

December 9, 2024

City of Fort Pierce
Human Resources Department
100 N U.S. Highway 1
Fort Pierce, Florida 34950

Re: City Manager

Dear Sir or Madam:

I am writing to express my interest in the position of City Manager for the City of Fort Pierce, Florida. After reviewing my professional and educational background, I am confident that your organization will find me to be worthy of consideration.

My career in local government spans over 30 years, with growth-oriented communities in Florida, Georgia, Arizona and Nevada. My present employment capacity involves service as an Assistant General Manager – Finance for Broward County Transportation, Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

I have a Master of Business Administration and in-depth experience in the local government sector. I am extremely proficient in strategic planning, budgeting, financial reporting, grants administration, procurement, marketing, capital improvement planning, and information technology. I have administered all levels of human resource management including collective bargaining and employee-management relations.

Attached please find my vita which delineates my work experience. Any response thereto will be most appreciated. I am available to discuss my skills and qualifications at your convenience.

Respectfully,

Richard D. Chess, MBA

RICHARD D. CHESS, MBA

E-mail: chessrd@gmail.com

Cellular: (623) 451-3891

Results oriented with broad based experience in local government. Demonstrated hands-on management style in the development and implementation of strategic plans to ensure organizational growth. Well disciplined with a proven ability to manage multiple assignments efficiently under extreme pressure while meeting tight deadline schedules. Strong team builder and facilitator. Effectively communicates direction and conveys complex information in easily understood formats. In-depth experience with complex information technology systems.

QUALIFICATION HIGHLIGHTS

Strategic Planning	Budget Preparation/Administration	Contract Negotiations
Organizational Effectiveness	Financial Management	Pension Administration
Team Leadership	Cash Management	Risk Management
Debt Management	Financial Reporting	Audit Management

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

BROWARD COUNTY
ASSISTANT GENERAL MANAGER
TRANSPORTATION - FINANCE

2019 - Present
Fort Lauderdale, FL

Broward County is located in southeastern Florida and has a population of approximately 2 million making it the second-most populous county in the state of Florida and the 17th-most populous county in the United States. The county seat is Fort Lauderdale.

Broward County Transportation (BCT) is the second-largest transit system in Florida. BCT provides fixed route bus, express, and community shuttles and paratransit services in Broward County. BCT's mission is to provide safe and reliable transportation solutions that link people, connect communities, support employment and contribute to the overall economic growth of the region.

Broward County FY 2025 operating, and capital budget is \$5 billion and \$2 billion, respectively. BCT has a year-round workforce of approximately 1,400 employees. BCT FY 2025 operating, and capital budget is \$278 million and \$198 million, respectively. As Assistant General Manager my responsibilities encompass oversight and direction of Finance, Accounting, Budget, and Grant Administration.

Key Projects:

- Administration of Broward County Transportation Surtax. In November 2018, voters approved a local one-cent, 30-year surtax to increase mobility and address transportation challenges in Broward County. The surtax is anticipated to bring in approximately \$15.6 billion over the 30-year period. The funds will be used for BCT's operating and capital budget.
- Most recently BCT's PREMO plan was approved by the Board of County Commissioners. PREMO will provide Light Rail, Commuter Rail, Bus Rapid Transit, and High-Capacity Transit to Broward

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County. I am responsible for the development of the operating and capital budget for the PREMO plan. In addition, I prepare short and long-term financial plans for BCT.

- Responsible for Federal Transit Administration (FTA), National Transit Database (NTD) Reporting, and Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) Grant Reporting.
- Liaison for Single Audits, Financial Management Oversight Reviews, FTA Triennial Review, and FDOT Triennial Review.
- Collaborate with Broward Metropolitan Planning Organization on the submission of BCT Capital Projects for the Transportation Improvement Program and Metropolitan Transportation Plan.
- Coordinating with Miami Dade-County and Palm Beach County on the implementation of a regional fare interoperability program.
- Member of Funding Subgroup for the Commuter Rail Project for Broward County and Miami-Dade County.

**SOUTH FLORIDA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY
DIRECTOR OF FINANCE**

2014 - 2019
Pompano Beach, FL

South Florida Regional Transportation Authority (SFRTA) operates Tri-Rail, which provides commuter rail service within the tri-county area, operating 50-weekday trains, 30 Saturday trains, and 30 Sunday trains along a 72-mile stretch of commuter rail. The South Florida metropolitan area encompasses the southeastern part of the U.S. State of Florida and covers the counties of Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach, which are the three most populous counties in Florida. The term "South Florida" is roughly synonymous with the Gold Coast. In 2020, the population of South Florida was estimated at 6.1 million by the US Census Bureau making it the eighth largest metropolitan area in the United States behind New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Dallas, Houston, Washington D.C., and Philadelphia.

Responsible for all financial activities of the SFRTA, including finance and accounting infrastructure, budgeting, short and long-term financial planning, projections, and analysis of combined entities. Also, responsible for the management of all fare collection systems, payroll, accounting services, grants, audit liaison, and capital accounting activities in compliance with local, state, and federal rules and regulations.

Key Achievements:

- Participated in the Tri-Rail Downtown Miami Link Project. A public-private partnership with the City of Miami, Miami Community Redevelopment Authority, Miami Downtown Development Authority, Miami-Dade County and All Aboard Florida. Tri-Rail Downtown Miami Link project is a \$71 million station and rail infrastructure project. The implementation of the Tri-Rail Downtown Miami Link project will allow passenger service on a rail connection between the existing Tri-Rail Metrorail Transfer station and MiamiCentral.
- Participated in the financial planning for the SFRTA to assume management, operation, maintenance, and dispatch of all rail operations from the CSXT. A \$221 million partnership between the SFRTA and the Florida Department of Transportation.

