

COLIN BAENZIGER  ASSOCIATES

EXECUTIVE RECRUITING

Section 14

Patrick “Pat” G. Salerno

*Gainesville City Manager
Candidate Report*

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Cover Letter and Resume

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February 29, 2016

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Mr. Colin Baenizger
Colin Baenizger & Associates
2055 South Atlantic Avenue, Suite 504
Daytona Beach Shores, FL 32118

Dear Colin:

Please accept the attached resume as my expression of interest in the City Manager's position for Gainesville. I have reviewed the position profile and believe I am well suited to the City's needs, particularly in view of my management experience in several noteworthy communities. This encompasses a track record for significantly improving city finances, neighborhoods and award winning economic development initiatives. I also have a reputation for developing communities to their fullest potential based on qualities that are positive and memorable.

Most recently, I held the position of City Manager for the City of Coral Gables, a dynamic, historic, pedestrian-friendly, and full-service community. Coral Gables is widely regarded as the premier city in South Florida and recognized for providing a superb business environment and lifestyle for its residents. The City has developed a reputation for progressive management, financial stewardship and planning that has become a model in the South Florida region. This includes planning for the community's interdependent needs in a sustainable way such that future generations benefit from the actions taken now. In addition, the University of Miami, one of the nation's leading research universities, is located in the City. In a competition held in China in December 2013, the City was named one of the **"Top Five Most Livable Communities in the World"**, in its population category (20,000 - 75,000) by the United Nations-backed International Awards for Livable Communities.

Prior to Coral Gables, I served 17+ very successful years as City Manager of Sunrise, Florida. During my tenure, the City became a major entertainment-corporate-retail destination in the State, while maintaining the heart and soul of a small town. Its major corporate park is the largest in South Florida and the sixth largest in the State of Florida. The City also hosts a large number of visitors, who spend time at the fourth largest shopping mecca in the country and attend events at the BB&T Center, the second largest arena in the country. The BB&T Center is home to the Florida Panthers of the National Hockey League, and consistently a top 15 worldwide venue in ticket sales. In addition, *Business Week* magazine ranked Sunrise among Florida's top three cities for families.

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Earlier in my career, I managed a county known for its broad economic base. My experience in Cobb County, Georgia, furthered my working knowledge of the importance of economic development in maximizing a community's standard of living. Cobb County, located immediately adjacent to the City of Atlanta, was the 10th fastest growing county in the country during my tenure and home to more than 400 national and international headquarters. Few could doubt that developing Cobb County's economic development partnerships between the public and private sectors (which are critical to creating that "can't lose" feeling of entrepreneurship) was one of the most challenging jobs in the nation. The *Wall Street Journal* predicted that the area would rank No. 1 in the country for job growth in the 1990's.

I have also managed communities with a distinctive character, including one that is rich in history and natural beauty. My experience in Savannah, Georgia, a community with the largest urban historic district in the nation, gives me a working knowledge of the importance of a community's heritage in making decisions about its future. This beloved city attracts and inspires visitors with its quaint cobblestone streets, majestic architecture, and charm.

From my experience, a great organization needs to display the following six essential elements: 1) Purpose – demonstrates clarity in its role and direction; 2) Passion – exudes eagerness, intensity and inspiration; 3) Performance – delivers excellence, on time and under budget; 4) Trust – operates with genuine and mutual respect; 5) Communication – consistently engages in good "messaging", and 6) Sustainability – has both an eye on the moment and an eye on the future. My approach to creating this competitive advantage focuses on teamwork, empowerment, the use of technology and a shared vision of the organization's mission. These attributes have always been important elements of the work cultures I helped to develop.

In closing, the City Manager's position offers me the fresh challenge of making a meaningful contribution to a special community that continues to have tremendous potential. I am goal-oriented and self-motivated. I will bring my enthusiasm, energy, and customer service focus, along with my record of accomplishment, fiscal restraint and accountability to Gainesville. A key to my success has been an ability to bring a results-oriented and entrepreneurial spirit to public sector operations. I wish to bring the same spirit of service to this position.

I would welcome the opportunity to meet with the Mayor and Commissioners to discuss my ability to address their needs. Your consideration is most appreciated. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely

Patrick G. Salerno

Section 14**PATRICK G. SALERNO**

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**SUMMARY OF
BACKGROUND**

Experience in various positions with increasing management, planning, economic development, labor relations, financial problem solving and decision-making responsibilities: City Manager, City of Coral Gables, Florida, from 2009-2014. City Manager, City of Sunrise, Florida, from 1990-2008. County Manager, Cobb County, Marietta, Georgia, from 1987-1989. County Manager, Chatham County, Savannah, Georgia, from 1985-1987. Assistant County Manager, Volusia County, Daytona Beach, Florida, from 1980-1985. Progressively responsible management positions with the City of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, from 1975-1980.

**EXPERIENCE
2009 - 2014**

CITY MANAGER, City of Coral Gables, Florida, (pop. 50,000) Served under a five-member city commission elected at large. The City Manager is the chief executive officer and accountable to the Mayor and Commissioners for the proper administration of the City's affairs. Coral Gables, The City Beautiful, stands out as a rare pearl in South Florida. Early city planners and visionaries were influenced by the esthetics of the City Beautiful Movement that swept across America in the early 1900's. Inspired by the works of landscape architect Frederick Law Olmstead, who designed New York's Central Park, The City Beautiful Movement encouraged the use of wide tree-lined avenues, monumental buildings, winding roadways, green space, plazas, and fountains. All these elements of style have been and continue to be incorporated throughout the city. The downtown is vibrant and active, with an abundance of boutiques, retail shops and more than 110 restaurants – all within walking distance of the central business district. The city has a large daytime population and is considered one of the premium office markets in South Florida, with approximately 11 million square feet of office space. Coral Gables was designed to be an international city and is home to 21 consulates and foreign government offices and approximately 150 multinational corporations. It is also home to a myriad of cultural venues, including galleries, theaters, cinemas, museums, and concert settings, which attract visitors from around the region and beyond. Coral Gables is a growing full-service city with approximately 800 full-time employees and an annual budget of approximately \$195 million. The assessed value of property in the city is \$14 billion. Listed below are a few of the major programs/projects that I have implemented or overseen:

- Developed an unprecedented course of action for the city called the Neighborhood Renaissance Program. This \$27.5 million, five-year program consists of 17 projects focusing on neighborhood recreation, community facilities, streetscapes and landscaping, street resurfacing, traffic calming and historic preservation. The City Commission approved the refinancing of the city's variable rate debt at favorable fixed rates and provided new funds to implement the program without increasing the city's annual debt service payments.
- Successfully facilitated and encouraged an international developer to acquire and develop a new mixed-use, world-class development on an assembled seven-acre parcel in the downtown. The developer's plan includes a five-star hotel, class A+ office building, ultra-luxury retail, spa and restaurants as well as magnificent condominiums and townhouse residences, which will continue to add to the cache of the Gables. The total project value is anticipated to be \$500+ million. An economic impact study of the effect of this project on properties within a half-mile radius determined residential values would increase by approximately 10 percent.

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- The City has an organic and historic main street that is the heart of the community and experiencing competitive economic challenges from neighboring sub-markets in Miami. I developed a comprehensive financing and developmental plan for \$20 million in streetscape improvements that had eluded the city, as neither the residents nor merchants wanted to pay for it. A detailed plan to establish a special assessment for the business community to contribute 50% of the financing and the city to finance the other 50% has been presented and approved by the city.
- Negotiated a 20-year development agreement with the University of Miami that includes paying the city \$22 million over the term of the agreement, and provides for orderly development of the University, while enhancing the protection of adjacent neighborhoods. The agreement also provides free tickets for residents to football, basketball, and baseball games, concerts, lectures and other cultural events sponsored by the University. Such an agreement had eluded the City and University for approximately 15 years.
- Through prudent fiscal policy and management, the budget for 2013-2014 reduced the property tax millage rate for the third consecutive year. It's the first time in more than 20 years a three-year rate reduction has taken place.
- The City has been able to establish healthy fund balances in its various funds. For example, the unreserved and undesignated general fund balance has grown from \$4.5 million during my first year to approximately \$29 million today.

RECOGNITION

Recipient of a "Key to the City" presented by the Mayor in recognition of my dedicated service to the city, in April 2014.

Recipient of an award from the Gables Good Government Committee in honor of my service as city manager.

Recipient of the "Outstanding Community Service Award" from the Gables by the Sea Homeowner's Association "in recognition of my openness, responsiveness and sense of community that makes Coral Gables such a world-class city", in March 2013.

Honored to have the University of Miami name its onion ring appetizer at a popular, on-campus restaurant "SalemOrings" after me in January 2014.

1990 – 2008

CITY MANAGER, City of Sunrise, Florida, (pop. 90,000) Served under a five-member city commission elected at large for overlapping four-year terms. The City Manager is the chief administrative officer and accountable to the Mayor and Commissioners for the proper administration of the City's affairs. The City of Sunrise is a growing full-service city with approximately 1,300 employees (1,000 FT & 300 PT/Temp) and an annual budget of approximately \$380 million. During my tenure, the City became a major entertainment-corporate-retail destination in the State, while maintaining the heart and soul of a small town. Its major corporate park is the largest in South Florida and the sixth largest in the State of Florida. The City also hosts a large number of visitors, who visit the fourth largest shopping mecca in the country and attend events at the BB&T Center, the second largest arena in the country. The BB&T Center is consistently a top 15 worldwide venue in ticket sales. In addition, *Business Week* magazine ranked Sunrise among Florida's top three cities for families. Served as Acting City Manager for several months prior to permanent appointment.

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Listed below are a few of the major programs/projects that I have implemented or overseen:

- Developed and proposed a comprehensive plan that demonstrated the financial feasibility of building a "world class" arena in Broward County and then successfully competed against several other cities that were intensely vying to be the site for the BB&T Center. This \$225-million multi-purpose venue was funded by the county and hosts 100+ events per year. The Center has 20,000+ seats, 74 private suites and three private clubs. Since opening in 1998, the Center has been the home of the National Hockey League's Florida Panthers and has hosted such performers as Celine Dion, Madonna, the Rolling Stones, Barbara Streisand, Luciano Pavarotti and Paul McCartney. Adjacent to the arena, a 250-room hotel is being planned and a 330,000 square foot entertainment/restaurant complex, known as *The Oasis*, has opened. The Center is projected to have an economic impact of \$4.4 billion over 25 years.
- Conceived the idea for creation of an urban village on 27 acres near the BB&T Center. Convinced the landowner to abandon plans for a traditional strip center and to pursue an upscale mixed-use project. The approximately \$250-million project, known as "Metropica," is to include four high-quality office buildings of six and seven stories (totaling 500,000 sq. ft.) with upscale retail, five to seven restaurants and more than 360 luxury condominiums in two buildings of eight stories or more. Parking for the office buildings would primarily consist of structured parking (2,125 spaces) and on-street parking. The development also would include a central park and tree-lined promenade connecting smaller thematic plazas. Negotiated an agreement that committed the landowner to the project, which would generate an estimated total annual economic output of approximately \$365 million, in exchange for certain incentives.
- Developed an unprecedented course of action called the Community Enrichment Program (CEP) after nearly a year of research. This plan called for the revitalization of City facilities and services over five+ years. Improvements included the construction of a civic center, senior center, library, tennis center, four fire/rescue stations, two community centers, a new park and expansion of two parks, 23 miles of median improvements, as well as the renovation of a community center, two parks, and replacement of water lines and resurfacing of all public streets in the older portion of the City. These improvements, totaling \$75+ million have been completed. These enhancements have enriched the quality of life for every resident and were accomplished without an increase in taxes or fees. Based upon the success of the CEP, the City initiated a new, \$40+ million, three-year program called the Neighborhood Renaissance Program (NRP), which consists of 30 projects focusing on neighborhood recreation, streetscape improvements and redevelopment. In addition, the City has made other substantial capital investments, ranging from infrastructure improvements, to open space acquisition. When combined with the CEP and NRP, these improvements represent approximately \$325 million in investments completed or funded over the past 10+ years.
- In the course of the last 10 years, Sunrise has emerged as the destination of choice for corporate business in Broward County. Over the past 5+ years, Sunrise set the pace among Broward County cities, including Fort Lauderdale, in terms of job growth.
- Through prudent fiscal policy and management, the City has reduced the property tax rate for the last 13 consecutive years.

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- Working in partnership with a major national developer, directed the City's efforts to bring about a mixed-use project that integrates a 250,000 sq. ft. office building and a 10-story, 250-room Crowne Plaza Hotel with a 1,250 space parking structure. The complex was recognized by the *South Florida Business Journal* as the "Best Real Estate Deal of the Year" in the new development - suburban office category for 2000.
- Developed a comprehensive incentive package that successfully attracted NORTEL, a leading global manufacturer of telecommunications equipment to build a regional world headquarters in Sunrise. This highly sought after project brought 750 jobs to an 185,000 sq. ft. corporate office complex, from which they serve 47 countries in the Caribbean and Latin America. Other regional headquarters are located in London, Hong Kong, and Toronto. This project was selected as South Florida's "Best Real Estate Deal of the Year" in the new development - office building category by the *South Florida Business Journal* for 1994, in large part, due to the city's efforts in facilitating this project and creating an attractive environment to locate.
- During my tenure, the city has been able to establish healthy fund balances in its various funds. For example, the unreserved and undesignated fund balance in the general fund has been significant, averaging 40% of expenditures over the past 10 years. In my last two years, the percentage has increased to 50% or \$45 million.

RECOGNITION

Recipient of a sculpted crystal award from the City in appreciation for my dedicated service to the community 1990-2008.

Recipient of the Sunrise Chamber of Commerce's, first-ever, "Man of the Decade" award for achievements in improving the City's quality of life, in October 2000.

Recipient of an award in appreciation for my contributions and dedication to the City from a civic organization called, "ACTION" (Active Citizens Taking Issues on Now), in May 1998.

Recognized by the City Commission for making the BB&T Center a reality by naming a major roadway that connects an expressway to the arena, "Pat Salerno Drive," in April 1998.

Named to a list of "The 50 Most Powerful People in Broward County" (pop. 1,650,000) published by *Gold Coast Magazine* (May/June 2002 edition). This survey considered an individual's "ability to influence political, social, charitable, educational and business decisions as they shape Broward County." I was honored to be the only city manager out of 26 in the County named to the list. This recognition is a reflection of the commitment by the Mayor and Commissioners to the ongoing success of the City.

Recipient of a Proclamation expressing the City Commission's appreciation for my hard work and leadership provided to the community over the past seven years, in November 1997.

Recipient of an award for "Visionary Leadership" from the Sunrise Chamber of Commerce, in November 1997.

1990

ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER, City of Sunrise, Florida Assisted and advised the City Manager on all matters relating to his duties and responsibilities, especially those pertaining to operational and financial activities, productivity improvement, program development and analysis, economic development, and growth management. Served as Acting City Manager in the Manager's absence.

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1987 - 1989

COUNTY MANAGER, Cobb County, Marietta, Georgia (pop. 450,000)

Served under a five-member Board of Commissioners; the Chairman is elected countywide and four commissioners are elected from districts. The County Manager is the chief executive officer and accountable to the Board for the proper administration of the County's affairs. Cobb County was the 10th fastest growing County in the country and fortunate to be a thriving part of the metro-Atlanta region, located just north of the City of Atlanta. Within its borders, Cobb had six municipalities ranging in size from 4,000 to 40,000. Nearly 80% of the County's total population lived in unincorporated areas. The County offered a full range of municipal-type services with 4,000+ employees, an annual budget of \$475 million and a capital improvement program of \$2 billion through the year 2000. Listed below are a few of the major programs/projects that I have implemented or overseen:

- Implemented the first transit system in the County, which will include both commuter and local fixed route service. Service will be provided through a contract with a private corporation, and the system will be the first in the country to obtain buses and facilities on a leased basis under a federal privatization initiative.
- Developed an implementation plan for the development of a 950-acre lakefront golf course, amphitheater, and a recreation complex on property leased to the County from the Army Corps of Engineers.
- Developed several enterprising communication programs to help keep citizens informed about their government, build awareness of its programs and services and improve responsiveness. Based in part on the marketing theme "Take Stock in Cobb," these programs capitalize on the community as a center for corporate headquarters and remind citizens that just as stockholders invest in a business, they have an investment in county government.
- Implemented the first Community Improvement District in the State, which allows an additional property tax millage up to five mills, per year, to be levied exclusively on commercial property owners in the District for infrastructure improvements - generating \$2.5 million annually.

1985 - 1987

COUNTY MANAGER, Chatham County, Savannah, Georgia (pop. 220,000)

Served under a nine-member Board of Commissioners; the chairman is elected countywide and eight commissioners are elected from single-member districts. The County Manager is the chief administrative officer and accountable to the Board for the proper administration of the County's affairs. Chatham County was a growing urban-suburban coastal community with the 10th busiest seaport and the largest historic district in the country. The County provided a full range of services with an annual budget of approximately \$108,000 million and over 1,200 employees, in addition to a five-year capital improvement program of over \$200 million. Countywide services included: Police, Public Works, EMS, Libraries, Civil Defense, Animal Control, Sheriff, Mosquito Control, Solid Waste Disposal, Parks and Recreation, Health, Courts, Elections, Property Tax Appraisal/Collection, Mass Transit and Harbor Construction/Maintenance. Listed below are a few of the major programs/projects that I have implemented or overseen:

- Implemented a new administrative structure. Raised employee morale and developed an effective management team through forceful and diplomatic leadership, constant counseling, and a clear interest in the employees' needs and opinions.

