 |

## Municipal Management | Sept 2010 – Nov 2011|

Beverly Hills, CA

National Urban Fellowship Placement | 455 N. Rexford Drive, Beverly Hills, CA 90210

## Economic Development and K-12 School

New School Economic Development Program | 723 E 53<sup>rd</sup> St., Indianapolis, IN 46220

## Municipal Private Sector Tech Solutions | Aug 2003 – Oct 2007 |

IBM Public Sector Business Manager

IBM | HQ: Miami, FL and Smyrna, GA

## Municipal City/County/Regional Experience | Jan 1992 – Jul 2003 |

South Florida Water Management (SFWMD) | Gun Club Road, West Palm Beach, FL

Miami Dade Co Water and Sewer Dept. (WASD) | N. District - Interama Waste Water Treatment Facil

a. Position start and end dates.	b. Position title and organization.	c. To whom you directly reported.	d. Ending salary.	e. Population of community served.	f. Total number of employees in the organization.	g. Number of employees supervised (directly and indirectly)	h. Total budget of the organization.
February 2024 – September 2024	City Manager	Commission	\$162K	11K	144	10/144	\$72M
September 2024 – December 2024	Interim City Manager	Council	\$120K	11K	122	13/122	\$20M
September 2019 – January 2023	City Manager	Council	\$85K	11K	77	7/77	\$15M

School N/A  
 School N/A  
 Consulting/Exec Board **Unpaid Non-profit Leadership and IDEA** (Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and A

| January 2017 – Fall 2019 |  
 Deputy CM and Acting CM Council 275 5/275 \$130K 35K \$60M  
 Chief Academic Board 2,400 6/2400 \$256K 24K Stud \$24M  
 Deputy State Director of M Rhee Florida 2030 5/2030 \$110K \$10M  
 National Director of C Jon Hage 16 states 70 4/70 \$104K \$70M

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| Sept 2010 – Nov 2011 | Assistant to the City of Jeff Kholin 1080 1/30 \$85K 34K \$420M

| Nov 2007 – Sept 2010 | COO and Regional Director of Amber Power 65 4/65 \$130K 870K \$45M

August 2003 – October 2007	Complex Solutions M D Stotts	\$125K	N/A	1250 50/1250	\$125M
March 1997 – July 2003	Deputy Chief of Staff Board	\$112K	16 Counties:	794 4/794	\$1.07B
January 1992 – March 1997	CSO Federal Consent C Ossman	\$82K	8M	130 6/130	\$880M



ccess) Consulting

[Short-Term CM Turnaround Assignments](#) | Sept 2023 – Sept 2024 |

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