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- Prepared SFRTA's Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2014 through 2018, Annual Comprehensive Financial Report in accordance with the GFOA Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting.

CITY OF COLLEGE PARK, GEORGIA

DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND ACCOUNTING

2010 - 2014

INTERIM CITY MANAGER

2012 - 2013

The City of College Park sits in southwest Fulton County and is home of Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport. College Park is a full-service City providing excellent city services and utility distribution, ample parks, and recreation facilities for its citizens. The city owns and operates its own power distribution company. The Director of Finance is responsible for the preparation and oversight of a \$120 million operating budget for City Council review and approval. Leadership, supervision, and involvement of operating line departments including police, fire, engineering, public works (sanitation, storm water, water and sewer), power and utility billing. Also, administrative services departments including city clerk, human resources, information technology, finance/accounting, purchasing, business licensing, inspections/code enforcement, public information, and economic development. College Park is recognized for owning the second largest convention facility in Georgia the Georgia International Convention Center.

Key Achievements:

- Instituted organization-wide performance-based budgeting model, enabling the identification of goals and objectives of departments and sections to be achieved, with the application of measurement tools a to report effectiveness, as well as support funding commitments.
- Closed budget gap in the general fund for fiscal years 2011 and 2012 of \$10 million and \$7.5 million, respectively. Also issued Budget for the fiscal year 2012-13 with no use of fund balance for the first time in over 6 years.
- Implemented GASB 54 Fund Policy to maintain municipal reserves.
- Coordinated and implemented an Early Retirement Incentive Program which resulted in savings over \$1.4 million.
- Staff reduction in fiscal year 2011 and 2012 of 4% and 2.6 %, respectively, with no reduction in services.
- Negotiated with City Attorney along with Public Works Director to reduce sewer rates from the City of Atlanta. Also, settled long standing dispute with the City of Atlanta over the City of College Park share of City of Atlanta capital improvement cost. Savings of over \$16 million.
- Maintained the city's bond rating from Moody's and Standard and Poor's of Aa- and AA+, respectively.

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**CITY OF SCOTTSDALE
ACCOUNTING AND TAX AUDIT DIRECTOR**

2007 - 2010
Scottsdale, Arizona

Located in the beautiful Sonoran Desert, Scottsdale, Arizona is bordered by Phoenix to the west and the McDowell Mountains on the east. Scottsdale's McDowell Sonoran Preserve, in the city's northern reaches, is the largest urban wilderness area in the United States and features more than 60 miles of trails through diverse and scenic desert terrain.

The City of Scottsdale has an estimated 217,965 residents and is the sixth largest city in Arizona and the 92nd largest city in the United States. The City of Scottsdale is a full-service city with operating departments including community, services, public safety, public works/water resources, planning neighborhood/transportation, economic vitality, financial management, human resources, and information technology. The city had a year-round workforce of approximately 2,600 employees. The FY 2009-10 citywide operating budget was \$509 million. As Accounting and Tax Audit Director I had direct management responsibility over finance, accounts payable, payroll and tax audit division.

Key Achievements:

- Participated on management team that closed a \$65 million budget gap without an impact of direct services to citizens.
- Restructured the city organization from 16 departments to 9 departments and reduced the city's workforce by 10%.
- Managed Tax Audit Division that performed 25 tax audits during FY 2008-10, resulting in additional revenue of \$5.5 million.
- Comprehensive Annual Financial Report was prepared, and external audit was conducted that resulted in only 2 findings over 2 fiscal years.
- Received City of Scottsdale achievement award for instructing Finance training during the City's Contract Academy Program.

EDUCATION

**MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION
UNIVERSITY OF PHOENIX, Orlando, Florida**

**BACHELOR OF ARTS, BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION, Major in Accounting
DILLARD UNIVERSITY, New Orleans, Louisiana**

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EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE

FEMA – IS-000100.c – Introduction to the Incident Command System, ICS-100

FEMA – IS-00200.c – Basic Incident Command System for Initial Response

FEMA – IS-0070.B – An Introduction to the National Incident Management System

FEMA – IS-703.B – National Incident Management System Resource Management

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS AND AFFILIATIONS

- International City/County Management Association
- National Forum for Black Public Administrators
- American Public Transportation Association
- Conference of Minority Transportation Officials
- Government Finance Officers Association
- Florida Government Finance Officers Association
- Institute of Internal Auditors
- National Association of Black Accountants (NABA)
- Served as Vice President for the Greater Orlando Chapter of the NABA, Inc.

REFERENCES

Furnished upon request.

Candidate Questionnaire

Candidate Name: Richard D. Chess

Position: City Manager

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:

- 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.
-
- a. January 2019 to Present
 - b. Assistant General Manager - Finance, Broward County Transportation (BCT)
 - c. Report to: Deputy General Manager
 - d. Current Salary: \$215,132
 - e. Population of community served: Approximately 2 million
 - f. Total number of employees in the organization: Broward County has approximately 6,400 employees. BCT has a year-round workforce of approximately 1,400 employees.
 - g. Employees supervised: 32
 - h. Total budget of organization: Broward County FY 2025 operating, and capital budget are \$5 billion and \$2 billion, respectively. BCT FY 2025 operating, and capital budget are \$278 million and \$198 million, respectively.
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- a. July 2014 to January 2019
 - b. Director of Finance, South Florida Regional Transportation Authority
 - c. Report to: Deputy Director
 - d. Ending salary: \$141,000
 - e. Population of community served: Approximately 6 million, serving Palm Beach County, Broward County, and Miami-Dade County.
 - f. Total number of employees in the organization: 115
 - g. Employees supervised: 10

h. Total budget of organization: FY 2019 operating, and capital budget were \$120 million and \$118 million, respectively.

a. January 2010 to July 2014

b. Director of Finance and Accounting, City of College Park, Georgia

c. Report to: City Manager

d. Ending salary: \$117,500

e. Population of community served: City population - 14,649; City daytime population approximately 770,000.

f. Total number of employees in the organization: 414

g. Employees supervised: 15

h. Total budget of the organization: FY 2014 operating, and capital budget were \$120 million and \$11 million, respectively.

a. August 2007 to January 2010

b. Accounting and Tax Audit Director, City of Scottsdale, Arizona

c. Report to: Chief Financial Officer

d. Ending salary: \$103,000

e. Population of community served: 217,965

f. Total number of employees in the organization: 2,600

g. Employees supervised: 50

h. Total budget in the organization: FY 2010 operating, and capital budget were \$509 million and \$234 million, respectively.