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- Directed staff efforts in support of an additional one-percent (1%) sales tax referendum that resulted in an affirmative vote (70%) and \$20 million annually for right-of-way acquisition and road/bridge construction.
- Development of a new structure for providing mass transit that combines the efficiencies of a private enterprise with a dedicated source of local funding and a policy board directly responsible to the voters.
- Development of a model cost sharing agreement with the Army Corps of Engineers to widen Savannah Harbor at a cost of \$15 million in order to expand an economically important industry.
- Development of an innovative County indigent health care program. The primary purpose of this program is to shift the cost of care to the State Medicaid program. Without sacrificing the level and quality of medical care, this program resulted in savings to the County of \$4 million annually.

1980 - 1985

ASSISTANT COUNTY MANAGER, Volusia County, Daytona Beach, Florida (pop. 330,000) Assisted and advised the County Manager on all matters relating to his duties and responsibilities, especially those pertaining to operational and financial activities, productivity improvement, program development and analysis, and growth management. Volusia County is home to the Daytona Beach International Speedway and NASCAR's most prestigious race, the Daytona 500. County government is structured according to the Council-Manager Plan established by Charter. Direct responsibility for supervising the operations of the following line and staff departments: Public Works, Sheriff, Corrections, Finance, Personnel, Data Processing, Medical Examiner, Civil Defense and Port/Marina. Volusia County was a full service county comprised of 2,000 employees and an operating budget of approximately \$90 million, in addition to the capital improvement program of \$249 million. Served as Acting County Manager in the Manager's absence. Listed below are several of the major programs/projects that I have implemented or overseen:

- Development of a Civic/Convention Center with a seating capacity of 10,000, at a cost of approximately \$40 million; a \$22 million, 600-bed pretrial detention facility (jail); and a \$17 million County Government Administrative Center.
- Co-sponsored the County's Quality Circles program, called "Quest for Quality" (Q2). Q2 offers unlimited possibilities to identify problems, study their causes and work to solve them in a team environment.
- Development of non-profit corporation approaches to providing countywide economic development activities and emergency medical transportation services.
- Coordinated staff efforts in support of an additional one-cent per gallon gasoline tax referendum that resulted in an affirmative vote and an additional \$1.5 million annually in road construction/maintenance revenue.

1975 - 1980

VARIOUS MANAGEMENT POSITIONS, City of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, (pop. 420,000) Began as a Management Intern and progressed to hold various senior management positions for the City's operations related to budget (approx. 3 years), police (approx. 1 year) and public works (approx. 1 year).

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EDUCATION UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA, Norman, Oklahoma. Master's Degree in Public Administration

UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI, Coral Gables, Florida. B.G.S. Degree, major in Politics and Public Affairs

PERSONAL Marital Status: Married
Children: One daughter & son

Candidate Introduction

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EDUCATION

MPA, University of Oklahoma, OK
 BGS, Politics & Public Affairs, University of Miami, FL

EXPERIENCE

City Manager, City of Coral Gables, FL	(2009-2014)
City Manager, City of Sunrise, FL	(1990-2008)
Assistant City Manager, City of Sunrise, FL	(1990-1990)
County Manager, Cobb County, Marietta, GA	(1987-1989)
County Manager, Chatham County, Savannah, GA	(1985-1987)
Assistant County Manager, Volusia County, Daytona Beach, FL	(1980-1985)
Various Management Positions, City of Oklahoma City, OK	(1975-1980)

BACKGROUND

Coral Gables is a dynamic, historic, pedestrian-friendly and full-service community. It is widely regarded as the premier city in South Florida and recognized for providing a superb lifestyle to its residents. One of the most beautiful cities in the United States, Coral Gables has many significant historic districts and was originally developed as part of the City Beautiful Movement. Because of its history, natural beauty, distinctive neighborhoods, and abundance of architecturally significant buildings, set under giant live oaks, the City attracts tourists from around the country and from around the world.

The City is a **cultural-corporate-retail/dining destination** in the State, while maintaining the heart and soul of a *small town*. It competes on a **regional, national and global stage** for corporate headquarters. International companies find Coral Gables to be a strategic location with a talented workforce. The community's high-tech environment, and its international opportunities are particularly appealing, resulting in a large number of creative class workers from outside the area working there. In addition, the **University of Miami (UM)**, one of the nation's leading research universities, is located in the City. During my tenure, we developed an outstanding Town-Gown partnership with UM. So much so, that the President of the University, Donna Shalala, recognized our relationship by naming the onion ring appetizer at the popular on-campus restaurant "SalernOrings". This was one of my go-to foods during my college days!

The community also developed a reputation for progressive management, financial stewardship and strategic planning that has become a model in the South Florida region, as more fully outlined in my resume. This includes planning for the community's interdependent needs in a sustainable way such that future generations benefit from the actions taken now. Coral Gables has 50,000 residents with 800 full-time employees, (15 of which, I directly supervised), a total annual budget

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PATRICK G. SALERNO

of approximately \$195 million with a general fund budget of approximately \$140 million and no general obligation debt. The assessed value of property in the City is \$14 billion.

Coral Gables has been recognized as one of America's "**Top 10 Cities to Live Well**" by *Forbes* magazine, "**Six Most Beautiful Cities**" (population 150,000 or less) by Rand McNally/USA Today, and one of the "**Most Successful Walkable Suburbs**" by the *Wall Street Journal*. HGTV also named it one of America's "**Top 10 Dreamiest Places to Live,**" and as one of America's "**Top 10 Romantic Cities**" by Livability.com. I know **firsthand** what it takes and how to become a "world class" city. In a competition held in China in December 2013, the City was named one of the "**Top Five Most Livable Communities in the World**", in its population category (20,000 - 75,000) by the United Nations-backed International Awards for Livable Communities.

The three most important issues facing Coral Gables are:

Continuing to improve financial condition. Shortly after arriving as the manager, I quickly determined that Coral Gables was also facing a financial crisis unrelated to the downturn in the economy that had not been previously identified. I was able to shore up the finances by focusing on prudent management decisions, long-term financial planning and spending controls to put the City on sound financial footing that involved, among other things, re-negotiating union contracts, instituting pension reform, and growing the general fund reserves from \$4.5 million to approximately \$29 million. Although the heavy lifting has now been done, the challenge will be for the City to stay the course.

Reinventing Miracle Mile (Main Street). The City has an organic and historic main street district that is considered by the residents and visitors to be the heart of the community. However, the City had not made capital investments in this public realm for decades, and as a result was experiencing competitive economic challenges from neighboring markets. Developing a comprehensive financing plan for \$20 million in streetscape improvements had eluded the City, as neither the residents nor the merchants wanted to pay for it. I presented a detailed financing plan to establish a special assessment for the business community to contribute 50% of the financing, and the City to finance the other 50%. This plan has been approved, and the challenge will be for the community to proceed with a successful implementation from the standpoint of all stakeholders.

Growing while keeping it going. Coral Gables has beautiful and historic residential neighborhoods that contribute to the high quality of life. Economic development is vital to the health of a community, but growth cannot be at the expense of livability. The challenge is marshaling such growth without negatively affecting the quality of life that first attracted the development. The community will need to continuously fine-tune the balance between preservation and the needs of the future.

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GENERAL, MANAGEMENT STYLE AND EXPERIENCE

Gainesville has made significant progress in the recent past. However, it still has many challenges - reflecting the need for capable management. This position offers me the fresh challenge of making a meaningful contribution to a community that continues to have tremendous potential as a **hometown of the 21st century** and the most **citizen-centered** city in America. Gainesville is a community that requires an experienced and strategic thinker. My years of accomplishment as a proactive manager for some noteworthy communities speak for themselves. I would look forward to discussing the potential for an association that would be long and rewarding for us both.

The recruitment profile indicates a community that has a keen awareness of the issues/challenges that need to be addressed and where it wants to go. My understanding of how a manager can complement this awareness along with my comprehensive and detailed practical knowledge of local government operations gives me the confidence that I could make a significant contribution. According to the profile, the City is not looking for a caretaker, and I am not interested in being one. The idea of city government being run in as businesslike a manner as possible has always been attractive to me. I see the challenges facing Gainesville as opportunities to use my skills and experience to marshal the community's assets to achieve its full potential. I also see Gainesville as a community with high expectations from its Mayor, Commissioners, and citizens, and I am looking for such an environment. A key to my success has been an ability to bring a results-oriented and entrepreneurial spirit to public sector operations. I wish to bring the same spirit of service to this position. My background and breadth of experience prove that I can rise to whatever challenges and pressures are thrust upon me.

My management style is directed at making things happen and achieving the best results possible for the betterment of the community. As a self-motivated person, I am willing to assume those calculated risks that go along with the chances for success. I try to combine vision with "old-fashioned" common sense and hard work to get things done, and done well. I am a communicative leader with a collaborative management style. I have been successful because I recruit, retain, and empower high-performing employees with the right tools, resources, training, and responsibility to do their jobs. My departments are professionally managed within a culture of continuous self-assessment and improvement. I foster a mission-driven organization where staff shares a sense of pride, passion, and commitment to the community.

In general, my preferred style is to manage staff, as you would have them manage you. This means allowing and encouraging them to exercise initiative, delegating authority to allow them to assume responsibility for the freedom of using their own judgment, and obtaining their participation in the decision process. However, I also expect to hold staff accountable for their actions. It is important that everyone in the organization knows who is accountable **before** something goes wrong. That allows each staff member to focus on prevention rather than finger pointing. Accountability is the recognition and acceptance that one is answerable for whatever happens within an area of activity, **regardless of cause**. This, in turn, requires me to be willing to clearly explain what I expect and want to be done; to tell staff when those things change, and to provide an objective means for

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reviewing and evaluating their performance. I do not mind being questioned or criticized by staff before a decision is made. I expect it because in doing so, they may either make me aware of something I had not considered or point out the need for explanation so that they can better understand and commit themselves to a course of action. I also have high expectations of staff, which encourages strong performance.

In the case of major changes, I prefer that those affected have ownership and agreement as to the nature of what the changes should be, but I am not reluctant to impose that decision if consensus cannot be reached or time does not allow such participation. Management is, in a sense, manipulation of people, but I do not manipulate people without their knowledge through Machiavellian games. I operate openly through persuasion and logic. Above all, employees must be made to feel they are important and useful to the organization. Every single employee contributes to the mission - whatever your title, whatever your role. Overall, I am committed to developing the full potential of all employees and to help them achieve a high degree of professionalism and self-satisfaction in their work.

As Thomas Jefferson said, "I am a great believer in luck, and I find the harder I work, the more I have of it." My staff would describe me as a manager with a strong vision for the community, who works as hard as they do to enhance the community. They find that I listen to new ideas, and allow them to have creativity in launching programs and actions that will be well received by residents, businesses and visitors.

I have worked with numerous elected officials, who would describe me as a dedicated public servant who is accessible and responsive to residents, who develops highly successful partnerships with stakeholders such as chambers of commerce, the business community, as well as neighborhood groups. They have seen that I have a passion for financial planning, economic development, improving infrastructure, pursuing smart growth, and creating places that are embraced by the community. I have a reputation for solving highly complex problems, especially with regard to financial matters. They also know I am not a 9 to 5 manager; I have been continually described as someone who always acts with the best interest of the community in mind. I get to know the community intimately so that I can anticipate and take care of matters before they become community issues, and as such, try to interact with the community as much as possible to understand the needs.

Rather than repeat my resume for examples of my strengths, I will simply give you my Boy Scout creed (trustworthy, brave, loyal, helpful, friendly, etc.). These values may sound like platitudes, but I believe they are important nonetheless. I am able to be objective with people, and I do not agree or disagree with people based on personality. This, and knowledge of organizational behavior, enables me to deal constructively with most situations and to work with almost anyone to get the job done. Dealing with people on the basis of mutual professional respect, I can communicate well and persuasively, (verbally and in writing) in a frank and open manner, with people from widely varying backgrounds. I am also good at and place an emphasis on listening.

Section 14**PATRICK G. SALERNO**

Working with citizens and community groups in the interest of reaching agreement on community priorities, policies and improvements to service has become one of the most essential ingredients of my past successes. I personally enjoy responding to citizen requests and attending community events. I want residents to know we're here for them and they can drop by anytime. This all creates a conduit through which messages from the community pass onto management.

I tend to be an analytical, systematic, logical, and objective problem solver with a great deal of patience weighing pros, cons, and alternatives before making a decision. I plan and organize work and resources on this basis and on the basis of my general familiarity with most of the functions, processes, methods, and workings of the organization. I am able to work well under pressure and to use financial and other management data from widely different sources to manage the organization.

On the other hand, some of my strengths are also my weaknesses. I tend to be detail oriented, and like to work out my thoughts before presenting them publicly. In philosophical discussions, I tend to lecture and, at times, become verbose. Normally patient, once my mind is made up about a situation or person, I tend to become impatient with lack of action, negligence, or incompetency. In balancing my strengths and weaknesses, I believe I am aware of and making the effort to compensate for my weaknesses, that my weaknesses are not major, and that my strengths far outweigh my weaknesses.

I have extensive experience employing performance measures to help manage organizations and staff. I use efficiency measures to consider the amount of service output compared to input such as cost; effectiveness measures to determine the extent to which goals and objectives are met; and lastly I use straightforward workload measures, when appropriate. I have used these various measures to help determine whether processes can be improved, and to achieve sustainable results. Managing the performance measurement program involves the design of communication and reporting mechanisms and periodic review of results. This may include a balanced scorecard, a dashboard system or more traditional reports. The establishment of performance measures is linked to how I have approached the budget process.

It is difficult to single out one accomplishment from the communities I have served. In every post I have been successful at making a real, positive and lasting effect on the quality of life of the community. In some ways, choosing one is like trying to pick which of my children I am most proud. However, I would have to select my role as City Manager in developing a comprehensive plan that demonstrated the financial feasibility of building a "world class" entertainment and sports venue in the City of Sunrise, as that project impacted the lives of so many South Florida residents, and created a projected economic impact of \$4.4 billion over 25 years. At the time, the Florida Panthers of the National Hockey League were threatening to leave South Florida because of a need for a facility where they had an opportunity to maximize revenues. Also, residents in Sunrise, and for that matter, all of Broward and Palm Beach counties had to travel to Miami in order to view first class entertainment and sporting events. This \$225 million public/private partnership was the largest single publicly funded capital improvement ever made in Broward County (not including

Section 14**PATRICK G. SALERNO**

the airport). In the process, I developed a working relationship with Wayne Huizenga, the owner at the time of the Miami Dolphins (NFL), Florida Marlins (MLB), and Florida Panthers (NHL). Mr. Huizenga founded three Fortune 500 companies (Waste Management, Blockbuster Entertainment, and AutoNation) and was named by Ernst & Young as World Entrepreneur of the Year in 2005. He has been kind enough to refer to me as the best city manager he has worked with.

Probably the biggest mistake of my career was a missed opportunity in not competing for DHL's U.S. headquarters. At the time, Sunrise had become the destination of choice for job growth and corporate headquarters in Broward County, when I learned about the DHL opportunity. They planned to start small (under 200 jobs) and hoped to grow. We determined it was not worth competing, especially when we had a lot of other irons in the fire, and they went to a neighboring community, where they did expand. Although this missed opportunity was not publicly known, I knew. At a later point, we did compete when DHL wanted to construct a headquarter complex, and our community was selected. Unfortunately, their business model failed, and they never built the complex. As a result of this, I learned not to rest on my laurels, and redoubled my philosophy that even when a community achieved its job growth goals and is the leader in the area, it must keep moving forward.

I have unfortunately had situations over my career when I have had to terminate certain staff members. My first response is to try to coach or mentor the employee to see if we can address performance issues. If an employee does not seem to be trying hard enough, I try to find the reasons why and work to overcome their barriers to performance. However, sometimes the employee just does not have the skill set to handle the job, and I have had to let them go. I do try to find another position that might suit the individual within the organization if possible. Of course, I terminate an employee who has misused privileges or broken the law more easily.

The challenges for the new City Manager are all issues I have successfully faced:

Creating your own future and how to pay for it. The City must continue to plan for its future financial needs based upon post-recession economic trends in order to address capital improvement needs (facilities, utilities, transportation projects & streetscapes) for aging and new infrastructure. Economic development (creating quality jobs), redevelopment of downtown and other areas, and revitalization of neighborhoods with specific deficiencies need to proceed at the same time the City is challenged with financial constraints. The City needs to continue to focus on prudent management decisions, long term financial planning and spending controls to enhance the City's financial position, deliver quality services, and increase the efficiency and effectiveness of City operations. This will include making real progress toward implementing the suggestions made in the Blue Ribbon Report and addressing GRU related issues.

This would not be my first experience dealing with such challenges. I have a long and proven track record for finding solutions to seemingly insoluble problems, award winning economic

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PATRICK G. SALERNO

development initiatives and significantly improving the financial condition of each of the communities I have served.

Developing a brand strategy that is both respected and cherished. The future requires us to build better places, and in the 21st century, the focus is having a healthy and sustainable lifestyle in the community. Every community competes with every other place for its share of wealth, new residents, and attention. Gainesville needs to continue creating more desirable gathering places - public places where people can gather and connect. The social vitality of a community is found in these places where citizens from all walks of life can interact. These places can also develop and enhance the City's brand to be respected and loved, so that Gainesville is viewed as the first choice that businesses want to be and where people want to live. The challenge is to differentiate the City in the minds of its residents, employers, and potential investors from its competitors. Gainesville needs to be seen as a place thriving on entrepreneurial behavior and what it aspires to be and do.