2. Why are you interested in pursuing this position?

I greatly admire the leadership of the City of Fort Pierce, particularly its strategic vision and long-term outlook. The goals and initiatives outlined in the city's strategic plan provide a solid framework for future growth, enabling Fort Pierce to deliver exceptional services to residents while fostering economic opportunities. Achieving these objectives requires strong leadership and a deep understanding of local government operations. With over 30 years of experience in public service, I am committed to advancing these efforts. I have supervised teams, developed and managed budgets for organizations of various sizes, and collaborated with elected officials, employees, and community members on a range of projects and initiatives. I am particularly excited about the prospect of working with a talented team to address the challenges and seize the opportunities identified by city leadership.

The City Manager role represents a unique opportunity for me to apply my leadership and strategic planning expertise while continuing to grow professionally. I am eager to take on the challenges of managing a dynamic city like Fort Pierce and contribute to a legacy of innovation, progress, and community-driven success.

3. How would you describe your management style?

I would describe my management style as collaborative, transparent, and results oriented. I believe in fostering an open environment where team members feel empowered to share ideas, ask questions, and contribute to decision-making. By actively listening and engaging with the team, I can align individual strengths with organizational goals, creating a sense of ownership and motivation. In situations that require adaptability, I adopt a situational management approach, tailoring my leadership style to the specific needs of the team and the task at hand. This flexibility ensures that I can effectively address varying challenges and dynamics within the team.

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

I believe in a strategic and comprehensive approach to recruitment. The city should maintain a well-defined recruitment plan that aligns with its organizational goals, ensuring the attraction of qualified candidates who not only meet the job requirements but also fit the organizational culture. Standardized interview processes and assessment tools should be used to objectively evaluate candidates, minimizing biases and promoting fairness throughout the selection process. Additionally, a thorough onboarding and training program is essential to help new hires integrate smoothly, set clear expectations, and support their successful transition into their roles.

There should be clear and well-defined disciplinary policies outlining acceptable behaviors and the consequences for violations, ensuring employees fully understand the standards expected of them. I believe in a progressive discipline approach, beginning with verbal warnings and escalating to written warnings or other actions as needed, providing employees with opportunities to correct their behavior. These opportunities for improvement should include access to resources, training, and coaching. Finally, I will collaborate with Human Resources to ensure that disciplinary actions are applied consistently across all employees, maintaining fairness and preventing perceptions of favoritism or discrimination.

Regular ethics training sessions should be conducted to reinforce the organization's code of conduct and ethical standards, fostering a culture of integrity. Confidential channels must be established for employees to report unethical behavior without fear of retaliation, promoting transparency and accountability. Ethical violations should be investigated promptly with impartiality, ensuring due process is followed and appropriate corrective actions are taken when necessary.

I believe successful labor relations are built on mutual respect, open communication, and a commitment to collaborative problem-solving. The city's executive leadership should ensure regular, transparent communication with labor representatives to foster trust and proactively address concerns. During collective bargaining, both parties should engage in good-faith negotiations to reach agreements that benefit everyone, strengthening labor-management relations. Additionally, effective conflict and dispute resolution processes should be in place to address grievances quickly, preventing escalation and maintaining a harmonious workplace.

Management should conduct regular performance evaluations to provide constructive feedback, recognize achievements, and identify areas for improvement. Clear, measurable performance metrics should be established organization-wide to ensure evaluations are based on objective data, minimizing subjectivity and bias. Furthermore, management should work closely with employees to develop personalized growth plans that support their career development and align their individual goals with the organization's overall objectives.

I believe that my approach fosters a supportive and ethical work environment that promotes employee engagement, compliance, and organizational success.

5. How would you deal with City Budget Constraints and identify new revenue sources?

Dealing with city budget constraints while identifying new revenue sources requires a strategic, multifaceted approach. Firstly, I would meet with the Mayor and City Commission to determine the City's fiscal priorities. Subsequently, I will implement a detailed plan that combines fiscal discipline, innovation, and collaboration. The following is a synopsis of how I would approach the issue.

Conduct a Comprehensive Budget Review

- **Zero-based budgeting.** Implement zero-based budgeting where every program and expense is justified from the ground up. This will help eliminate inefficiencies and prioritize essential services.
- **Cost benefit analysis.** Perform a cost benefit analysis by regularly evaluating city programs and services to determine whether they are providing value relative to their costs. Programs that are underperforming or non-essential should be restructured or eliminated to free up funds for higher-priority needs.
- **Public engagement:** Involve the community in the budgeting process through social media, town halls or online surveys, so citizens understand the trade-offs involved and can contribute ideas for cost-cutting or revenue-generating measures.
- **Public-private partnerships:** Explore opportunities where the private sector can fund or collaborate on infrastructure or service delivery, reducing the burden on the city's budget.