Building consensus and teamwork. As with all communities, there appears to be many points of view and concerns. There are neighborhood groups and many other stakeholders that need to have a voice in the community. The new City Manager needs to deliver on the goals and objectives established by the Mayor and Commissioners, while still inviting citizen engagement by including all stakeholder concerns and voices in the discussions.

During the first six months, I would do much listening. I would need to get out and meet people as well as create a rapport with the Mayor, Commissioners, staff, and other community leaders along with the press. One-on-one meetings to develop professional relationships and understand the collective agenda are key. I need to take the time to fully understand the City's financial position, desires and aspirations of stakeholders, and staff capabilities. I want to absorb the nature and character of the community for which I am entrusted. I need to understand and empathize with the people and **love** the community that **they love**. Integrating into the community as a private person with my family is also important.

I maintain an open door policy for the news media, as I understand they have a difficult job, and need to meet deadlines. I am responsive to media requests, and feel that the public is entitled to understand the actions of their elected and appointed officials. There is nothing in my background that would be embarrassing to the community. With respect to Gainesville's use of social media, I would evaluate the City's goals and strategic objectives early on and obtain buy-in from the Commission as to any modifications to their social media plan, as appropriate. The plan would promote civic awareness, understanding, and participation in governmental and community affairs. It would be reexamined every six months to a year to make sure expectations are in line with current trends. Social media, among other uses, can reinforce and enhance the Commission's image and increase its visibility in the community; enable the Commission to show that it is listening; help the Commission build a community of interest around specific issues, programs or events; enable the Commission to recognize issues raised by members of the community; and be used to cultivate the Commission's profile in an authentic, conversational, and friendly tone, as

Section 14**PATRICK G. SALERNO**

well as convey the City's **big dreams** and **big personality**. Coral Gables is using social media to spread the word about all it has to offer as well as finding ways to connect, collaborate, and consult.

In my leisure time, I like to travel, attend college sporting events, see live theater, go out to dinner, and spend time with family and friends.

SIX ADJECTIVES OR PHRASES I WOULD USE TO DESCRIBE MYSELF

Strategic & Proactive, Creative, Friendly, Sense of humor, Customer-focused, Problem solver.

REASON FOR LEAVING MOST RECENT JOB

I did not realize it at the time, but I took over as City Manager just a few days before the discovery of a crippling financial/budget crisis that was caused, only in part, by a near-nationwide economic collapse. It was a tremendous challenge to preserve the economic integrity of the City, get it back on sound footing, and then lay the foundation for a sustainable future including the implementation of a citywide renaissance plan comprising significant beautification and infrastructure improvements. These accomplishments required many 7-day weeks of commitment over the course of 5 years. Although there were several factors that influenced my decision, including tension that developed in the relationship with a couple of commissioners, I felt it was time to move on. I was honored to receive a “Key to the City” from the Mayor and agreed to remain available to advise and assist on matters during the transition.

MOST RECENT SALARY

My salary at Coral Gables was \$190,000. \

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CB&A Background Checks

Background Check Summary for PATRICK G. SALERNO

Criminal Records Checks:

Nationwide Criminal Records Search	No Records Found
County	
Miami-Dade County, FL	No Records Found
Broward County, FL	No Records Found
State	
Florida	No Records Found

Civil Records Checks:

County	
Miami-Dade County, FL	No Records Found
Broward County, FL	Records Found May 1999 Temporary / Permanent Injunction against the City of Sunrise including Mr. Salerno Disposition = May 2002 Dismissed with Prejudice
	Record Found June 1999 – Civil Suit against the City of Sunrise including Mr. Salerno accused of stealing development concept. Disposition = August 1999 Dismissed with Prejudice
	<i>*See Personal Disclosure for Candidate Explanation of Records Found</i>

Federal	
Florida	No Records Found

Motor Vehicle

Florida	No Records Found
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Credit

Excellent

Bankruptcy

No Records Found

Education

Confirmed

Employment

Confirmed

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**Background Check Summary for
PATRICK G. SALERNO
Personal Disclosure**

Personal Disclosure Questionnaire

Name of Applicant: PATRICK G. SALERNO

The following questions are designed so that we will be able to make full disclosure to our client concerning your background. Please answer them honestly. Cutting corners or misrepresenting your past will result in you being eliminated from all further searches conducted by this firm. We understand that frivolous charges are sometimes made and that charges do not mean you were guilty. We also understand that you may have been wronged and needed to seek compensation. The bottom line is that we want to be certain that our client is fully informed. If you have any questions, please contact us for clarification.

Please explain any yes answers on a separate sheet of paper.

1. Have you ever been charged or convicted of a felony?
Yes No X
2. Have you ever been accused of or have been involved in a domestic violence or abuse incident?
Yes No X
3. Have you ever declared bankruptcy or been an owner in a business that did so?
Yes No X
4. Have you ever been the subject of a civil rights violation complaint that was investigated or resulted in a lawsuit?
Yes No X
5. Have you ever been the subject of a sexual harassment complaint that was investigated or resulted in a lawsuit?
Yes No X
6. Have you ever been convicted of driving while intoxicated?
Yes No X
7. Have you ever sued a current or former employer?
Yes No X
8. Do you have a personal My Space, Face Book or other type of Web Page?
Yes No X
9. Do you have a personal Twitter Account?
Yes No X
10. Is there anything else in your background that, if made public, would cause you, our client or our firm embarrassment if it came to light through the press or any other mechanism?
Yes No X
11. Please provide a list of any lawsuits in which you are or have been a party either as plaintiff or defendant.

Attested to:

Patrick Salerno

Signature of Applicant

Please email this form via PDF DOCUMENT to kknutson@cb-asso.com or via fax to (888) 539-6531 no later than 9:00 AM CST 03/10/2016.

(Note: Please be sure to sign the form with your actual signature if you are sending Fax or PDF Document)

**Background Check Summary for
PATRICK G. SALERNO
Personal Disclosure Explanation**

Lawsuit Information

No pending lawsuits

Prior lawsuits:

1. In 1999, an individual filed a civil suit against a couple of developers, the City of Sunrise, FL and me in my official capacity as City Manager claiming that a proposed development concept used his general idea for a mixed use project. A motion to dismiss was granted with prejudice within a couple of months of filing.
2. In 1999, a developer sued the City of Sunrise and me in my official capacity as City Manager for an injunction to prevent a competitive development to theirs. The suit was dismissed with prejudice.
3. In 1992, shortly after I became City Manager, an employee filed a writ of mandamus against the City of Sunrise and me in my official capacity as manager regarding the employee's supervisor. The matter was dismissed without prejudice within a couple of months.
4. In 1990, a suit was filed against Cobb County, GA and myself as an employee resulting from a minor fender bender when I was driving a county vehicle.

CB&A Reference Notes

Reference Notes

Patrick G. Salerno

Jim Cason – Mayor, City of Coral Gables, FL 305-409-4061

Mr. Salerno was the City Manager when Mr. Cason became the Mayor in April of 2011. They met in 2010. Mr. Cason was an Ambassador and Foreign Service officer and has had experience with many types of governments. Mr. Salerno is the kind of manager you want to hire during a crisis, especially a financial one. He was asked to turn the city around financially and address personnel issues, which he did extremely well.

The former manager started as an assistant lifeguard and worked his way up to become the manager. He resigned rather than being fired for sexual harassment and falsifying travel vouchers. Mr. Salerno was brought in to restore order. The city was almost bankrupt and was the worst run organization he had ever seen. Everyone had given themselves pay increases and instead of having a surplus, the city was six million dollars short in the budget with a reserve of \$157,000. He brought order to the chaos, got the team working together, and put money into infrastructure instead of salaries.

In 2001 the pension was funded at 105% and \$5 million dollars of the budget was spent on pension obligations. In 2010 the number had dropped to 47% and pension obligations increased to \$26 million. Coral Gables was the most indebted per capita in the state of Florida. Mr. Salerno increased the reserves to \$30 million. He hired extremely competent management across the top and managed pension reform. He refinanced the city debt to 3.4% fixed for 20 years, using the savings to fund a renaissance program so they could avoid raising taxes. The millage rate was lowered three years in a row. He reduced staff by 100 in the first year, then started infrastructure projects, built up the reserves and has moved onto other major projects. He is very likeable and quite focused on his work.

Mr. Salerno knows when to finance and where to find funding opportunities. He has created many public / private partnerships and put together very complex bonds and taxing districts. He has impeccable ethics. If you meet him for a coffee he pays for his order, rather than allowing others to buy it for him. Coral Gables competed for the most likeable small town in the world and won second place. Mr. Salerno insisted that everyone fly economy to China to accept the award as the tickets were purchased with public funds.

Mr. Salerno presents all angles of an agenda item, which makes it easy for the elected officials to vote. He worked weekends interviewing candidates; he keeps a position vacant until he finds the right person. He beautified the city by adding parks and fountains. He led a project to place 250,000 previously extinct orchids in the trees. He passed a tree succession plan to replace 30,000 dead trees. He purchased new trees at a price several times lower than the rate he would have paid to the Department of Transportation.

When Mr. Salerno was hired the Biltmore Hotel owed the city \$5 million dollars. He worked out a strategy to prove that the bill was accurate and convinced the hotel to pay it. Mr. Salerno started the process of a streetscape project and created a mechanism to fund it. His core strength is financial acumen and he is very innovative in financing.

Reference Notes

Patrick G. Salerno

Prior to Mr. Salerno's arrival the organization was very informal; employees came in when they wanted and worked when they felt like it. He changed the culture of the organization and demanded high performance. He worked 80 hours per week. When he worked Saturday, the staff worked Saturday.

Mr. Salerno attended chamber events and spoke at chamber meetings and rotary clubs. He was more of an in-house leader, the politicians interfaced with residents. He hired an assistant to oversee operations so he could focus on strategic planning. Even so, everyone knew him and no one had a major complaint except union members who were unhappy with the outcome of the negotiations and employees who had been demoted.

As the Mayor, Mr. Cason is the only elected official to come into the office every day. Mr. Salerno frequently checked in to discuss projects and concerns. He communicated mostly in person, but also through email and the telephone. He held weekly pre-agenda meetings. If an item was not ready for the public meeting, he removed it.

Mr. Salerno frequently drove around the city. He saw a really nice area in the southern region for a park. He worked with a design firm to create an excellent design. He worked with advisory boards, the designer and staff. He noticed a drainage problem and delayed the opening until it was fixed. He included exercise equipment which was well received by the residents. The park is open and has received rave reviews from residents.

The former city manager and individuals at the University of Miami had a personality conflict which led to a very poor relationship between the two entities. Mr. Salerno developed a good relationship with the University and they even named onion rings after him.

Unions did not like him because he squeezed the last drop out during negotiations. Those who have not worked in government sometimes complained that Mr. Salerno was slow in completing assignments. Municipal governance has more steps by nature. The elected officials in Coral Gables believe in total transparency so every step needs to be done correctly while listening to constituents. While projects did not always move fast, they were all done extremely well and residents were happy. He produces a quality product.

Mr. Salerno is superbly ethical and a solid individual. Nothing in his personal or professional life would embarrass an employer. Mr. Cason would hire Mr. Salerno especially in difficult situations. His talents are best utilized in a city in crisis. He is a consummate manager.

Words or phrases used to describe Patrick Salerno:

- Extremely ethical,
- Financially astute,
- Problem solver,
- Analytical,

Reference Notes

Patrick G. Salerno

- Hard working, and
- Good judge of talent.

Strengths: Absolutely superb in finances, impeccable ethics, very analytical, works through every issue, extremely hard working, problem solving, interested in the quality of life, superb negotiator, very loyal, very likeable.

Weaknesses: He demoted a few employees rather than terminating their employment. They then badmouthed Mr. Salerno to others, which affected morale. Also, if he does not trust employees, he does their work.

Howard Cohen – Reporter, Miami Herald, FL 305-376-3619

Mr. Cohen has known Mr. Salerno since 2009. For a number of years Mr. Cohen covered Coral Gables. Managers can affect significant change in businesses in the city. They did not always agree on what Mr. Cohen wrote, but Mr. Salerno made sure the facts were right.

When Mr. Salerno came to Coral Gables they were on the brink of financial disaster. They had very little in reserves, which was hidden by the previous administration and only discovered after Mr. Salerno was hired. Through some tough measures and hard changes he grew the reserves to \$21 million at the time that Mr. Cohen was reassigned. While it takes more than one person to turn a city around, Mr. Salerno put the wheels in motion and the right people in place to make it happen. He is very well respected as a financial wizard and accomplished much in spite of the economic downturn.

When making decisions Mr. Salerno takes the time to weigh the options. He pays attention to details and does not make rash decisions. He has a very strict operating style and is very demanding of employees. He hired the best applicants because they generate better results.

Coral Gables has a very popular downtown district that is in desperate need of new parking garages. Mr. Salerno conducted studies to review different design ideas. He weighed the options heavily before making a presentation to the Commission. His idea for the parking garages was very innovative and while every Commissioner did not vote yes, he received enough votes to move forward.

Coral Gables is one of the wealthiest and finest communities in the state. Mr. Salerno stepped into an entrenched community with old rules and extremely tough zoning codes. He had to work with elected officials and residents to change the culture. He left the city in a better position than he found it. He successfully managed Sunrise for 18 years. He led many quality development projects in both communities that were well received and will last for years to come.

Reference Notes

Patrick G. Salerno

Complex formulas are used to determine the millage rate and property tax. Mr. Salerno is very approachable and good at explaining complex ideas. He broke the budget down until everyone had the facts right. He never became exasperated even if he had to explain an item multiple times. He or the staff provided everything needed whether it was public information or a file request.

Actors' Playhouse at the Miracle is a historic theater. Mr. Salerno attended a number of shows to support them. The Merrick House has seven public events a year, which Mr. Salerno attended. He does not want to be on stage cutting the ribbon as he is not a politician, but he attends events in the community to show support and monitor how it is working.

Mr. Salerno is very personable and enjoyable to work with. He made sure that Mr. Cohen knew about every important meeting and provided other information as needed.

To address the budget crisis, Mr. Salerno dismissed employees who were not performing, tightened departments and hired new department heads. Some employees collected paychecks for years without doing their work. His legacy in Coral Gables is turning the organization around after it had been mishandled.

Every city manager is involved in controversy. One commissioner did not like Mr. Salerno and always found a way to argue even when they agreed on the issue. Commissioners did not always approve of his style and felt morale was low. When you have to make tough decisions, reduce staff and change the cultural not everyone will like you. He had support of three commissioners and the Mayor, and weathered controversy just fine.

Mr. Cohen is not aware of any embarrassing incidents in Mr. Salerno's past and would be surprised if anything were discovered. Everything in his professional life is public record. Mr. Cohen was surprised when Mr. Salerno resigned and does not know the reason why.

Mr. Cohen would hire Mr. Salerno. He always returned calls and worked extremely hard. He has a proven track record. He is a very successful manager who achieves results. Sunrise and Coral Gables are thriving communities.

Words or phrases used to describe Patrick Salerno:

- Professional,
- Tenacious,
- Thorough,
- Experienced,
- Tough, and
- Tireless.

Strengths: Brilliant in financial management, leadership, very conscientious.

Reference Notes Patrick G. Salerno

Weaknesses: He is the first to admit that he is not warm and fuzzy. However, he is cordial and very much a manager. Some complained that he was tough.

Carol Brock – Senior Advisory Board, City of Coral Gables, FL 305-441-8100

Ms. Brock has known Mr. Salerno since 2009. She worked closely with him. He is an excellent manager. His ability to take a city almost bankrupt and increase reserves to \$29 million was impressive.

A quarter of the population is over 50 years of age but the community has no adult activity center. Ms. Brock met with government leaders over the years to discuss the construction of a center but was unsuccessful. Mr. Salerno came to Coral Gables and was receptive to the idea. He was very creative in financing the project. He funded \$3 million dollars through a neighborhood renaissance program and another \$2 million dollars through bond offerings. The senior center is ready for construction; the contract was well negotiated before Mr. Salerno left.

Mr. Salerno knows what it takes to accomplish a goal. He can be demanding in his efforts to move the community in the right direction and achieve the goals of the Commission. He beautified the city, paved streets, and lowered taxes every year of his tenure. He attracted industry; a number of large corporations moved their headquarters to Coral Gables. He was very good at hiring talented individuals.

Most of the citizens in Coral Gables were upset to hear of Mr. Salerno's resignation. The pension plans created by the former manager were unreasonable; employees could retire early at 100% of their salary. Everyone wanted to be employed by the city. Mr. Salerno dismissed several employees to stop the outgo of unnecessary funds. He restructured pension plans for police and fire departments. His actions did not make him popular with all of the employees but he is very capable of making hard decisions to better the organization and community.

Mr. Salerno is very responsive and quickly returns calls. They talked on the phone on numerous occasions. They met in person two to three times per month. He was innovative in the financial structuring for the senior center. He is a change agent and he also maintains operations at a very high performance level. When he discovered that items were charged incorrectly, he immediately fixed it.

Mr. Salerno was very visible in the community and worked more hours than any other manager employed by Coral Gables. He was responsive to the residents. When they requested that their street be paved, he made sure it happened. Coral Gables was voted the second best and most livable city of its size through the leadership of Mr. Salerno.

Managers always face controversy. An issue arose with the police department but in working through the process Mr. Salerno significantly improved the department. The employees he

Reference Notes Patrick G. Salerno

dismissed for not performing, or those with a reduced pension, might have negative feelings about Mr. Salerno but he made decisions that were best for the city.

Ms. Brock has not looked into Mr. Salerno's background but is unaware of anything that might embarrass an employer.

Ms. Brock would hire Mr. Salerno. The city is beautiful and taxes are lower. He is a great financial manager and overseer.

Words or phrases used to describe Patrick Salerno:

- Hard working,
- Industrious,
- Innovative,
- Good problem solver, and
- Very good manager.

Strengths: Visionary, significantly improved the city, excellent at attracting and keeping top notch employees.

Weaknesses: Some managers meet with staff to achieve buy in before moving forward, which can impede the process. He is too strong from the top down but he needed to manage this way in order to accomplish his goals. The city was in a dire financial position and only survived through Mr. Salerno's leadership.

Lori St. John – Chief Compliance Officer (Internal Auditor), City of Coral Gables, FL 303-906-8656

Ms. St. John has known Mr. Salerno since 2009 and reported directly to him until 2014. She has worked as a Certified Public Accountant and an Attorney for over 35 years. Mr. Salerno is one of the best supervisors she has ever had. She lived in Coral Gables before his arrival and saw the tremendous progress that occurred through his excellent leadership. The mayor gave him a key to the city when he left. He is extremely ethical and was an amazing asset. She holds him in very high regard and was sorry to see him leave.

They had frequent interactions. Ms. St. John reviews all operations, measures efficiency and audits the Biltmore Hotel and park services. She saw Mr. Salerno's work firsthand and understands how much he improved the organization.

The Human Resource Director has the final hiring decision but Mr. Salerno plays a very active role in the hiring process. He is very good at attracting talent, interviewing applicants and fettering out those who would be weak employees.

Reference Notes

Patrick G. Salerno

In general, Mr. Salerno's decisions are very good. He is definitely a visionary. He likes efficiency and avoids wasting staff time and financial resources. He accomplished much in the community through innovation.

Many residents have commented that Mr. Salerno was very visible in the community. Residents saw his efforts to improve the city. He is very ethical and does not play political games. He focuses on doing what is right for the community.

When Mr. Salerno came to the city he interviewed many of the employees, most new managers only interview directors. He wanted to hear from everyone, which was brilliant. In order to change the culture he had to get to the bones of the structure which is not always accomplished by talking to the directors.

As the compliance officer Ms. Brock has to remain independent. Mr. Salerno kept her informed to an appropriate level. He was careful not to provide information that she should not know but made sure she had the information she needed.

Mr. Salerno is a visionary and a leader. He leads by example and others follow him. He is a strong leader, which is what Coral Gables needed.

The Biltmore Hotel had not paid rent to the city for several years. They made a ludicrous argument that a federal statute absolved them from this debt. Mr. Salerno expertly negotiated with the Hotel and proved that the statute did not apply to them, and they paid the rent due. Strong arming the hotel would have blocked all communications. Mr. Salerno was very strong, communicated well and moved forward. He walked a delicate balance to resolve a very complex and political problem.

Mr. Salerno will serve the community if it is in the best interest of the organization, he is always ethical. He weighs the request, seeks input from others and works with residents to achieve their goals. He truly wants the best for the community.

Ms. St. John is unaware of any personal or professional controversies involving Mr. Salerno. He resigned because he felt it was time to move on. Any manager is liked by some and not by others, but she is unaware of anyone who would disagree with the comments in this reference. With change comes resistance, but Mr. Salerno worked through the resistance for the betterment of the organization.

Ms. St. John would hire Mr. Salerno and wishes he was still managing Coral Gables. She hopes the next manager is at least half the person Mr. Salerno is. He is a strong leader and a great asset. His resignation was a loss to Coral Gables.

Words or phrases used to describe Patrick Salerno:

- Tremendous visionary,
- Builds a strong management team,

Reference Notes

Patrick G. Salerno

- Highly principled,
- Collaborative, and
- Strong negotiator.

Strengths: Incredible vision, finds solutions to difficult problems, strong financial management skills, enhances the quality of life, can-do attitude, very analytical, very ethical.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Cindy Birdsill – Economic Sustainability Director, City of Coral Gables, FL 305-903-9112

Ms. Birdsill was hired by Mr. Salerno in 2009. She has learned much from him and is impressed by the way he led the organization. He has a strong sense of best practices for an organization.

Interactions are always very professional. Mr. Salerno is respectful of an employee's knowledge base. He has a good sense of the strengths and weaknesses of staff. He involved directors in projects and helped them understand the direction of the organization. Employees felt valued and part of the team.

One of Mr. Salerno's strengths is hiring personnel. The directors he brought into Coral Gables are extremely well educated. He hires those who have the right intentions; public servants who care about their job and want to do the right thing.

The residents were overwhelmingly happy with Mr. Salerno's performance, he turned the city around. They were in a poor financial position. Watching departments become more efficient and effective was incredible, especially the developmental services department. He is a consummate professional and completes work in a timely fashion.

While Mr. Salerno is a change agent and he maintains an organization at a high performance level, his strongest trait is innovation. He researches other cities to find best practices that could benefit the community. He led some wonderful economic development projects and is well known in Sunrise and Coral Gables for his strong economic development vision.

Not only did Mr. Salerno attend public events, he asked employees to create events like the Fourth of July celebration. Residents are the top priority. His philosophy is that employees must always be respectful, responsive and assist residents to the extent that they can. He is always available to meet with residents and employees. He has a good sense of what the community values and desire. Everything the staff did was for the betterment of the community.

Coral Gables is known for its architecture and is called the city beautiful. Mr. Salerno noticed an underutilized park in a very populated area. He listened to what the residents wanted. He worked

Reference Notes

Patrick G. Salerno

with an outside design team, public works and the communications staff to renovate the park. He added drinking fountains with chilled water that includes a spout for dogs. The project had many stake holders but he was very successful in creating something beautiful that also functioned well.

The controversies in Coral Gables are typical for the public sector. Nothing in his background would embarrass an employer. While some might disagree with some of the statements in this reference, everyone would agree that every decision Mr. Salerno made was in the best interest of the community. He resigned from Coral Gables and is ready for his next adventure.

Ms. Birdsill would hire Mr. Salerno and highly recommends him. She came from the private sector and learned much from him. He taught her about giving back to the community. She truly enjoyed working with him.

Words or phrases used to describe Patrick Salerno:

- Very intelligent,
- Good strategic thinker,
- Very sound financial decisions,
- Moves the city forward in a positive way,
- Extremely principled, and
- Honest.

Strengths: Exceedingly ethical, very smart, strategic planner and thinker, very strong financially, works on a detailed level but has extremely good vision.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Mark Trowbridge – President and CEO, Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce, FL 305-725-5571 305-446-1657

Mr. Trowbridge has known Mr. Salerno since 2009. A chamber's relationship with the manager is critical. Of the three managers Mr. Trowbridge has interacted with, Mr. Salerno was the easiest to work with and the most responsive. He enjoyed their working relationship very much.

Mr. Salerno's job performance is excellent. Hiring quality personnel is one of his strengths, he chooses individuals who are highly educated and very responsive. They are all top notch professionals. The building director has one of the most difficult jobs in the city, he is doing extremely well.

Mr. Salerno showed innovation in reorganizing current staff to create a more business friendly environment. He was very open to ideas from the chamber and involved staff to achieve goals and objectives.

Reference Notes

Patrick G. Salerno

Mr. Salerno attends the chamber breakfast, some of the events and the ribbon cuttings. He is fairly visible in the community and ensures that employees are visible as well. He did a great job balancing public interactions with elected officials who want to be in the limelight. He worked very well with the public, taking time to meet with property owners who had questions. He is always receptive and responsive to constituents.

Mr. Trowbridge and Mr. Salerno were working on a significant project and had daily conversations. Sometimes they brainstormed on big picture items and discussed how the chamber could participate.

Mr. Salerno led the Miracle Mile streetscape project. Progress continued without pause even after his departure, which is a testament of his leadership. He managed projects related to parking, innovations and new technology. He allowed employees to bring ideas to the forefront.

Controversy is typical when hiring or reducing personnel. At times Mr. Salerno had to push the city in a certain direction. Nothing in his personal background would concern an employer. He resigned because he felt it was time to step away. While some of the activists in the community might disagree with the statements in this reference, it should be noted that they do not work in government or completely understand the environment.

Mr. Trowbridge would hire Mr. Salerno. Managers often put the business community second to residents but Mr. Salerno always made Mr. Trowbridge feel important and valued the Chamber's contribution. He is a great manager.

Words or phrases used to describe Patrick Salerno:

- Subject matter expert,
- Financial wizard,
- Excellent procurer of talent,
- Responsive,
- Open to new ideas, and
- Very comfortable with the role of the chamber.

Strengths: Great problem solver, sees the big pictures, resolves issues, financial wizard.

Weaknesses: Sometimes he is hyper focused on an issue and may need a reminder to keep everyone in the loop.

Bill Kerdyk – Vice Mayor, City of Coral Gables, FL 305-801-5931

Mr. Kerdyk has known Mr. Salerno since 2009. Overall Mr. Salerno's job performance is good. He is responsive to the elected officials and attentive to their needs. He works very hard to hire excellent upper level staff. His decisions in general have benefitted the community.

Reference Notes Patrick G. Salerno

Mr. Salerno was frequently at community events. He kept everyone very well informed and was effective when working with the public. He helps the elected officials create a vision and then rallies the employees around it.

In 2008 the economy was in bad shape and reserves dropped to an all-time low. Mr. Salerno increased reserves to \$28 million during his tenure. He was given a very difficult situation and greatly improved it through difficult but necessary measures.

Mr. Salerno is customer service oriented. He is timely in completing tasks but has much on his plate and cannot always address items as quickly as desired. However, delays are normal in a bureaucracy. Overall he did a fairly good job of accomplishing tasks in a timely manner.

Mr. Salerno has been involved in controversy due to the nature of his job, but he has never been implicated in any personal controversies. He resigned because he wanted to move on. Some in the organization felt that he micro managed too much and might disagree with this reference. However, Mr. Salerno had a number of challenges to overcome.

Mr. Kerdyk would hire Mr. Salerno and considers him to be a great manager. He came in at a very difficult time and turned the organization around.

Words or phrases used to describe Patrick Salerno:

- Extremely hard worker,
- Innovative,
- Problem solver,
- Honest,
- Fixer, and
- Excellent financial.

Strengths: Tireless worker, extremely good financially, selects quality staff.

Weaknesses: He sometimes micromanaged when he lacked confidence in the upper level managers.

Anna Louise Fulks – Vice Chair, Landscape Advisory Board, City of Coral Gables, FL 305-446-7420

Ms. Fulks has known Mr. Salerno since 2009. She is very involved on the landscape advisory board and on environment related issues. Her focus is protecting the boundary lines as developers want to build on every patch of green in the community.

Reference Notes

Patrick G. Salerno

Ms. Fulks has lived in her current home for 45 years and in the Miami area for 75 years. After Mr. Salerno was hired, the streets were repaved and potholes fixed. He resolved many issues and did a tremendous job of returning the city to its beautiful state.

Coral Gables was in dire straits, operating in the red with significant debt and the organization was dysfunctional. Mr. Salerno turned operations around and left them with a cushion, which was a herculean feat.

Mr. Salerno hired top individuals from around the world. His decisions are good. He is innovative and he maintains the organization at a high level of performance. He encouraged staff to fulfill the organization's vision. He is very customer services oriented. He is the best financial manager. Even though Mr. Salerno is very busy, he always returns calls. He worked overtime and was always available. He attends community meetings. He handled one-on-one interactions beautifully. When speaking to the public as a group, he relayed his point and helped residents see the benefits of a decision. He did a tremendous job.

Segovia Street had difficulties with traffic, violations and accidents. Mr. Salerno created a streetscape plan to address the issues. He repaved the road and placed large oaks down the center. His improvements will be visible for years to come. He also replaced palm trees in front of the University of Miami that had been removed. He did a superb job.

Trying to negotiate finances with the police union became controversial. Nothing in Mr. Salerno's background would embarrass an employer. Ms. Fulks is sorry that he decided to leave and wishes he was still managing Coral Gables.

Ms. Fulks would hire Mr. Salerno without question. He left the city with a \$28 million dollar reserve and did much to improve the community.

Words or phrases used to describe Patrick Salerno:

- Hard worker,
- Honest,
- Go-getter
- Trustworthy,
- Responsible, and
- Friend.

Strengths: Excellent captain ensuring everything runs smoothly.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Reference Notes Patrick G. Salerno

Chip Withers – Former Commissioner, City of Coral Gables, FL 305-216-7972 305-702-7427

Mr. Withers was on the hiring panel that selected Mr. Salerno. He is an excellent manager. He interacts with the commissioners in person, through the telephone and during commission meetings.

Mr. Salerno makes good decisions both when hiring personnel and in general. He is innovative, a change agent and he maintains an organization at a high performance level.

While Mr. Salerno interacts with the public very well, he does not often attend community events. He keeps the elected officials very well informed and manages processes within the organization.

Coral Gables was in a difficult financial position; Mr. Salerno negotiated union contracts that resulted in immediate savings. He dealt with big picture customer service concerns. For example, he ensured that residents had police protection. He did not personally retrieve a cat from a resident's tree.

Mr. Salerno is a problem solver. His strength is in financial management. His work is completed in a timely fashion.

A traffic situation related to a median was controversial. Mr. Salerno handled it very well by being transparent and providing information to those concerned. His background is clear of any incident that might embarrass a potential employer.

Mr. Salerno left Coral Gables after a new commission was elected. He felt it was time to move on. Some in the community would disagree with this reference but Mr. Withers declined to comment on what they would say about Mr. Salerno.

Mr. Withers would hire Mr. Salerno. He is an excellent manager.

Words or phrases used to describe Patrick Salerno:

- Strong financial skills,
- Believer in sustainability,
- Appreciative of cultural assets,
- Bottom line,
- Demands of employees what he demands of himself, and
- Builds strong senior management.

Strengths: Vision and financial controls.

Weaknesses: He sometimes expects too much from others.

Reference Notes Patrick G. Salerno

Steven Feren – Mayor, City of Sunrise, FL 954-562-6767

Mayor Feren served as a City Commissioner from 1987-1996. He was then was elected Mayor in 1996 and held that position until 2008. Mayor Feren ranks Mr. Salerno as the best City Manager in the state of Florida.

Mr. Salerno maintained open lines of communication with the Commissioners and kept them well informed. He was careful and took his time making decisions so he could get it right the first time. The staff in Sunrise, many of which he hired, is well qualified and has been stable during his tenure. Mr. Salerno was a leader and accomplished his tasks in a timely manner.

In 2007 the residents were surveyed about the city government. Seventy-three percent (73%) were pleased with the way the City was being run. Mr. Salerno still has very positive name recognition in the community. He was customer service oriented and never wanted a resident to feel ignored. After Commission meetings, he assigned a staff member to get the name and phone number of individuals who made complaints or asked questions at the meeting so the City could follow up.

Hurricane Wilma devastated Sunrise, destroyed City Hall and left about 1,500 people without homes, many of them elderly. Mr. Salerno discovered the contractor rebuilding these homes was not working quickly and the quality of work was substandard. Further, the residents were spending thousands of dollars for temporary living arrangements. Mr. Salerno created the Hurricane Wilma Relief Program and devoted \$6 million of the City's reserves to help pay living expenses. No other city or county in the state implemented this kind of program.

In another case, Mr. Salerno had a study done on the undeveloped land in Sunrise. It determined the best use of the land to ensure growth and a high quality life for the residents and businesses. The largest mall in the Southeast was constructed on this land, along with a corporate center that houses many Fortune 500 companies and the NHL Florida Panthers hockey arena.

Mr. Salerno improved the quality of life in the City by upgrading codes (so that developers have to meet higher standards), redeveloping older areas and accomplishing projects that were perceived as unattainable. He convinced developers to build the first upscale high-rise condominiums inland, instead of on the beach, and these have proven successful.

Mayor Feren recommends Mr. Salerno for any City/County Manager position.

Words or phrases used to describe Patrick Salerno:

- Modest,
- Gives Commission all the credit,
- Hardworking,
- Intelligent,
- Supportive of employees,

Reference Notes

Patrick G. Salerno

- Loyal to employees, and
- Innovative.

Strengths: His ability to market the City to corporate entities. He is good at finance, understands budgetary issues, and is able to run the day-to-day operations while moving major projects forward.

Weaknesses: He could have been more patient with people who presented false information or do not know what they are talking about.

Fran Klauber – Former City Commissioner, City of Sunrise, FL **954-749-0297 954-290-6693**

Ms. Klauber was on the City Commission from 1989-2001 and works for the Office of Government Relations for the school district. Mr. Salerno is an excellent City Manager.

Mr. Salerno educated the Commission, worked well with them, and promoted consensus. Even if one or two did not agree with the majority, he worked with them to help them understand the project and at least go along with it. He kept the Commissioners well informed because he knew that to make the best decisions, they need to know all of the facts. He also worked at a pace that pleased the Commission.

The residents appreciated Mr. Salerno and even voted to have one of the streets adjacent to the Florida Panther Arena named after him. He was approachable and talked to everyone who came to his office. He made sure complaints were resolved, even if it took six months to do so. He respected his staff, had high expectations for them and led by example. He asked employees for their input and held them accountable. He made certain that the second in command was well trained and able to do their department head's job. Thus, when a department head retired, a replacement was ready to step in without further training, which kept projects moving forward.