Increase Operational Efficiency

- **Implement technology:** Invest in digital tools and software to improve internal processes. Automating functions like billing, reporting, and permit processing can reduce administrative costs and improve service delivery.
- **Cross-department collaboration:** Encourage collaboration across city departments to streamline services. Consolidating similar functions can lead to economies of scale and lower overall costs.
- **Shift to data-driven decision-making:** Use data to track spending patterns, identify underperforming programs, and measure outcomes. If certain programs do not provide a good return on investment, they should be restructured or eliminated.

Leverage Grant Opportunities and Partnerships

- **State and federal grants:** Actively pursue federal and state grants that support transportation, infrastructure, education, and public health. This can offset costs for critical city projects.
- **Nonprofit partnerships:** Collaborate with nonprofits and foundations for social programs and community services. Nonprofits can help fund initiatives that the city cannot afford on its own.

Enhance Revenue from Existing Sources

- **Incentivize compliance:** Use digital platforms to make it easier for residents and businesses to pay taxes on time, while offering incentives or penalties for early/late payments.
- **Review fee structures:** Assess current city service fees (e.g., parking, permits, utility fees) to ensure they align with market rates and adequately cover costs. Gradually increase fees for services that are underpriced.
- **Tax increment financing (TIF):** Use TIFs in key development zones to capture increased property tax revenue from newly developed areas to fund public improvements.

Identify New Revenue Streams

- **Tourism and Events:** Increase city revenue by focusing on tourism and large events (sports, festivals, conventions) that can generate both direct income (fees, taxes) and indirect economic benefits (hotel, restaurant, and retail sales).
- **Commercial development:** Promote business development and mixed-use projects in high-growth areas. By expanding the tax base with new commercial, residential, and mixed-use developments, the city can generate more revenue from property taxes, business taxes, and sales taxes.
- **Green energy initiatives:** Invest in sustainable projects like solar energy installations, energy efficiency upgrades in public buildings, and green infrastructure (e.g., urban farms, green roofs). Not only can these help save costs, but they also open up opportunities for state or federal incentives, grants, and partnerships.
- **Digital platforms:** Implement innovative solutions such as a city-specific app or online platform for services, like parking, event bookings, and local business promotions. This can increase accessibility, generate revenue through small transaction fees, and improve engagement with the community.

Transparent Communication and Accountability

- **Public transparency:** Ensure the city's budget, expenditures, and revenue sources are easily accessible and understandable to the public. Transparency builds trust, encourages compliance with taxes, and may generate public support for necessary budget adjustments.
- **Regular updates:** Provide regular, clear updates to residents and stakeholders on budget status, the impact of new revenue measures, and progress on fiscal goals. This transparency can help generate support for difficult decisions and encourage more active community participation in the process.

By combining these strategies—streamlining spending, optimizing existing revenue sources, identifying new income streams, and fostering collaboration the City of Fort Pierce can better

manage budget constraints while continuing to meet the needs of their residents and position themselves for future growth and sustainability.

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

I will prioritize competing demands based on projects that align with the city's long-term vision, strategic goals, and comprehensive plans.

Alignment with Long-Term Vision and Goals

- **Serve our Community:** Projects that directly impact the quality of life, public services, health, and safety.
- **Develop our Community:** Investments in infrastructure, economic development, and workforce development to ensure long-term sustainability.
- **Engage our Community:** Initiatives that promote participation, inclusivity, and the active involvement of residents in decision-making and community activities.
- **Beautify our Community:** Projects that focus on aesthetics, parks, green spaces, streetscapes, and environmental conservation.
- **Enjoy our Community:** Enhancements in recreational opportunities, cultural events, and tourism-related projects.

2039 Vision Areas and Prioritization Criteria

- **Waterfronts:** Prioritize projects that enhance access to and development along the waterfront, ensuring they are sustainable and accessible.
- **Strong Local Economy:** Focus on initiatives that attract investment, create jobs, and support local businesses and industries.
- **History, Arts, and Culture:** Invest in projects that preserve and showcase Fort Pierce's unique history and culture, making it a destination for both locals and tourists.
- **Desirable Neighborhoods:** Prioritize projects that improve housing quality, urban renewal, and mixed-use development, creating attractive and safe neighborhoods.
- **Opportunities for Fun:** Develop recreational facilities, festivals, and entertainment venues that provide residents with a high quality of life.
- **Community Unity and Pride:** Focus on projects that strengthen community identity and foster inclusivity and pride among residents.
- **Make Us Unique:** Invest in projects that distinguish Fort Pierce from other cities, emphasizing its character and distinctive attributes.

Input from Elected Officials

- Integrating the priorities of the Mayor and City Commission ensures that the work aligns with the political will and vision of the leadership. Regular consultations will help fine-tune projects and make sure they reflect the aspirations of the City Commission.

Implementation and Resource Allocation

- Allocate resources (funding, manpower, and time) based on the potential impact of each project, considering both short-term and long-term benefits.
- Break down larger projects into phased initiatives to ensure immediate progress while working toward long-term goals.

- Regularly assess and update the priorities to remain responsive to new challenges and opportunities.

Community Engagement

- Public input should be integral to the process to ensure that the community's needs and desires are met. This can include social media, public surveys, town hall meetings, and advisory committees.

By following this comprehensive approach, we will ensure that the projects not only align with the city's long-term vision but also resonate with the community, contribute to economic development, and reflect the unique character of Fort Pierce.

7. Describe a successful initiative that you led as a City Manager.

One of my most successful initiatives occurred while serving as Director of Finance and Accounting for the City of College Park, Georgia, during the 2010 recession. I was tasked with developing strategies for cost reduction and savings, and I proposed three key measures that significantly improved the city's budget. First, I developed an Early Retirement Incentive Program (ERIP) in collaboration with the Employees Retirement System of Georgia (ERSGA). Second, I recommended reducing the workforce through attrition by freezing vacant positions. Finally, I proposed a 3% reduction in the department's operating budget and deferred major non-safety capital improvement projects. These proposals proved highly effective in strengthening the city's financial position.