Ms. Klauber feels that Sunrise used to be just an ordinary community, but because of Mr. Salerno's hard work, it has now become one of the top areas in Florida. He made the city financially strong while lowering property taxes. The biggest change to the City's status occurred with the construction of the Florida Panthers Arena. Wayne Huizenga, owner of the Miami Dolphins and the Florida Panthers, worked with Mr. Salerno to put together a deal for the arena. There was competition from larger cities, but Mr. Huizenga stated that Mr. Salerno was the deciding factor in relocating to Sunrise.

Mr. Salerno also helped create a corporate center and redeveloped the east side of Sunrise. The city even paid for some of the storefront reconstruction where owners could not afford the costs. These things have spurred a new pride in the city, and residents have followed this example by taking the initiative to clean up their own yards and neighborhoods.

Reference Notes Patrick G. Salerno

Ms. Klauber highly recommends Mr. Salerno for any City/County Manager position.

Words or phrases used to describe Patrick Salerno:

- Visionary,
- Self-Motivated,
- Hardworking,
- Passionate,
- Energetic, and
- Creative.

Strengths: He understands the Commission's goals and makes them a reality. His management and financial skills are outstanding.

Weaknesses: He does not like to speak outside of city meetings, and prefers that the City Commissioners perform that function.

**Jeff Olson – Former City Attorney, City of Sunrise, FL
954-255-1107 954-788-7898 954-868-9011**

Mr. Olson worked with Mr. Salerno from 1989-2003 as the Assistant City Attorney and the City Attorney. Mr. Salerno is a first rate City Manager.

In order to last seventeen years as the City Manager, you must be able to get things done and to be able to work well with the Commission, staff and the public. In fact, all held him in high regard. He gave all the credit to the Commissioners and little to himself. He was given awards from different community organizations, including the Chamber of Commerce. He made himself available to the residents and the Commissioners to ensure that everyone was well informed. The city's staff was stable with very little turnover. Mr. Salerno developed a pension plan that improved the retention of employees.

Mr. Salerno was not the most dynamic public speaker, but he is capable and comfortable in that setting. He responds well to questions from Commissioners and residents. Mr. Salerno was constantly dealing with controversial issues but he presented issues well and was able to sell it to the community so effectively that when the decision was made, very few were opposed to it.

When Mr. Salerno started, the city was in financial trouble. He instituted fiscal restraints, was frugal with resources, planned for both the present and the future, found innovative ways to fund general operations, and negotiated lease/purchase agreements to save money. The result was the City became financially sound and quite prosperous after a few years. Due to his efforts, the City was able to meet the need for capital improvements without incurring debt.

Reference Notes

Patrick G. Salerno

When Mr. Salerno arrived, Sunrise was not particularly well known for anything. Due to his hard work and vision, it is now an entertainment, retail and corporate focal point for South Florida. One major project was the acquisition of the Florida Panthers Civic Arena. Mr. Salerno went to the County and the team and convinced them to locate the center in Sunrise. He also helped get the largest shopping mall in the Southeast built in the City. To bring in corporate headquarters, he implemented controls in parts of the City to prevent the building of warehouses and to encourage corporate offices. This effort and his marketing acumen have drawn many Fortune 500 companies to the area.

Mr. Olson is the Deputy General Counsel for South Florida Regional Transportation which operates the rail system in Miami-Dade County. Coral Gables is a prominent community in the County and as such Mr. Olson has followed Mr. Salerno's career. The strengths that he exhibited in Sunrise were demonstrated again during his tenure in Coral Gables.

Mr. Olson feels that the knowledge that Mr. Salerno has, particularly in finance, will be an asset to any community and especially in Florida with the property tax limits.

Words or phrases used to describe Patrick Salerno:

- Modest,
- Financially Creative,
- Thoughtful Decision Maker,
- Dedicated,
- Astute, and
- Innovative.

Strengths: His knowledge of government finance and economic development. Also, he helped the Commission establish a vision, and then put a plan in place to meet that vision.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Prepared by: Lynelle Klein
Colin Baenziger & Associates

CB&A Internet Research

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
PATRICK G. SALERNO
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Herald, The (FL)

April 22, 2014

Commissioners miffed over last-minute raises

Author: *Joey Flechas, jflechas@MiamiHerald.com*

Coral Gables commissioners were unhappy to learn Tuesday that former City Manager **Pat Salerno** gave last-minute raises to half a dozen city employees before his resignation took effect last week. Before his resignation became effective at 5 p.m. April 18, **Salerno** conducted evaluations for seven people who work in the manager's office, many with evaluations that should have been done last summer and fall. They received merit raises of 2.5 percent and in some cases, 4 percent for exceptional performance.

According to the city's personnel regulations, employees are entitled to annual evaluations that can come with raises, depending on their evaluation score. The employee can receive raises up to the point that they reach the maximum salary in their pay range.

The eleventh-hour move left city commissioners miffed, and the issue was raised at Tuesday's meeting. "I hate the way it was carried out," said Commissioner Frank Quesada. Vice Mayor Bill Kerdyk Jr. echoed Quesada and the other commissioners, saying the raises didn't bother him so much as the timing. "It pains us all how this was handled," he said, adding that although the move may irk the commission, individual employee salaries are not an area directly governed by commissioners. Elsa Jaramillo-Perez, the city's human resources director, told the commission **Salerno** had followed all city regulations while conducting evaluations for employees who worked in his office and had not already reached their maximum salary.

Salerno told the Miami Herald on Tuesday he had been informed by human resources in his last few days that he owed evaluations to four employees eligible for raises and one who was could not get a raise due to having recently been hired. Two other employees directly asked him for evaluations. He said it would have been unfair to the employees to not evaluate them because he was their outgoing supervisor and only he could give them what was they were owed. "If I did not do it, I would have left them in limbo," he said.

Commissioners wondered about other city employees who were in the same position who did not get evaluated, but **Salerno** noted that he handled the employees in his office that he was notified about, and each department director signs off on his or her own employees' evaluations. "They don't come to me," he said. "HR is the one who stays on top of [directors] to make sure that they're doing their evaluations."

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Miami Herald, The (FL)

April 9, 2014

Departure of Coral Gables Manager Pat Salerno reveals deeper tensions with some commissioners

Author: *Joey Flechas, jflechas@MiamiHerald.com*

The sudden resignation of Coral Gables City Manager **Pat Salerno** has given residents a view of rising tensions between the manager, known for his hard-charging style, and some of the city's top elected leaders. **Salerno's** five years as manager were, by all accounts, marked by good financial stewardship of the city. So some were left shocked by his decision to resign, which he announced at Tuesday's City Commission meeting.

Even though the move was abrupt, not all commissioners were surprised. The two newest commissioners - Vince Lago and Patricia Keon, both elected last April - have expressed frustration with **Salerno** at recent commission meetings. And a recent meeting revealed fissures between **Salerno** and City Attorney Craig Leen. Keon said Wednesday she had heard speculation about **Salerno's** resignation for a few weeks. She added that even though she never had issues with his work, city staff members had approached her with complaints about his management style.

In 2012, **Salerno** barely survived a move to oust him by former Commissioner Maria Anderson, who said at the time that she had heard similar complaints from city employees. He kept his job by a 3-2 vote. "I think it would have served him well to be more open to suggestion, more open to criticism," Keon said, adding that his style, which has been described as brusque, was better-suited for City Hall in 2009, when the city faced a budget crisis. **Salerno** had previously served as the city manager of Sunrise for 18 years.

Salerno's relationship with Lago has grown even more strained. In recent months, Lago grew increasingly frustrated with the manager's office while seeking information about traffic accidents on Ponce de Leon Boulevard. Lago had requested accident statistics and received incomplete reports from the manager's office.

Acting City Manager Carmen Olazabal, who had worked under **Salerno**, said Tuesday that the reports - which came from the police department - were inaccurate. Lago had planned to get clarification from **Salerno** on his requests for data at Tuesday's meeting before **Salerno** resigned.

"I was surprised, and I was looking for answers," Lago said Wednesday. During a March commission meeting, a tense discussion on the dais saw **Salerno** disagreeing with Leen on an interpretation of the city charter. Leen reports to the commission, as does **Salerno**.

Commissioners were considering a vote to have the commission aide position - someone to assist commissioners with clerical duties - report to the commission instead of to the manager. **Salerno**

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disagreed with Leen's opinion that the commission had the authority to create such a job. In the end, the commission voted to move the position to the city clerk's office. "There was absolutely tension at that meeting," said Commissioner Frank Quesada. Quesada said he had not expected **Salerno** to resign, noting that he had never had problems with the manager.

With **Salerno's** last day set for April 18, Olazabal, an assistant city manager, will be acting manager until the commission's next meeting, scheduled for 9 a.m. April 22 at City Hall, 405 Biltmore Way. At that meeting, the commission will name an interim manager and discuss the search process for a new, permanent administrator.

The city says it wants to conduct a national search for a new top administrator. Whoever gets the job will oversee a \$195 million budget to run the city of 48,000 people.

Meanwhile, **Salerno** said he continued to get a steady stream of phone calls and emails Wednesday from people offering support and asking him to reconsider. He said he has not changed his mind, adding that he is spending his final days tying up loose ends. "I'm tidying up, closing up things, talking to staff and making them aware of various initiatives and projects there are," he said.

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(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Herald, The (FL)
April 8, 2014

Coral Gables City Manager Pat Salerno quits unexpectedly
Author: *Joey Flechas, jflechas@MiamiHerald.com*

Days after his five-year anniversary as city manager in Coral Gables, **Pat Salerno** unexpectedly resigned during a City Commission meeting Tuesday morning. A longtime municipal administrator with many fans and critics both on and off the dais, **Salerno** left many in City Hall shocked with his decision, which is effective April 18. Rumbblings of his resignation filled City Hall after **Salerno** was absent during the first part of the meeting.

After an unusual break from the meeting, **Salerno** took his seat at the dais to make his announcement. The manager known for his no-nonsense demeanor showed emotion as he spoke softly. "It's been an honor to serve this commission and the people of Coral Gables," he told the commission before handing over his seat to assistant manager Carmen Olazabal. He later told the Miami Herald that no single event led to his decision, saying it's time to move on, although others pointed to the rising tension between him and some of the commissioners.

The Commission voted Tuesday 4-1 to accept **Salerno's** resignation, with Mayor Jim Cason dissenting. Afterward, they lauded **Salerno** for his attention to the city's bottom line in the lean years after the Great Recession. Vice Mayor Bill Kerdyk Jr. noted the city's reserves had dwindled to around \$1 million when **Salerno** arrived in April 2009. After years of cost-cutting - and lower property taxes - the city has \$28.7 million in reserves. "This is a tough day for the residents," he said. "The city's a better place today than when he came in here five years ago."

Commissioner Patricia Keon echoed Kerdyk Jr. "I don't ever doubt for one second that you always acted in what you believed to be the best interest for the city," she said. Cason said he's worked with many managers over the years working with different organizations, and he had no problems with **Salerno**.

"We've had all kinds of managers and everybody has their strengths and weaknesses," Cason said. "But I'm very, very pleased and proud to have worked with **Pat Salerno**." Although he is widely praised for his financial stewardship of the City Beautiful, **Salerno's** five years at the helm were marked by occasional problems that some say stemmed from his brusque management style.

In 2012, **Salerno** narrowly avoided getting fired after then-commissioner Maria Anderson moved to oust him amid concerns about the negative employee morale at City Hall. **Salerno** prevailed in a 3-2 vote.

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A recent string of email correspondence obtained by the Herald shows what was likely a breaking point for Commissioner Vince Lago, who has butted heads with the manager before. Lago was elected to the commission last April.

In November, Lago had requested data on traffic accidents from 2011 to 2013 for a stretch of Ponce de Leon Boulevard near Salamanca Avenue after residents complained of several accidents in the area. In March, Lago received a report from **Salerno's** office, through Olazabal, that showed an increase in accidents along the boulevard but did not include the complete memo the police department had written to the manager's office.

After another request in March for accident statistics from Antilla Avenue south to Miracle Mile along with the dates of construction of a tree-lined median, Lago again received only certain pages from what police delivered to the manager's office. Lago told the Herald he was concerned about the missing information Tuesday. "I just want to make sure we are as transparent as possible and we are relying on the most up-to-date information as possible," he said.

Olazabal said she had discussed the numbers presented in the second police memo with **Salerno**, and they determined they did not accurately represent the issue because the statistics covered a wider area than the median construction and included inaccurate construction dates. "If I would have forwarded this to the commission, it would have been wrong," she said Tuesday afternoon.

Lago saw it as a safety issue that required more urgency. "If the city manager disagreed with the numbers provided by the police, then his duty as an employee of the commission is to provide me those numbers immediately so that action can be taken or whatever precautionary measures are required are implemented," he said. Lago had placed an item on Tuesday's agenda to remove **Salerno's** power to prepare meeting agendas and give it to the city clerk, as well as three discussion items about the commission's working relationship with city staff - all items presumably aimed at **Salerno**.

For his part, **Salerno** said he's worked diligently for all five commissioners throughout his tenure, even if his position is to serve five politicians. "My job is apolitical," he said. "But I have to be sensitive to the issues I work around." As he returned to work Tuesday, he noted the city's accomplishments under his watch, including stabilized finances, lower property taxes, increased development, and initiating projects that had long been stalled, like the Miracle Mile streetscaping and redeveloping two city parking garages behind the Mile. "We turned this organization around," he said. "We changed the culture, the work ethic and the professionalism of the staff."

Salerno arrived in Coral Gables after 18 years as manager in Sunrise, where a road near the BB&T Center is named after him. Several framed photographs of street signs bearing his name hang in his office in City Hall. He looked at it before sitting down to explain to a reporter that he never saw his role as manager as just a job. "I think it's more of a calling," he said.

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(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Herald, The (FL)

March 4, 2014

Coral Gables proposes splitting costs of Miracle Mile makeover with business ownersAuthor: *Joey Flechas, jflechas@MiamiHerald.com*

As the long-awaited and much-discussed beautification of Miracle Mile and Giralda Avenue approaches, Coral Gables officials have proposed to split the costs down the middle with local business owners.

Through a special-assessment tax, half of the estimated \$17 million cost would be paid by businesses that are determined to benefit from the project, which aims to widen sidewalks, plant trees and generally make the two streets more pedestrian-friendly.

The improvements would be made along Miracle Mile and Giralda Avenue, which is known as the city's "restaurant row." With the project, which has not been designed and is still in the planning stages, businesses hope to attract people to shop, dine and lounge in downtown Coral Gables, similar to other local leisure destinations like Lincoln Road in Miami Beach and Mary Brickell Village in Miami. At a recent meeting, City Manager **Pat Salerno** presented the financing proposal to the City Commission and about 25 members of the Business Improvement District that covers Miracle Mile. The plan will be heard at four public hearings in the coming months.

According to the proposal, properties directly on the Mile and Giralda would bear 35 percent of the total cost, and adjacent properties would pay 15 percent. Mari Gallet, spokeswoman and former executive director of the improvement district, said many business owners are fine with paying their half but suggest the city gives them a one-year grace period to recover from the lost business during construction. That year, she said, would give proprietors enough time to bounce back and hopefully see business grow before the higher tax bills come in. "Our goal as property owners and business owners, is to have a small number on our property tax bills that'll be easy to absorb because of our success," she said. **Salerno** said the city has already factored in a two-year grace period into the plan, adding that is rare for a city do so.

"Normally, there isn't one," he said.

Abe Ng, owner of the Sushi Maki chain of restaurants, has worked through street improvements in front of his location on Sunset Drive in South Miami back in 1998. He said business will decrease for places like his Sushi Maki at 2334 Ponce de Leon Blvd., located just north of Miracle Mile since 1983. But he welcomes the planned improvements, and he hopes the city will help let drivers know that they are still open. "Signage is very important," he said. "Signage provided by the city that says the businesses are still open."

City staff were asked to prepare a timeline for the financing, hearings and construction of the streetscaping, as well as a time frame for renovation of two city parking garages on Andalusia Avenue. The garages project is still in its planning stages. Burton Hersh, an architect and

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president of the improvement district's board of directors, said many people are nervous about the garage redevelopment. He noted that during the construction of The Palace at Coral Gables, a luxury senior living community in downtown, five businesses did not survive. "It's very important that the city stages the construction in a staggered way," he said.

Salerno said the city will address the timing of those projects later on, as the City Commission would have to give necessary approvals for projects to go forward. "At some point down that road we will take a look between the relationship between the two projects," he said.

Business owners like Jose Bolado, owner of Bolado Clothiers at 314 Miracle Mile, have emphasized that they could take a huge hit if they had to contend with construction along the street and behind their buildings. "We need as much help as we can get from the back if they start working in the front," Bolado said. Bolado's family business has been on the Mile since 1975, and he said downtown Coral Gables has long needed a facelift. "I believe it's long overdue," he said. "We need to keep up with the times."

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Miami Herald, The: Blogs (FL)

November 20, 2013

Coral Gables city manager inspires return of University of Miami's onion rings

Author: *Patricia Mazzei at 4:27 PM*

For the most part, University of Miami and Coral Gables officials had nothing but praise for each other at their annual meeting together Tuesday morning. The exception: Gables City Manager and UM alumnus **Pat Salerno** found something missing from the Rathskeller at UM's new \$46.5 million Student Activities Center. "Those delicious onion rings that sustained me through my college days are no longer on the menu," **Salerno** lamented.

UM President Donna Shalala chuckled, suggesting she'd look into the oversight.