I presented these proposals to the Mayor and City Council through a detailed PowerPoint presentation. This included projections of potential cost savings from widespread participation in the ERIP, the financial benefits of workforce attrition, and how deferring capital projects could generate savings without compromising public safety. I also highlighted how a 3% operating budget reduction would yield further savings, while proposing process improvements to streamline workflows and maintain operational efficiency.

To ensure broad collaboration, I met with Department Directors to discuss the strategy for balancing the budget without tapping into the fund balance. I explained the rationale behind the proposed budget reduction and the deferral of capital projects, emphasizing the need for streamlined operations and potential impacts on staffing. I encouraged Department Directors to share the cost-saving approach with their teams and gather additional recommendations for savings from their staff.

I also worked closely with the City of College Park's Human Resources Director and ERGSA representatives to communicate the ERIP to eligible employees. This included hosting several workshops to explain the program's details and its impact on retirement benefits. The workshops were highly informative and successful, with enough employee participation to meet the targeted savings.

All three proposals were approved by the Mayor and City Council, and the results were successful. In fiscal year 2011, these initiatives led to a 4% reduction in the workforce, helped

close a \$10 million budget gap, and marked the first time in six years that the City did not need to use its fund balance.

All three proposals were approved by the Mayor and City Council and proved to be successful. In fiscal year 2011, the initiatives led to a 4 percent reduction in the workforce, helped close a \$10 million budget gap, and marked the first time in six years that the City did not have to use its fund balance.

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

In April 2023, Broward County faced anticipated rainfall, prompting the Weather Prediction Center to elevate the risk of flash flooding to a "Slight Risk" as confidence in its potential grew. As a result, a flood watch was issued for southeastern Florida, and Broward County activated its Emergency Operations Center (EOC). During this time, I was responsible for coordinating the financial emergency operations plan for Broward County Transportation (BCT). I issued instructions outlining the documentation required for reimbursement from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and directed the Purchasing Manager to activate emergency procurement processes and adjust purchasing card limits. Additionally, I instructed the Accounting Manager to provide guidance on completing the FEMA Force Account Labor and Equipment Form, which tracks labor hours, work types, and equipment purchases. These actions were swiftly initiated within a 24-hour period, impacting several BCT divisions and hundreds of employees.

As a result, BCT successfully procured the necessary equipment for the emergency response, and employees ensured all documentation was completed accurately, enabling the county to secure federal reimbursement. It is worth noting that the storm was particularly severe, causing significant flooding and tornadoes throughout the county.

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

Ensuring transparency and accountability in city operations is crucial for fostering public trust, effective governance, and the efficient use of resources. Here are key steps that can be taken to promote these values within a city like Fort Pierce:

Open Communication and Information Sharing

I will ensure public access to information by making key city data, budgets, plans, meeting agendas, and reports easily accessible through an online portal or website. This will allow residents to stay informed with the latest city documents, progress updates, and financial reports. Additionally, I will promote transparent decision-making by clearly explaining the rationale behind major decisions, including projects, budgets, and policy changes. I will provide detailed reports, presentations, and FAQs to help the public understand significant issues and the decisions that impact them.

Independent Audits

I will commission regular, independent audits of city finances. Audit results would be publicly available and reviewed during city council meetings. Transparency in audits helps ensure taxpayer money is being spent efficiently and responsibly.

Community Engagement

I will enhance community engagement by creating multiple channels for public input, including town halls, surveys, and digital platforms. These channels will be accessible to all residents, including marginalized and hard-to-reach groups, ensuring that every voice is heard. Additionally, I will establish feedback loops to ensure that public input is not only collected but also acknowledged and acted upon. I will ensure that residents receive follow-up communication on how their feedback has influenced the decision-making process, fostering a sense of transparency and community involvement.

Use of Technology and Digital Tools

I will create easily accessible online dashboards that track the progress of key initiatives, such as public works, economic development, and public safety. These dashboards will display real-time data and highlight key performance indicators. This allows for real-time updates and fosters a more engaged and informed community.

Clear Reporting and Progress Updates

I will provide the Mayor and City Commission with regular accessible progress updates on key city projects. The progress updates would include timelines, challenges faced, and how funds are being spent. Also, the project updates will highlight both successes and areas for improvement. The progress updates would be accessible to the public via an on-line portal or website. Finally, I would conduct periodic surveys to gauge residents' satisfaction with city services, governance, and overall transparency. I would use this data to identify areas for improvement and guide future decisions

By implementing these steps, Fort Pierce can foster a culture of transparency and accountability, strengthening the relationship between the city government and its residents, enhancing civic participation, and ensuring that public resources are used efficiently and responsibly.

10. Please describe your experience working with Unions.

As the Assistant General Manager for Finance at Broward County Transportation, I play a key role on the executive team for collective bargaining negotiations. Broward County Transportation is home to five unions: the Transit Union, White Collar Union, Blue Collar Union, Supervisory Union, and Professional Union. Most recently, I contributed to the negotiations for the Transit Union agreement for fiscal years 2024–2026, focusing on changes to employee wages, leave of absence policies, and seniority rules.

At Broward County, our approach to collective bargaining is highly collaborative. The negotiation process spans several months and involves multiple stakeholders, including union representatives, transportation leadership, legal teams, Human Resources, and the Office of

Management and Budget. Throughout these negotiations, I actively participated in discussions on key contract issues, analyzed the potential impact of proposals on existing policies, and provided critical data regarding the fiscal implications of both the proposed and final agreements.