On Wednesday, the school announced that onion rings would return as a special menu item when students hit classes in January. **Salerno** has a standing invitation to come taste test. "I will add this item to the city's list of accomplishments for this year," he said, with a laugh. "I can't wait to eat them."

UM says the new snack will get a new name, too: **SalernOrings**.

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(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Herald, The (FL)

October 1, 2013

Coral Gables business group is studying downtown rulesAuthor: *Philippe Buteau, pbuteau@MiamiHerald.com*

Coral Gables' Business Improvement District has hired an independent consultant to study downtown and Miracle Mile to find out what restrictions can be loosened up. The BID hired the consultant, Jaime Correr & Associates, to determine what changes can be made to the city's zoning laws to allow for different types of businesses in the district, and for businesses already there to be able to operate differently. The BID is an independent taxing agency in downtown Coral Gables.

Its decision to undertake the study has sparked an exchange of letters to the editor in Neighbors between former mayor Don Slesnick and others, who worry about the prospect of South Beach-style night clubs coming to town, and members of City Manager **Pat Salerno's** administrative team, who say such fears are unfounded. The BID's executive director agreed, saying Tuesday that her members are not looking to bring night clubs to downtown. Asked about the BID's plans on Tuesday, **Salerno** noted that the BID doesn't answer to him. "They're allowed to study and propose whatever they want as an independent entity," **Salerno** said. "But I haven't seen one word of the proposal."

BID executive director Mari Gallet said she has a draft proposal but refused to discuss details or provide a copy on Tuesday. Before anything is presented to the City Commission, the BID board must first approve the consultant's proposal and a draft of how new text in the city's zoning laws will read, according to Gallet, who stressed there is nothing formalized for this project. "It's called a 'study' for a reason," she said. "We're still in the discussion phase." Gallet said the BID plans on hosting public meetings to involve residents in the project. Public meetings will take place in early 2014, after the BID's board approves the proposal, but before the BID submits it to City Hall, she said. The consultant was hired after BID members, which include every business and property owner in the area, identified several issues that make bringing in new business difficult.

The issues include signage rules, what restaurants are able to do and display in their storefronts and a rule which states 50 percent of profits must come from the sale of food. Hours of operation are a point in the study, but residents' concerns have made it a minor one. "We've talked about hours of operation but we're not pushing hard on that," Gallet said. The types of businesses will be ones that support the district's 88 restaurants. "We want to bring things that are supportive of our restaurant community," Gallet said.

As an example she mentioned several vacant 1,000-square-foot spaces on Giralda Avenue - also known as "Restaurant Row" because of the 14 restaurants there - which could be ideal for bars,

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retailers, arts or cultural businesses, but not nightclubs. "We have no desire to bring nightclubs to Coral Gables," Gallet said. "We don't know where that started."

If there are changes, they will not affect the entire city but rather only the 12-city block area that makes up the BID: Giralda Avenue in the north, Andalusia Avenue in the south, Le Jeune Road in the west and Douglas Road in the east.

The project, called the "Downtown Overlay Study," started in March 2012 with a volunteer committee made up of zoning lawyers, urban planners and several BID members who all wanted to do the proposal.

The BID wants Coral Gables to grow and be able to attract not only Coral Gables residents, but the growing population of millennials, according to Gallet. But changing Coral Gables' identity is not a part of their plans. "We don't want to be South Beach," Gallet said. "We want to grow and be relevant but we want to protect the sophisticated tone of our district."

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(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Herald, The (FL)
September 24, 2013

Coral Gables leaders unanimously OK \$164.6 million budget and tax-rate decrease

Author: *LANCE DIXON, ldixon@MiamiHerald.com*

Coral Gables held its second public budget hearing on Tuesday evening, and it only lasted about 30 minutes, as the city's leaders unanimously approved the city's \$164.6 million budget, an increase from the \$156.2 million proposed in the initial hearing on Sept. 12. The increase was due to changes in the estimated revenue from the first hearing, which added up to \$8.3 million. The commissioners also approved a tax rate decrease to 5.629 from last year's rate of 5.669 and a resolution to adopt the city's capital improvement program for the next five fiscal years (through 2018) without discussion. One of the major portions of the budget's increase from last year's \$148 million is multiple improvement projects throughout the city, which will cost about \$6.9 million.

The projects include \$1.8 million toward landscaping improvements on Ponce de Leon Boulevard, which the leaders on the dais said have been discussed for at least 12 years, and another \$1.1 million to repair and upgrade the city's Public Safety Building which houses the police and fire departments. Additionally \$400,000 will go toward renovation of City Hall and \$450,000 will go to streetscape enhancements in Kings Bay.

Miles Maronto, a Kings Bay resident, said the proposed projects reflect well on the city's leadership. "They've listened to the residents. It's been a long time coming," said Maronto. These changes were also applauded by commissioner Vince Lago, who hopes that the parks and infrastructure improvements will continue. "I think the city's headed in a great direction," said Lago. "Would I love to have more money to set aside? Sure, but we're all dealing with the tough economy."

The city is also adding eight employees including seven police officers, increasing the force to 191, and an additional fiscal and policy analyst in the city's finance department. City Manager **Pat Salerno** said he was also happy to have decreased the city's tax rate for the third year in a row.

The city's 5.629 proposed tax rate will make it the 24th-highest rate out of the 35 cities and municipalities in the county. Biscayne Park has the highest proposed rate for the next budget year at 9.5.

The new budget and tax rate will go into effect on Oct. 1.

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(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Herald, The (FL)

September 6, 2013

Coral Gables imposes new terms on non-uniformed employees

Author: *Howard Cohen, hcohen@MiamiHerald.com*

Coral Gables commissioners on Wednesday imposed new contract terms on Teamsters Local 769, the union representing the city's 290 or so non-uniformed employees. The commission decided on the terms at an impasse hearing after negotiations failed to produce a contract. Among the decisions in the new contract, general employees had been paying 20.26 percent of their salaries towards the pension plan. The union requested a figure of 12 percent. The city manager's position was 18.26 percent. Ultimately, the commission, in a 4-1 vote, set the figure at 17 percent. Commissioner Frank Quesada voted against the figure without naming a desired number. "It was an improvement over where we were but far from where we need to be," said Mike Scott, president of the Teamsters Local 769. "We recognize there are issues with the pension, but we don't feel it should fall totally on our bargaining unit."

The actual benefit was unchanged, City Manager **Pat Salerno** said. "We didn't change any of the benefits in the action, the change is to how much they contribute. What was in dispute was how much an employee pays to their pension." By comparison, currently the police contribute 10 percent of their pay toward their pensions, up from 5 percent after negotiations last fall. The fire employees, currently in negotiations with the city, pay 5 percent and the city wants to take them to 10 percent. Management in the city pays 15 percent toward their pensions. A 30-year non-uniformed employee, making \$60,000 annually, would get an annual pension of \$40,500, **Salerno** said.

The new contract stays in effect until the city and union reach a new agreement and there is no time frame for when that could happen, **Salerno** said. The new contract also caps monthly health insurance premium costs per employee at \$665 or \$7,980 annually. If insurance premiums rise, that amount will have to be bargained for each year rather than simply remaining open-ended as it has been and as the union desired.

The union also wanted to "sell" up to 80 hours of annual leave, meaning if vacation had built up employees could cash-out two weeks of vacation per year. The commission unanimously rejected that proposal.

The city and union also negotiated over its layoff and cost-sharing strategy. The union wanted to ensure that an employee with seniority, facing a lay-off, could bump down into any lower classification job or position. The city wanted to maintain the existing language that says an employee can only bump down into a job they once held. The commission ruled unanimously to keep the current approach intact.

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Additionally, if pension costs rise the city has a system by which the costs are shared 50-50. For example, if pension costs rise 10 percent, the city absorbs 5 percent of the burden and the union takes the other half. The commission unanimously opted to keep that arrangement intact, over the objections of the union.

“The majority of the impact hit our lowest-paid unit in the city,” Scott said.

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PATRICK G. SALERNO
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Coral Gables News (FL)
September 3, 2013

City to reduce property taxes for third consecutive year
Author: *TANIA SOSA*

While other communities speak of increasing taxes and drastically cutting services, property owners in Coral Gables will see a lower tax rate for the upcoming fiscal year. The city commission has preliminarily approved the millage rate proposed by city manager **Pat Salerno**. The budget, which would take effect starting Oct. 1, calls for a property tax millage rate reduction from the current rate of 5.669 to a new rate of 5.629. The rate represents \$5.629 per \$1,000 of assessed property value.

This would be the first time in more than 20 years that the city has reduced the millage rate for three consecutive years. As a result, the owner of a single family home with homestead exemption that has an average taxable value of \$588,023 saves approximately \$260 annually. The owner of a homesteaded condo with an average taxable value of \$280,498 saves approximately \$125 annually. "Although it is a challenge to reduce the millage rate and still have the necessary funds to maintain and enhance the services residents enjoy, I believe the proposed budget accomplishes the needs of our residents while keeping us on the path to economic sustainability," said Mayor Jim Cason.

The proposed budget includes seven additional police officers for the field, the largest number of sworn officers in the city's history, from 183 to 190. This brings the number of total personnel in the Police Department from 256 to 263.

For the past few years, there has been a conscious effort to right-size the entire city organization without compromising any of the services residents enjoy. Consequently, this strategic increase in positions still results in a smaller total workforce than the city had two decades ago. Proposed funding for the Capital Improvement Program is approximately \$9.8 million. The program includes funding for the purchase of additional green space, restoration of the Merrick House, repairs and improvements to other city facilities, re-sodding the Youth Center field, and two streetscape projects, among other improvements.

There will be two public hearings in September before the final budget is adopted.

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(Articles are in reverse chronological order)**

Miami Herald, The (FL)
July 25, 2013

Coral Gables would hire more cops under proposed spending plan

Author: *Howard Cohen, hcohen@MiamiHerald.com*

City Manager **Pat Salerno** wants to add seven officers to the Coral Gables Police Department under a budget proposal received by the City Commission on Wednesday. The budget also includes a slightly lower tax rate, but longtime homeowners would end up paying a little more because of increased home values. **Salerno** proposed a tax rate of \$5.629 per \$1,000 of taxable property value, down from the current rate of 5.669. The commission voted unanimously to advertise **Salerno**'s proposed rate, meaning it could hold, or be lowered but not raised, after two public hearings in September. As such, the reduction in its property tax rate continues a trend, **Salerno** said.

The owner of a home assessed at \$375,000 would pay about \$1,865 in property tax, assuming the owner qualifies for the standard \$50,000 homestead exemption, and that the home's taxable value increased by 1.7 percent, the maximum allowed this year for an owner-occupied home. That's an increase of about \$23. If the city were not cutting the tax rate, the increase would have been \$36.

The city also proposes a budget of \$153.4 million for its 2013-14 fiscal year, up from this year's \$145 million. Part of the reason for the increase is that the city plans to spend money already set aside for big-ticket projects — including about \$400,000 for structural repairs to the aged City Hall on Biltmore Way, \$450,000 to shore up the historic Merrick House and \$300,000 for streetscape improvements to the Kings Bay community. The city also budgeted \$390,000 for a re-sodding of the War Memorial Youth Center's fields and irrigation improvement. "Soccer moms should be appreciative of the commission because they can be heard," **Salerno** said.

The additional police personnel would add about \$850,000 to the budget and **Salerno** hopes to hire a financial and policy analyst at an undetermined pay scale, likely in the \$60,000 to \$90,000 range. This person's job would include developing a five-year economic plan and would be the key person in setting forth performance standards for the various city departments. "I would look at this position as a revenue generator," **Salerno** said. "As the county moves toward a policy of eliminating unincorporated areas and have donut holes annexed by the cities, this individual would work on our case as to why certain unincorporated areas would be advisable to join us."

The fire department would hold steady at 139 positions, a figure maintained since the 2005 budget cycle.

The proposed increase of eight employees would bring the city total to 800, its highest figure since 2010.

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Coral Gables will hold two public hearings on the budget, at 5:01 p.m. on Sept. 12 and Sept. 24 at City Hall. State law requires that the hearings be after 5 p.m. so that residents can share their views after work.

“I’m pleased that the commission has before it a budget that will lower the tax rate for the third consecutive year while meeting our needs and enhancing the services that are being provided,” **Salerno** said Wednesday afternoon.

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PATRICK G. SALERNO
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Coral Gables News (FL)

April 16, 2013

City manager Pat Salerno honored with Outstanding Community Service Award

Author: *TANIA SOSA*

The Gables by the Sea Homeowners Association recently expressed their appreciation to Coral Gables city manager **Pat Salerno** by presenting him with the "Outstanding Community Service Award."

The award is not given every year; it is presented only when the association feels individuals or organizations merit the recognition. Members of the Gables by the Sea Homeowners Association, representing nearly 1, 000 residents, wanted to acknowledge the city manager for his responsiveness to the community's needs, and his efforts improving the city's financial stability and quality of life.

"I am grateful for the award. My focus has always been to look out for the interests of our residents," said **Salerno** who has been city manager for four years and also is a resident.

The Gables Good Government Committee also has honored him with an award. Throughout his public service career, the city manager has been honored by civic, community, and business organizations for making cities better places to live.

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PATRICK G. SALERNO
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Examiner (FL)

March 27, 2013

Making sense of Coral Gables' real finances

Tuesday night's regular commission meeting was full of emotions in Coral Gables, one of the wealthiest towns in South Florida. Two commissioners, Maria Anderson and Ralph Cabrera, brought in their families at City Hall to say goodbye to the local government as their 12-year terms are scheduled to end on April 9. The farewell addresses were filled with memories, as if lives were about to be ended. In reality, Anderson is set to become a minister at a local church, while Cabrera will more than likely be chosen as the next Mayor of Coral Gables next month.

However, the Coral Gables meeting was not only about hugs and kisses. Minutes before the end of the meeting, officials from McGladrey Certified Public Accountants, a firm contracted by the City, revealed that the total amount of available reserves turned from \$12 million to \$21.1 million for the 2011-2012 fiscal year. In total, this amounts to 18% of the operating budget, which may return the city to an AAA rating from Moody's. "The ability to go from less than \$200,000 in 2009... to \$21 million in that period of time is truly remarkable," City Manager **Pat Salerno** said. Indeed, the new finding is remarkable and gives an indirect slam to Mayor Jim Cason, who had previously stated that \$12 million in reserves was not nearly enough to protect the financial health of the city in case of a catastrophe.

Anderson, however, was not pleased by the report. Instead of praising the city manager and his staff for managing to free up so many resources, she announced, "I hope in the future we could have a heart and give some of that money back instead of tax cuts. Give to the employees and services that are losing their homes and who lost their cars. You can talk about the big money all you want, but until you have a heart, we are not a city." This statement is worrying, especially coming from a potential minister. Maria Anderson is opposed to property tax cuts and wants more money to "be given back" to public employees. But for something to be given back, or returned, to someone, that person must have given in to begin with. However, property taxes are paid for by homeowners in the city, and public employees are only paid by this tax money, which some argue is nothing more than thieved money.

In other words, for money to be truly given back to the city, property tax cuts are the best way to go. The fact that Commissioner Anderson misunderstands the true origin of public money is one of the thousand reasons why governments are increasingly immoral. There is room for criticism, however. **Salerno** might have managed to boost up resources dramatically, and this is better than running on a deficit, but it is clearly not the best approach. \$21.1 million represents one third of the total property tax revenue. And it comes short by just \$7 million of being twice as big as the total utilities service taxes and business tax revenues.

In real terms, this means that forgetting the available revenues can forgive all city business taxes, all utilities service taxes and a sixth of property tax rates for a whole year. It can also be used to

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end the business tax for six years. But even more importantly, the reserve fund can and should be used to pay back the city's debts by a fifth. (The latest estimates put Coral Gables' debts at \$105 million.) Click here to see Coral Gables' 2012-2013 budget

But the reason why the current government won't act to use the reserves is clear. Moody's bond credit rating depends exclusively on the amount of reserves in the General Fund, and the better the rating, the more investors will purchase municipal bonds. Municipal bonds are a way for municipalities and other sub-state entities to receive cash payment quickly, in exchange of a promise of repayment with interest in the future. In other words, municipal bonds are the ultimate theft schemes used by local governments.

The principle is simple. Today's city government receives easy revenues without increasing taxes or fees, and tomorrow's homeowners are forced to pay for the interest with their own taxes.

If "giving back" is the real goal, as Commissioner Anderson wants to believe, then the real solution is to save future homeowners to be coerced into a system elaborated by this generation. In other words, assuming that the state ends its restrictions on local governments, Coral Gables should default on its future promises, use the reserves available to pay back current bond holders, and save future generations from tax increases. There are plenty of steps that should be taken in order to both increase the living standards of the people of Coral Gables and lower spending rates drastically. Privatization is one such issue. Simply privatizing local avenues to business associations, such as Miracle Mile and Ponce de Leon Boulevard, can bring in a lot of revenue and save the city millions in the coming years. Reforming public salaries and pensions, which represent 41% of total expenditures in 2013 (the largest share of the budget) is another important step to be taken.

Mayor Cason and **Pat Salerno**, while they are to be praised for the good steps they have taken toward financial health, should also be blamed for ridiculing the debate over finances. They have allowed small property tax rate cuts to become enraged debates about the "future of Coral Gables," even though revenues from this source are higher than at any point before 2008. Now, they are hurting the next generation by wanting to increase reserve funds even more – up to \$25 million- in order to issue even more municipal bonds and put the city in debt.