Beyond the bargaining table, my responsibilities extended to managing various grievances, arbitrations, and disciplinary matters within the Human Resources department. I worked closely with mediators, arbitrators, union representatives, and legal teams to ensure fair and consistent resolutions for employee-related issues. In instances of suspension or termination, I ensured disciplinary actions adhered to established policies and were equitable across the board. Additionally, I collaborated with union representatives to implement training and professional development programs, aimed at enhancing employee skills and overall performance. I believe the foundation of successful labor relations lies in mutual respect, open communication, and a commitment to collaborative problem-solving. By proactively addressing concerns, negotiating in good faith, and involving unions in decision-making, we can foster a productive, positive working environment that benefits both Fort Pierce and its employees.

In summary, I excel at building collaborative relationships between management and unions, ensuring both sides are heard, and their interests are balanced. I bring strong financial acumen to assess the fiscal impact of union agreements, ensuring alignment with the budget. I am adept at navigating complex HR policies and seamlessly integrating contract changes. I have extensive experience managing grievances, arbitration, and disciplinary actions, maintaining fairness and consistency while adhering to legal and union guidelines. Finally, I am a passionate advocate for employee development, fostering training and professional growth to strengthen both individual and organizational performance.

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

I have extensive experience in developing and managing police department budgets for several cities, which has given me a deep understanding of police operations, including administration, investigations, and patrol. Although I have not directly managed or overseen a police department, my expertise in public administration, law enforcement operations, and organizational management allows me to provide valuable insights into the key responsibilities, challenges, and leadership principles required for such a role. Based on best practices in the field, here's how I would approach guiding and overseeing a police department:

1. Establishing a Clear Vision and Strategy

- **Defining Mission and Values:** A key responsibility when overseeing a police department is to ensure that the department's mission aligns with the broader goals of the community and government. This involves clearly defining the department's core values such as integrity, accountability, transparency, and community engagement. By setting the tone at the top, I would aim to ensure that every officer and employee understands the mission and how their work contributes to public safety and community trust.

- **Strategic Planning:** In my role, I would lead the development and implementation of a **strategic plan** that focuses on both short-term goals (e.g., crime reduction, response times, or community policing initiatives) and long-term objectives (e.g., leadership development, technological upgrades, or diversity in recruitment). The plan would be data-driven and regularly updated to ensure it remains responsive to evolving community needs and challenges.

2. Supporting Effective Leadership and Organizational Culture

- **Empowering Leadership at All Levels:** I would focus on developing leadership within the police department at all levels, from senior officers to frontline staff. Ensuring that supervisors and commanders have the right leadership tools and training is essential for fostering a department-wide culture of respect, integrity, and accountability.
- **Creating a Positive Culture:** Strong leadership is the foundation of a positive departmental culture. As a manager or overseer, I would prioritize building a culture based on **mutual respect, professionalism, and service** to the community. This would include ongoing training, fostering open lines of communication, and ensuring that officers are supported in their professional development.

3. Community Engagement and Building Trust

- **Community Policing:** One of the core tenets of modern policing is **community policing**, which involves building positive relationships between officers and community members. As a leader, I would work to strengthen these relationships through regular community meetings, outreach programs, and collaboration with local organizations and businesses. Ensuring that officers engage with the community in a way that is both transparent and respectful helps build trust and reduces tensions.
- **Transparency and Accountability:** Public trust is vital, and as such, I would champion **transparency** in police practices. This includes clear communication about departmental policies, use of force, and how complaints are handled. I would ensure that there is a robust and independent system for handling complaints and misconduct allegations, ensuring accountability at every level.

4. Resource Allocation and Budget Management

- **Prioritizing Resources for Maximum Impact:** Managing a police department involves overseeing a significant budget and resource allocation. I would work with the department's leadership to ensure that resources are allocated efficiently to areas that will have the greatest impact on public safety. This includes investing in **technology** (e.g., body cameras, data analytics tools), **training programs**, and **well-being initiatives** for officers.
- **Balancing Budget Constraints with Community Needs:** Ensuring that the department has the resources it needs to be effective while remaining mindful of budget constraints is essential. I would focus on securing funding for key initiatives, including **community policing, mental health crisis intervention, and de-escalation training**, while working to optimize existing resources and manage costs effectively.

5. Managing Public Safety and Crisis Response

- **Crisis and Emergency Management:** In overseeing the police department, it is crucial to prepare for and respond effectively to crises. Whether dealing with natural disasters,

large public events, or civil unrest, I would ensure that the department is equipped with clear **emergency response protocols** and **incident command structures** to protect both the community and law enforcement officers.

- **Collaboration with Other Agencies:** Public safety is not the responsibility of law enforcement alone. I would foster partnerships with other local, state, and federal agencies, as well as community organizations, to address broader public safety challenges, such as substance abuse, homelessness, and mental health crises. This collaboration can improve **service delivery** and enhance the **effectiveness of the department**.

6. Ensuring Officer Well-Being and Mental Health

- **Supporting Officer Wellness:** Policing can be an incredibly demanding job, often involving stressful, dangerous, and traumatic situations. As a leader, I would prioritize the **mental and physical well-being** of officers by providing access to mental health services, **counseling**, and **peer support programs**. Promoting wellness initiatives helps to reduce burnout, improve performance, and prevent incidents of misconduct or excessive force.
- **Training and Development:** I would advocate for continuous professional development and training, particularly in areas like **de-escalation**, **conflict resolution**, **cultural competency**, and **community engagement**. Regular training keeps officers prepared for a variety of situations, reduces risks, and helps maintain public confidence in the department.