Unfortunately, Ralph Cabrera is no better. While he says he doesn't support tax increases, he is one of those elected officials that have attacked the recent tax cuts. He isn't opposed to the reserve funds at all, but wants the Commission to be given more credit than **Pat Salerno**.

In many ways, Cabrera and Anderson leaving the Commission is a good aspect of Coral Gables. But the possibility of Ralph Cabrera becoming the next mayor and potentially more dangerous commissioners entering the government is even worse.

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PATRICK G. SALERNO
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Herald, The (FL)

January 22, 2013

Coral Gables commissioners and city manager argue over trolley garage
Coral Gables’ Commissioners Ralph Cabrera and Maria Anderson clash with City
Manager Pat Salerno over a controversial land swap deal that will lead to a city trolley
garage in the West Grove.

Author: *Howard Cohen, hcohen@MiamiHerald.com*

The controversy over building a Coral Gables trolley garage in the West Grove as the result of a land swap with a local developer was not on the Gables’ commission’s first meeting of the year Tuesday.

Still, two commissioners and the city manager clashed during open discussion at the close of the meeting after City Attorney Craig Leen brought up the issue to state the city’s position. “Reports are attacking the city of Coral Gables and I want to make a couple points clear for the record,” Leen began. “We have a trolley building now in Coral Gables near the high school and Merrick Park. The developer came to the city and made this request and this was something that came to you months ago,” he said, addressing the commission, which voted unanimously to a land swap deal with Astor Development in March 2012.

The developer approached Coral Gables to acquire land on Le Jeune Road, just south of Bird Road, where the city operates a maintenance garage for its trolleys. Astor wanted the land to build a seven-story, apartment building with high-end retail in the neighborhood of Merrick Park. As part of the deal, Astor agreed to build the city a garage for its trolleys. The company said it could not find affordable land in the Gables and, instead, found a site on Douglas Road, just outside of the Gables, bordering a residential community in the West Grove. “This commission and city staff and outside counsel made it clear the trolley building had to comply with federal and state law and local ordinances,” Leen said. “It is not our intention to force this on the community. The developer had to get approvals. This commission didn’t know of appeals or objections. My understanding is the City of Miami was made aware of the proposed use of this building from the beginning and our contract with the developer was dependant on approvals. The city will not accept a building, ultimately, unless all those issues are resolved. We have to act carefully in this matter. The developer is trying to work this out.”

Miami City Commissioner Marc Sarnoff told The Herald earlier this month that Miami zoning code allows Astor to build the garage in that location. Outgoing commissioner Maria Anderson said she would like the city to make amends. “I would love that, as a city, we proffer a landscape or a trolley stop to build goodwill,” Anderson said. “Not interfere with the developers. But we are impacting a neighborhood that is very poor and they are looking for simple solutions.” Commissioner Ralph Cabrera, who is term-limited and who is running for mayor against incumbent Jim Cason in the April election, agreed.

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In an interview after the meeting, Cabrera said the community deserves proper landscaping as buffers. He also said the building's design contains the exhaust and fumes. He thinks building a trolley stop in the neighborhood would be advisable. "I thought of a trolley stop to cross Dixie Highway," he said. "It's got plenty of parking so we won't be parking on their public right of ways. It's generally a beautiful structure."

Cabrera also reiterated at the commission meeting that he had discussed having a dialog with the West Grove during a December 2011 commission meeting. He said City Manager **Patrick Salerno** did nothing to facilitate the process.

In November of 2011, Cabrera emailed **Salerno** concerning a request from Jihad Rashid, the vice president of the Coconut Grove Village West Homeowners' and Tenants' Association. Jihad asked that Cabrera attend the association's executive committee meeting. Cabrera emailed **Salerno** at the time, "Please follow up appropriately" and said he returned a phone call placed by Rashid. Tuesday, he said he did not attend the meeting because it could violate future quasi-judicial hearings on the issue, in which he would have to vote.

The minutes of the December 2011 meeting show an exchange between Cabrera and **Salerno** in which **Salerno** said, "We acted on that immediately... You said, here it is, take care of it. We did. We advised the developer of the request and suggested that they make contact with the head of the homeowners' association and discuss and brief them. We are not the applicant in that project." On Tuesday, **Salerno** addressed Cabrera's charges. "You chose subsequently to attack me for not doing my job and for doing nothing and you knew when you asked that I had," **Salerno** said. "And I think you went beyond that, trying to make me look bad and make this commission and the city look bad. "With all due respect, you were invited to the meeting with the residents. I have the email. You have the email. If you really cared about those Grove residents you would have gone to the meeting instead of telling me to handle it — which I did. And you didn't criticize me when I told you what I was doing. You criticized me after the fact. Furthermore, you had two opportunities to raise questions about the plans and developer's intentions to secure a site in the city of Miami when it came before you for votes on first and second readings — but you sat silent."

Cabrera stood by his comments.

Anderson complained the discussion had gotten out of hand. "I want to stop this," she said. "This is intolerable and not because five months ago I asked for his [**Salerno's**] resignation, but intolerable that someone sits as equal to us."

Cason adjourned the meeting.

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PATRICK G. SALERNO
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Herald, The (FL)
September 12, 2012

Gables imposes pension cuts on cops
Officers will still be entitled to retire after 25 years on two-thirds of their working pay.
But the police union says that’s not enough.

Author: *Howard Cohen, hcohen@MiamiHerald.com*

Coral Gables commissioners decided unanimously on Tuesday to reduce pension benefits for some police officers and require a larger annual pension contribution from current officers, saving the taxpayers an estimated \$1.9 million per year. Commissioners imposed the changes on the police union after City Manager **Pat Salerno** and the union were unable to reach a deal despite 18 months of negotiations.

All officers’ annual pension contributions will increase from 5 to 10 percent of wages. The union had refused to agree to any increase. According to the city, Miami and Miami Beach police already contribute 10 percent of their pay to their pensions, while officers in nearby South Miami pay 15.6 percent.

Meanwhile, officers whose pension benefits have not yet vested — meaning officers with fewer than 10 years of service — will no longer be able to retire on 75 percent of their working pay after 25 years. Instead, they will get a maximum of 67.5 percent after 25 years.

Officers whose pensions already have vested will still get the old benefit. Sgt. John Baublitz, president of the Coral Gables Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 7, said the reduced benefits will make it harder for the Gables to hire first-rate officers. “To be honest, what they’ve done to this city and the department and officers is going to have unbelievable detrimental effects to this police department,” he said after the hearing, which featured attorneys and financial expert representation on both sides. “I’m stunned. This city has money. [City Manager] **Pat Salerno** has been hiding money in accounts. This was nothing more than punitive. We offered a pension system where they would have been better off if they accepted our offer, but they are not better by cutting 5 percent of salaries.” But **Salerno** said the city simply couldn’t afford the more generous pension formula. “This commission did not create this situation but they have taken the steps necessary to correct it,” he said after the day-long hearing. “What has been resolved at the impasse hearing constitutes reasonable and sustainable wage and pension reform that considers the interest of the Coral Gables taxpayers.”

The subject of pension reform has dominated city discussions nationwide, was a chief element in Mayor Jim Cason’s campaign two years ago. Since 2001, the city’s unfunded pension liability has swelled from \$15 million to \$235 million. The city’s contributions to pensions have grown 413 percent since 2000. “When I was campaigning, everyone told me about pensions,” Cason said. “This is crowding out money for investment and roads and other projects. My impression is we have a very generous pension.” Officers on the new plan will calculate their pension benefit

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based on their average pay during their last five years of service, rather than three, and overtime pay and unused vacation time won't be included in the math. Traditionally, officers in many cities make a point of working many overtime hours during their last few years of service as a way to pump up their retirement pay.

Salerno also had proposed that the city no longer pay the police union president a salary for conducting union business on city time. But commissioners opted to keep Baublitz in his current full-time capacity as union president. "I take offense that I don't provide a service," Baublitz said. "I represent 170 officers who are doing a job, and they look to me when we get in trouble. There are many aspects to my job."

Normally, unionized workers determine their pay and benefits via negotiations between their union and the employer. But in the case of Florida municipal employees, the governing board may impose a settlement when negotiations don't lead to a contract. The deal lasts only one year, meaning the two sides will soon be back at the negotiating table.

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Miami Herald, The (FL)
July 27, 2012

Gables manager Pat Salerno keeps his job

The Coral Gables Commission voted 3-2 at an emergency hearing Friday to keep its city manager and to restore his powers after two commissioners voted to fire him earlier in the week due to his management style.

Author: *Howard Cohen, hcohen@MiamiHerald.com*

The Coral Gables Commission voted 3-2 Friday morning in favor of keeping City Manager **Pat Salerno** in office. The vote, taken at an emergency meeting after a surprise motion Wednesday by a commissioner to terminate **Salerno**, also restores **Salerno**'s power to hire and fire city employees.

Commissioners Maria Anderson, who initiated the movement to fire the manager at a budget workshop Wednesday morning, and Ralph Cabrera, who backed her, said they felt the administration had grown "toxic" under **Salerno**'s three years as the manager. They cited a crisis in employee morale and Anderson noted **Salerno** made it difficult for her to place an item on the agenda. The manager, by city charter, is required to place on the agenda of public meetings items submitted by commissioners, the city clerk or the city attorney. "I don't do what I did on Wednesday and I don't take that lightly. I wouldn't have come to that decision if I hadn't felt so strongly to call for a motion to terminate," Anderson said. "I voted for Mr. **Salerno** [when he was first hired]. And there have been good things that have happened in the city — and, at the time he arrived, there were things that needed to be fixed. "But over the last few years, I noticed a pattern of behavior that is very disturbing and have heard stories from employees. This is a workplace that has become so hostile and so despotic they fear for their work and jobs. They are understaffed. The layer of administration at the top is so top-heavy there are very little workers at the bottom and they are at wit's end and there is no end in sight for them. Eventually, residents will feel the result of that in service," she said.

Mayor Jim Cason, Vice Mayor Bill Kerdyk, Jr. and Commissioner Frank Quesada voted to support the manager and cited his success at improving the city's finances, which were in a tight budget crunch when he took office in April 2009. "As an elected official, my responsibility is to constantly monitor the job performance of key employees," Kerdyk said. "Is this city in a better place than it was three years ago? I say yes. Does the city manager have areas he needs to address? Yes. We have heard about it from commissioners Anderson and Cabrera, areas as far as brusqueness with him, and the way he responds to employees concerns me. "But I have to look at the big picture. We had pension reform, which saved the city millions of dollars. We executed a University of Miami development agreement that pays the city \$22 million. We negotiated a successful outcome with Biltmore Hotel, renovated several parks, reorganized city departments. Even brought back the Fourth of July. All positive things. But in these days and times, one issue is the financial security of a city, and three years ago the city manager inherited a financial mess," Kerdyk said.

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When it became clear that **Salerno** had the majority's support, Anderson and Cabrera tried to strip the manager of overseeing the agendas and, instead, place that task with the city clerk or attorney.

Anderson said she tried to place an item on the agenda earlier this month featuring her language for the pickup truck referendum. She had worked on the text with City Attorney Craig Leen. She said **Salerno** was resistant to placing the item on the agenda. Leen agreed they had had difficulties getting the item placed. "We had a two-hour conversation about it. Going forward, the benefit of this discussion is that this won't happen again," Leen said. "He controls the agenda and what I try to put on it. Some of you may have more luck, you're in the majority,"

Anderson said, addressing the commission. "My concern is the agenda. That's great power. That agenda is his power base. One day you will find out you are no longer in his good graces and will remember this day." Anderson withdrew her motion on the manager and the city agenda, but says she will resubmit the item at a future commission meeting. "I need to point out to the commissioner, I never held an item from the agenda," **Salerno** said. "The moment I received it, it was going on the agenda. I say, if you want an item on the agenda, you send it. And if it's not there, I will resign. That's how strongly I feel about it."

Hours after the meeting, Anderson was not convinced. "I have no confidence in the city manager," she said. "He lied by saying that statement. If he was a man of his word he wouldn't have given the attorney such a hard time. That was lip service." Cabrera feels the manager, who earns \$190,000 plus perks and reports to the commission, has been insubordinate. Cabrera and Anderson's terms expire in April. "I have concerns about the next 256 days," he said. "I think they will be tumultuous and toxic." Cabrera agreed with Commissioner Frank Quesada, who proposed regular goal meetings between the manager and commission to improve communication. The first such meeting would be in October, after the budget is set. The budget must be adopted by Sept. 30. "It's more than management style. It's about process. And the process that exists today, it's about power and about secrecy and that's not what open government is supposed to be about. It wouldn't be prudent to just sit here and complain and not try and find resolution," Cabrera said.

Salerno said he expects the city will move forward despite the lack of confidence from two of the five commissioners. "I was confident the majority of the commission wanted me to continue what I was doing. They are proud and I am proud of the accomplishments and we'll continue to make this community even better. The residents of this community haven't seen anything yet in what's in store for them in moving this community forward. The best days are ahead and it's been three years of overhauling. We're still not where we need to be. We're still not a perfect government. I don't know that you can get a perfect government but that's what we'll strive for. There are a lot of things we need to address. No one is harder on anyone than I am on myself."

Employees, including members of the police, general employees and fire unions, attended the meeting. Prior to the meeting, John Baublitz, president of the police union, criticized **Salerno's**

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management style and said he had trouble keeping officers on the beat because of the deteriorating atmosphere at city hall.

“Employees here at the police department, or officers of the year, leave to go to other departments. Officers retired early just because of morale issues. My fear is he’s making it tougher for us to keep the city safe.”

The other two union heads were more conciliatory. “We’re glad of the outcome, we think the city is moving in the right direction now and it would have been counterproductive to the overall city to change course now,” said fire union president Mike Chickillo. “We’ve been working with him for three years and we’re comfortable with the work he’s done. He inherited a big mess and we understand the concerns. There’ll be some changes made. How do you fire a guy who’s done what he’s done and has such a good résumé? He might not be the warmest person, but from day one, he came in and we worked great together,” Chickillo said.

Mike Scott, president of the Teamsters Local 769, which represents the general employees union, acknowledged Friday that morale in the department is low. “There are some issues regarding pension increases and Coral Gables is not unique with public employee pensions. There are some issues with that that have driven morale down. I don’t want to attack **Pat**. What I will say is we’ve worked with **Pat** and his team to get a contract for our members and will continue to work with him, or anyone else the commission puts in that position.”

Members of the public also sat silent in the packed chambers. Except for one.

Longtime activist Roxcy Bolton got her point across — gesturing emphatically before the meeting began.

“Coral Gables has lost its edge,” she said. “The new city manager stepped up to his waist in manure.”

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(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Herald, The (FL)

March 13, 2012

Coral Gables approves no-bid contract for palm trees

City Manager Patrick Salerno said he decided not to get competing prices because “the cheapest tree is not necessarily the best tree.”

Author: *Howard Cohen, hcohen@MiamiHerald.com*

Coral Gables commissioners agreed Tuesday to spend more than \$110,000 on hundreds of new trees for Ponce de Leon Boulevard — without seeking bids from competing tree companies. The money will pay for 358 new Alexander palms in the median of Ponce, between Red and LeJeune roads, including some at the entrance gates at the University of Miami. UM has agreed to cover more than half the cost. City Manager **Patrick Salerno** said he saw no need to seek competing prices because he had identified a tree company offering the best tree at a discounted price. “Not all trees are equal,” he said. “Manuel Diaz Farms has some of the best product in South Florida. The cheapest tree is not necessarily the best tree from a health and aesthetic standpoint.”

Because the city did not seek competing bids, the purchase required a four-fifths vote of the commission which was met 4-1, as Ralph Cabrera was the sole no vote. **Salerno** remembers the trees from his days on campus where he earned a bachelor of general studies degree in politics and public affairs in 1973. But in the decades since, disease, Hurricane Andrew and other problems wiped out most of the Alexanders except for four hardy trees. The city will replace the lost trees by planting single-trunk Alexander palms in the existing medians at a price of \$275 each. The figure represents a savings from the price of \$323 for the same trees that Miami-Dade Expressway Authority pays to Diaz Farms under a contract awarded through a competitive bid process.

The total expense of the project will be \$110,950, which includes other costs. The University of Miami has agreed to kick in \$100,000 for landscape beautification improvements between Red Road and Granada with \$59,486 of that going toward the Alexander project.

“We want to take advantage of a favorable negotiated rate between the city and Diaz Farms, and the university strongly supports the project,” **Salerno** said, adding that he thinks Diaz gave the city a better price because he lives there. “We think it’s a significant restoration project to bring back trees that were here decades ago and a resemblance of what the entrance to the university was like.”

To make room for the new arrivals, Diaz’s company will move 16 oaks in the 4800 block to another site in the city.

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Miami Herald, The (FL)

December 20, 2009

CORAL GABLES: Gables overspent for gas, manager finds

By not signing a contract and buying a higher-grade fuel than necessary, Coral Gables spent nearly \$1 million more than it had to on gas.

Author: *CARLI TEPROFF, cteproff@MiamiHerald.com*

Over the last seven years, Coral Gables spent nearly \$1 million more than it had to on gas for its fleet of more than 500 vehicles, the city manager has discovered. The overspending was the result of the city's failure to piggyback on the county's gasoline contract, which has a negotiated rate with a petroleum company that is substantially lower than the city's bulk rate. Additionally, the city bought a higher grade fuel than necessary, adding to the costs.