7. Accountability and Oversight

- **Internal Affairs and Investigations:** I would ensure that the department's **Internal Affairs** division operates independently and transparently, investigating all allegations of misconduct thoroughly and fairly. A clear, impartial system for handling complaints and ensuring accountability is critical for maintaining trust and upholding the integrity of the department.
- **Use of Technology for Oversight:** Leveraging **data analytics**, **body cameras**, and other technology tools can provide an additional layer of oversight, ensuring that the department is held accountable for its actions. I would encourage the use of these tools to improve transparency and strengthen public trust.

8. Crisis Management and Addressing Tensions

- **Dealing with Tensions or Public Protests:** In moments of public crisis or heightened tension (e.g., protests or high-profile incidents), I would focus on balancing **public safety** with the need for **de-escalation** and **community engagement**. This involves working closely with community leaders and ensuring that officers are trained to handle such situations in a way that respects both law and the public's rights.
- **Leadership During Difficult Times:** It is important for the leader of a police department to provide calm, clear, and confident leadership during challenging or high-pressure situations. This includes offering transparent communication to the public and providing direction to the department's personnel on how to handle complex situations.

As someone overseeing a police department, my primary role would be to lead with integrity, support officers, and ensure public safety while fostering community trust. This involves strategic planning, resource management, continuous training, and collaboration with both the community and other agencies. By focusing on accountability, transparency, and officer well-being, I would work to build a police department that is not only effective in fighting crime but also trusted and respected by the community it serves. My approach would center around proactive leadership—leading by example, promoting ethical conduct, and ensuring that the department is responsive to the needs of both the officers and the community.

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

To ensure a city’s services meet the needs of all its citizens, a comprehensive and inclusive approach is essential. Here are several key strategies that can help achieve this goal:

Engage the Community

I will actively engage the community by conducting public consultations and gathering input through surveys, town hall meetings, and digital platforms, ensuring that voices from all demographics—such as youth, seniors, and marginalized communities—are heard and their needs are addressed. To foster ongoing communication, I will establish accessible feedback channels, including mobile apps, websites, and dedicated hotlines. Additionally, I will form advisory committees made up of diverse citizen groups, ensuring representation from a wide range of cultural, socioeconomic, and demographic backgrounds.

Use Data and Analytics

I will perform a needs assessment to collect and analyze data on demographics, service usage, and socioeconomic factors to identify gaps. Also, I will establish performance metrics to regularly measure the effectiveness of city services against predefined benchmarks. In addition, I will perform Equity Audits to evaluate services to ensure they are equitably distributed and accessible to all citizens, particularly marginalized groups.

Foster Inclusivity

I will prioritize communication that reflects the diversity of the community and enhances accessibility for all residents. To support non-English speakers and individuals with disabilities, I will ensure that materials and services are available in multiple languages and accessible formats. With an emphasis on cultural sensitivity, I will train staff to understand and respect cultural differences, making services more welcoming and approachable. Additionally, I will promote digital inclusion by providing alternative access options, ensuring that citizens without internet or devices can still engage with services through in-person or paper-based formats.

Partner with Local Organizations

I will collaborate with non-profits, community groups, and businesses that have deeper connections to specific communities or neighborhoods and leverage the partnerships to co-deliver services or to reach hard-to-access populations.

Regularly Evaluate and Adapt

I will be committed to fostering continuous improvement by regularly assessing services in response to citizen feedback and evolving community needs. To ensure effective implementation, I will launch pilot programs to test new initiatives on a smaller scale, gathering valuable insights before expanding them citywide. Additionally, I will prioritize emergency preparedness, ensuring that our services remain adaptable and resilient in the face of crises, such as natural disasters or economic downturns.

Promote Transparency and Accountability

I will publish annual reports and create interactive dashboards to transparently display how resources are allocated and the impact of services. This will enable citizens and residents to track the progress of key projects, ensuring greater accountability and providing a clear view of how well city leaders are addressing community needs.

Prioritize Equity and Sustainability

I will prioritize reducing disparities by directing resources to underserved communities, ensuring they receive the support they need. Additionally, I will develop and implement long-term solutions that not only address current needs but also make services sustainable and adaptable for the future.

In summary, by integrating community engagement, data-driven decision-making, and a strong commitment to equity, Fort Pierce can ensure that its services are responsive to and effectively meet the diverse needs of all its residents.

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

Building strong relationships with community stakeholders requires trust, collaboration, and consistent engagement. Here are strategies that I will implement to connect with and engage stakeholders:

Identify and Understand Stakeholders

I will identify key stakeholders, including community leaders, business owners, nonprofit organizations, government agencies, schools, and residents. To understand their interests, I will engage with them through surveys, interviews, and informal conversations, listening closely to their goals, concerns, and priorities. Furthermore, I will ensure that all demographic and socioeconomic groups, particularly marginalized communities, are represented and have a voice in the process.

Build Trust Through Transparency

I will foster open communication by proactively sharing information about city projects, policies, and decisions. This will include providing regular updates through newsletters, social media, and community meetings to keep residents well-informed. In addition, I will maintain accountability and transparency by openly addressing challenges, acknowledging mistakes, and tracking progress. Most importantly, I will follow through on commitments to build trust and ensure that the community remains engaged and confident in the decision-making process.

Establish Regular Communication Channels

I will host regular community meetings, town halls, and forums to foster open dialogue and ensure all voices are heard. To maintain ongoing communication, I will leverage digital platforms—such as websites, apps, and social media—to provide real-time updates and gather feedback. Additionally, my team and I will make personal visits to stakeholders' businesses, organizations, and events to build stronger relationships and better understand community needs.

Collaborate on Shared Goals

I will actively ensure the city engages in joint initiatives by partnering with stakeholders on projects and programs that align with our shared goals, such as economic development, education, and environmental sustainability. By including stakeholders in decision-making processes, I will foster a sense of ownership and collaboration. Additionally, I will ensure the city supports local organizations through grants, resources, and other forms of assistance to help achieve these common objectives.

Develop a Shared Vision

I will organize community visioning workshops with stakeholders to co-create a shared vision for the future of our community. In addition, I will work closely with the City Commission to align the City's Strategic Plan with stakeholder goals, ensuring their active involvement in the planning and decision-making processes.

Foster Long-Term Relationships

I will actively acknowledge and celebrate stakeholders' contributions to the community, ensuring their efforts are recognized and valued. To foster sustained engagement, I will maintain ongoing relationships, even in the absence of immediate projects or needs. Additionally, I will ensure the city remains a reliable partner during challenging times, offering crisis support in situations such as economic downturns or natural disasters.

Leverage Community Events

I will organize events such as neighborhood clean-ups, cultural festivals, and workshops to bring stakeholders together and foster a sense of community. Additionally, I will ensure the city actively participates in events hosted by local businesses, schools, and non-profits to demonstrate support and strengthen our partnerships.

Evaluate and Adjust

I would obtain feedback on engagement. I will ask stakeholders how the relationship-building process can improve. I will use benchmarks to measure success. I will track relationship-building efforts through participation rates, collaboration outcomes, and satisfaction surveys. Finally, I will adapt strategies and adjust engagement approaches based on feedback and changing community needs.

By implementing these strategies, the city can cultivate meaningful, long-lasting relationships with stakeholders that foster collaboration, mutual trust, and a stronger, more unified community.

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

Promoting economic growth and job creation requires a combination of strategies focused on supporting local businesses, attracting new investments, fostering innovation, and ensuring an equitable approach. Below are strategies that I will implement to achieve these goals:

Support Existing Local Businesses

Create Business Retention and Expansion Programs. I will engage with local businesses to understand their needs and challenges, providing resources to help them grow and stay competitive. I will review the current business license and permitting process and if necessary, simplify the processes to make it easier for businesses to operate. Also, I would consider opportunities to offer grants, low-interest loans, or technical assistance programs for small businesses and startups.

Attract New Investments

I will implement targeted incentives to attract new businesses, offering tax breaks and grants to companies in high-growth sectors such as technology, healthcare, and green energy. Additionally, I will strategically promote the city's unique advantages—including its economic opportunities, historic and vibrant downtown, and strategic location—to attract both national and international businesses. I will also foster Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) and collaborate with private-sector partners to invest in key projects, including infrastructure, housing, and commercial development.

Develop Workforce Skills

I will champion training and apprenticeship programs by partnering with local colleges, vocational schools, and businesses to develop workforce training initiatives tailored to industry needs. I will promote investments in programs that connect young people with internships, mentorships, and skill-building opportunities in high-growth sectors. Additionally, I will support reskilling initiatives to help workers in declining industries transition into emerging fields, ensuring a future-ready workforce.

Invest in Infrastructure

I will prioritize transportation and connectivity by improving roads, public transit, and digital infrastructure to attract businesses and enhance mobility for workers. I will also focus on creating affordable housing to support a growing workforce and reduce commuting challenges. Additionally, I will establish Business-Friendly Zones by developing industrial parks, co-working spaces, and commercial districts designed to meet the needs of specific industries.

Promote Tourism and Hospitality

I will actively promote cultural and recreational events, hosting festivals, sports competitions, and cultural activities that not only attract visitors but also stimulate local spending. Through targeted marketing campaigns, I will position the city as a premier tourist destination. Additionally, I will support the growth of the hospitality sector by offering incentives to develop hotels, restaurants, and attractions, creating a vibrant and welcoming environment for both tourists and residents.

Encourage Sustainable Development

I will promote green jobs by investing in renewable energy projects and encouraging businesses to adopt sustainable practices. Additionally, I will champion environmentally friendly tourism, leveraging the city's natural and cultural assets to attract eco-conscious visitors. I will also support businesses that prioritize recycling, waste reduction, and sustainable resource management, fostering a more environmentally responsible local economy.

Ensure Economic Equity

I will prioritize employment development in underserved areas, directing investments and job creation efforts toward economically disadvantaged neighborhoods. I will also continue to expand opportunities for minority- and women-owned businesses, providing tailored resources and support for historically underrepresented groups. Additionally, I will encourage, and where possible, require businesses to pay living wages, ensuring that the economic benefits of growth are shared broadly and contribute to long-term community prosperity.

Build Collaborative Partnerships

I will collaborate closely with the Chambers of Commerce and local business associations to identify and capitalize on growth opportunities. I will also partner with schools and colleges to align educational programs with the region's economic needs, ensuring a well-prepared workforce. Furthermore, I will prioritize regional collaboration by coordinating with neighboring cities and regional stakeholders to pursue shared economic initiatives that drive collective growth and prosperity.

Monitor and Adapt

I will utilize economic dashboards to monitor key metrics such as employment rates, business growth, and investment levels. Additionally, I will gather stakeholder feedback and engage regularly with businesses and residents to refine strategies as needed. Finally, I will remain flexible, adapting to economic shifts and emerging industries to ensure the city stays competitive and responsive to changing market demands. By implementing these strategies, the city can create a thriving economy that supports businesses, generates jobs, and improves the overall quality of life for residents.

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 on-line 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 City Manager?

To the best of my knowledge, there have been no adverse or critical statements made about me in print, online media, social media, or any other related form. Should an online search be conducted, I would expect it to highlight my extensive background in public administration, my strong professional reputation, and my leadership experience. I would hope it includes details of my accomplishments and evidence of my active engagement with the community. Above all, I would want the search results to reflect a career free from controversy or unethical behavior.