City Manager **Pat Salerno** told commissioners Tuesday that the city had been spending nearly 15 cents more per gallon on both regular and diesel fuel by not using Miami-Dade's contract. For the fiscal year beginning Oct. 1, the city budgeted about \$1.8 million for 525,000 gallons of gas. "There is no reason for not contracting out our single largest commodity purchase," **Salerno** said after the meeting. "We need to watch every penny."

Most municipalities in Miami-Dade County piggyback on the county's contract, which allows the city to buy gas based on the Oil Price Information Service -- the gas price standard. When **Salerno** took over as manager in April -- replacing David Brown, who resigned under pressure -- he began reviewing all of the city's spending habits to trim a multimillion dollar deficit. He tasked the new Automotive Director Steven Riley -- who replaced Clive Cork after he retired -- with looking at the city's fuel policy.

For starters, the city was buying mid-grade fuel, which cost the city about \$60,000 more than necessary. **Salerno** said he does not know why the city bought the higher grade of fuel. Riley also found that there was no gas contract with the county. **Salerno** said "it made no sense" that the city did not have a contract, but did not know why the city never entered into a contract. "It was before my time," he said. "As soon as we found out, we began looking at alternatives."

Vice Mayor William "Bill" Kerdyk, who asked **Salerno** to address the issue at the meeting, said he was pleased that the manager discovered the added expense, but disappointed that the city spent unnecessarily.

"I think we need to learn by our mistakes and move forward," he said.

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Miami Herald, The (FL)

September 27, 2009

CORAL GABLES: City manager making final cuts to budget

The city manager will have to trim about \$2 million if he wants the city's \$155 million budget to pass Tuesday.

Author: *ELAINE DEVALLE, edevalle@miamiherald.com*

Coral Gables City Manager **Pat Salerno** will have to cut another \$2 million from the city budget after commissioners postponed adopting the budget last week, as they searched for ways to bring the tax rate down.

The commission continued last week's vote on the budget and tax rate to this Tuesday after two hold-outs -- Vice Mayor William Kerdyk and Commissioner Ralph Cabrera -- refused to provide the fourth required super majority vote on the manager's \$155-million proposed budget. After nearly five hours, the commission deadlocked on **Salerno's** proposed \$5.995 tax rate for every \$1,000 of taxable property value. They asked **Salerno** to come back with a budget for a \$5.795 tax rate, which is as high as Kerdyk said he would go, and a \$5.675 rate, which is where Cabrera said he was "not budging." "I learned in my career as a politician that if you feed the beast, it grows. If you starve it, it will shrink," Cabrera said.

Kerdyk, who is considered the swing vote, could get his \$5.795 rate passed. That would be less than 5 percent higher than the rollback rate, but more than 9 percent higher than what taxpayers would have paid had the city stayed at the same tax rate of \$5.25 as this year. "The city manager mentioned that people are suffering in this organization," Kerdyk said, referring to **Salerno's** list of more than 60 laid-off employees, both full time and part time. "But people are suffering out in the public too. There are properties being foreclosed on. There are businesses being foreclosed. There is angst out there that I have never seen in the city of Coral Gables."

Salerno, however, warned commissioners against passing a lower tax rate without making cuts. "I've never seen a city commission that didn't want to know the implications of their actions," **Salerno** said. "You're not adopting a budget. You are adopting a millage rate. And you don't know what I'm going to propose" to cut, he warned. **Salerno** did not return several calls last week. But he said at the commission meeting Tuesday that the cuts already made will impact services. He said some of the people who had been laid off were "in some respects still hoping that there is something that's going to happen that can change that outcome. And there's very little that can be done at this point."

Two of the commissioners said after the budget hearing they could identify areas to trim. Commissioner Wayne Withers, who supports the manager's top tax rate of \$5.995, said Friday he would look at cultural grants, the recreation budget and commission salaries. Cabrera said he would eliminate the \$450 monthly gas allowance for top management and cellphone reimbursement, freeze pension contributions for non-union employees and review all special

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events expenditures. He also said it is not the time for the city to be advertising new positions, including a sustainability department director who would make between \$88,000 and \$121,000 annually and a property administrator budgeted at \$98,000. The budget also calls for an assistant parks and recreation director and a new accountant in finance.

NO NEW JOBS

"If we are letting people go who have been here for years, I don't think we should be posting these new jobs," Cabrera said, adding that the sustainability department and property management should be handled out of the city manager's office by one of the two assistant city managers. Mayor Don Slesnick and Commissioner Maria Anderson said they would trust **Salerno** to make the cuts. "I am waiting to study the manager's recommended budget amendments before I put any pressure on the process with my own suggestions," Slesnick said. Anderson said she would turn to **Salerno's** expertise to minimize the carnage of a lower millage rate. "Unfortunately, with potentially having to cut \$2.4 million more out, I can't imagine that anything will be spared," she said Friday.

Kerdyk could not be reached Friday, but if his \$5.795 proposed tax rate is passed, it would mean the owner of a home with an average value of \$570,000 would pay \$3,013 a year in taxes, or almost \$300 more than this year. At the current rate, that homeowner paid \$2,730 this year.

FIRE-SERVICE FEES

No matter what happens with the tax rate on Tuesday, city residents will pay two new fire service-related fees passed by the commission Tuesday 3-2. They will pay \$50 more each year in a new fire assessment fee. Commercial property owners will pay about 6 cents per square foot for the fee, which will generate about \$2 million to be used for new equipment and training by the fire department.

Residents will also get billed between roughly \$350 and \$600, depending on level of service and number of times called, if they are transported by a Gables fire rescue vehicle to a local hospital. Kerdyk and Cabrera voted no to both fire fees.

The budget hearing begins at 6 p.m. Tuesday in commission chambers at City Hall, 405 Biltmore Way.

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Miami Herald, The (FL)

August 16, 2009

**CORAL GABLES: Coral Gables city employees asked to take 7.5 percent pay cut
Coral Gables unionized employees are being asked to take a 7.5 percent pay cut, 2.5
percentage points higher than initially discussed by city leaders.**

Author: *ELAINE DE VALLE, edevall@gmail.com*

City employees in Coral Gables are being asked to take a bigger pay cut than they first anticipated.

The city manager has proposed a 7.5 percent salary decrease for members of the police and general employees union -- more than the 5 percent first proposed. About 85 percent of the city's approximately 800 employees belong to the police, fire fighters or general employees unions. Labor attorney Jim Crosland presented the offer Aug. 5 to the Teamsters local that represents the general employees. The offer proposes either a 7.5 percent cut in wages or an additional 7.5 percent contribution to the pension.

The general employees already contribute 5 percent to the pension. The 7.5 percent cut would be additional.

The firefighters union also contributes 5 percent to the pension, but is not being asked for additional cuts because it voluntarily took a 5 percent wage cut in a contract signed this summer. The police union has not contributed to the pension; it is being asked for a 7.5 percent wage cut or pension contribution. "We won't agree to a 7.5 percent pay cut," said Mike Scott, president of the Teamsters Local 769, which represents the general employees. "Their budget documents refer to a 5 percent cut and I don't even know if that will see the light of day," he said, adding that his union will present its economic proposal at a meeting next week. Part of the reason for the sudden additional wage cuts could be an additional \$2 million pension liability that had not been identified at the budget workshop last month.

Instead of \$800,000, as commissioners had been told they would have to pay this year, the city will have to contribute \$2.8 million to the pension fund to keep it in the black. "Bad news comes in clumps," Mayor Don Slesnick said. "The actuary working with [Finance Director] Don Nelson projected around \$800,000 and that's what we were working on increasing our contribution this year," Slesnick said. "The increase was decreasing. It was still an increase, but it was decreasing. "Now all of a sudden, the figures most recently given put the increase at \$2.8 million, which is a total shock," the mayor said, adding that the commission had "begged the pension board" to seek a new agreement with a new attorney and new actuary. "We haven't gotten the full story, but this is the same actuary who has given me a hard time on a number of issues," Slesnick said. Slesnick said he was not sure whether the salary cuts were related to the pension news.

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The 7.5 percent salary cut will save the city \$2.75 million -- just enough to cover that \$2 million extra hole and have some wiggle room, said City Manager **Pat Salerno**. "It's a combination of things. It's what we need to do to put ourselves on a path to being able to sustain our pension plan," **Salerno** said. City commissioners cannot impose an additional pension contribution, but they can impose wage cuts, **Salerno** said. "If we don't reach an agreement, they can impose a 7.5 percent wage decrease," **Salerno** said.

"Either way, the payroll check to the employee is going to go down 7.5 percent, whether it's a wage reduction or a pension contribution," **Salerno** said. The firefighters union, which had already agreed to a 5 percent salary cut, will not be asked to make any further sacrifices, **Salerno** said. "They have a contract."

Other details of the contract proposed by the city for the general employees include a cut in future merit increases and loyalty payments given after 10, 15 and 20 years of service from 5 percent of one's compensation to 2.5 percent. Additionally, employees who were compensated an extra 7 percent in pay rate because they worked from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m. will now get a 2.5 percent additional compensation. And the city will fund 70 percent, rather than 100 percent, of health insurance. The proposed contract also gives the city authority to change to the Florida State Pension system, something that has been discussed for years as the city's pension payments have ballooned to more than \$20 million a year. Any new employees would be entered into that pension.

Battalion Chief Dan Thornhill, secretary and treasurer of the Coral Gables Firefighters Association, said he did not think the city would go back to his unit to ask for more concessions. "We're kind of proud as employees of what we've done," Thornhill said of the fire department. "It's something pretty significant that's never been done in the history of our city. We went back and sharpened our pencils and did what we could and it saved them \$2 million. "Now the police and general employees," represented now by the Teamsters Local 769 "are going to have to do their part," Thornhill said.

Leaders at the police union, which has an impasse meeting Aug. 31, could not be reached last week. But the Teamsters' president, who has a meeting scheduled this week with **Salerno**, said employees could not be asked to bear so much of the burden. "Obviously there has to be some give from employees and we recognize that. But we need to see what management is going to contribute," Scott said.

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Miami Herald, The (FL)

July 23, 2009

Balancing the city's budget is a painful puzzle

Author: *ELAINE DE VALLE edevaille@gmail.com*

BY ELAINE DE VALLE edevaille@gmail.com

In Coral Gables, where garbage is picked up in the back of homes, officials are loath to cut services.

So the new city manager -- **Pat Salerno**, who was known for ushering great growth in 18 years as top boss in Sunrise -- has proposed a tax increase, new revenue-generating fees, increases on existing fees and a 5 percent salary cut for all personnel. The tax rate could be as high as \$6.245 per \$1,000 of taxable property, which commissioners voted on earlier this month. At the lower end of the scale, \$5.65 per \$1,000, the taxes for the average home valued at about \$571,000 would be \$2,945, or about \$200 more than what the same homeowner paid this year. At the higher tax rate, the same taxpayer would have to pay about \$3,255. If passed, it means the owner of a house with the average value will pay \$500 more a year in city taxes alone. But commissioners could go with a lower rate -- if and only if they raise money elsewhere, **Salerno** said.

Coral Gables residents could pay more for almost everything, from parking on Miracle Mile to that coveted backyard garbage pickup -- which **Salerno** proposes to raise from \$610 to \$685 a year -- to having the police show up when a pet trips the burglar alarm by mistake. Property owners could be also slapped with two new fees: a fire assessment fee and a fire rescue transport fee. The latter was proposed last year and shot down fast. But everyone admits that things are different this year as the city rushes to cover an estimated \$11 million to \$13 million shortfall. **Salerno** said that kind of deficit also requires the elimination of about 43 full-time positions -- and 39 employees, including one of the assistant public works directors. Employees who remain have been asked to take a 5 percent pay cut. Almost \$9 million (\$8.8 million) has been cut out of the budget that commissioners will vote on in September.

Salerno said the cuts were not done "with a sledgehammer or an ax. They were done with a scalpel. They were strategically made so that we could minimize impact on the citizens. This budget minimizes any impact on the citizens as far as service levels. But what it does is, we've cut out any flexibility to add to the balance next year. There won't be savings from staff because people aren't leaving. It's very difficult to find a position so they are not leaving." He explained the revenue generators and tax increases are "moving parts" and that if the commission adopts the new fire fees they may have flexibility to go down in the tax rate. "They could increase some of the revenues higher. All that stuff is interchangeable," **Salerno** said.

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But, he stressed, there were no proposed cuts in services or suggestions that residents bring their garbage to the curb. "We're going to do our best to provide comparable services with less resources," **Salerno** said.

Slesnick and other commissioners said they were glad the manager spread the pain out and proposed salary cuts and layoffs in addition to the tax increase.

Commissioner Maria Anderson said it was the fair thing to do.

"We need to mirror the real world and for a long time we hadn't been mirroring the real world," Anderson said. "Before we went out to residents who are in pain we had to show that we were going to take some of our own hits whether it be through staff reduction or reduction in salary."

But not everyone feels the cuts have been equitable. Vincent Damian, president of the Coral Gables Citizens Political Action Committee, said members had discussed it back and forth in e-mails and had expressed a concern that too many of the cuts were at the bottom and not enough in management. "We are disappointed that the budget does not address the very, very high salaries that are being paid to a large number of supervisory personnel at the city," Damian said, referring to more than 80 employees with salaries in the six figures -- including about a dozen fire captains who make \$123,000.

Damian suggested the city do as the county did in making a 10 to 15 percent across the board reduction in salaries of all supervisory and assistant supervisory persons. "Anyone making more than \$100,000," he said. "Some of these persons have taken some pay reductions and the brunt of it has been taken by the lower end employees, the hourly employees. Going for the lowest ranked persons with the lowest salaries makes no sense," Damian said. Like many residents, Damian said he understood that times were hard. But everyone has to tighten their belts, he added -- and that includes local government.

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Miami Herald, The (FL)
 July 9, 2009

CORAL GABLES: Coral Gables votes to increase tax rate
Coral Gables commissioners voted to raise the tax rate to offset a budget shortfall caused by lower property values and higher costs.

Author: *ELAINE DE VALLE, edevaille@gmail.com*

Coral Gables property owners likely will pay more taxes next year -- up to more than \$500 for an average-priced home -- to help offset an approximate \$10-million shortfall in the city's budget. City Manager **Pat Salerno** proposed three different tax increases at a budget workshop Wednesday, ranging from \$5.65 to \$6.245 per \$1,000 of taxable property. The current tax rate is \$5.25. Commissioners voted on publishing the \$6.25 figure. It doesn't mean they will go that high when they set the final tax rate in September, but since they cannot go higher than the published rate, they wanted room to maneuver.

The average assessed value of a Coral Gables home in 2009 was \$571,388; property taxes on that home would be \$2,739 at current rates, after the \$50,000 homestead exemption. At the \$6.245 proposed rate, taxes on that home would be \$3,255. At the \$5.65 rate, taxes would be \$2,945. Cities across South Florida are facing budget shortfalls due to higher costs and lower tax bases stemming from falling property values. The result: higher tax rates or substantial cuts in services are anticipated as the budgeting season begins this month. Last week, the county reported a decline of \$23.4 billion in 2009 countywide taxable value, or a 9.5 percent decrease when adjusted for new construction.

'IT'S HUGE'

In Coral Gables, the tax base has dropped by about \$1 billion, or a 7.5 percent decrease from 2008 to 2009, when adjusted for new construction. Finance Director Don Nelson told commissioners the city's losses would be \$3.5 million higher if last year's tax rate remained in place. "It's huge," Nelson said.

To help balance the budget, the city is laying off about 40 of its 827 employees through job eliminations, including seven police department positions, 10 in public works and 11 in public service. Residents also are likely to pay more for nearly everything. Among the fees discussed:

** Garbage pick-up -- which is proposed to go from \$610 to \$685 a year, and expected to generate an additional \$800,000.

** Parking on both street meters and in public garages, which would raise another \$645,000.

** A fire-assessment fee of \$50 per household.

Salerno said the proposed \$150.8 million budget had "many, many moving parts" and that commissioners had never dealt with a budget that had so many new measures at once. He sent notifications last week to people who were identified for possible layoffs, including Assistant

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Public Works Director Ron Van Eyk; a video production assistant; a staffer in the planning department; two in parking; and three in building and zoning.

WAGE CUTS

The remaining employees will be asked to take a 5 percent wage cut or contribute 5 percent more to their pension, easing the city's pension contribution, which is about 20 percent of its operating budget and has been ballooning.

Mayor Don Slesnick said that he felt the cuts had been spread out so that not one stakeholder was holding more of the burden. 'I, for one, will not vote to reduce any employees' benefits or reduce any numbers if we don't spread the responsibility,' Slesnick said. "We are all responsible for this city. Every constituent, every resident. We are all residents and employees are part of the family and if we don't spread this and all share responsibility, we can't do it."

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(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Herald, The (FL)
April 26, 2009

CORAL GABLES: A challenger in Coral Gables elections says city withheld budget deficit information

As Coral Gables leaders grapple with a \$9 million deficit they say was discovered days ago, one of the challengers in the April 14 race says the information may have been known before the election and wants state authorities to inquire.

Author: *ELAINE DE VALLE, edevall@MiamiHerald.com*

Coral Gables City Manager **Pat Salerno** met with department directors Friday so they could begin to address a \$9 million shortfall in the city's budget. Among the measures: an immediate hiring freeze, a capital purchasing freeze and a "discretionary spending" freeze, **Salerno** said Friday. There will be some exceptions with "good cause" to the spending freeze, but those would have to be submitted by department heads and be approved by the city manager's office and the finance director, **Salerno** said.

The plan also includes possible layoffs of temporary and part-time workers, including some hired in building and zoning to handle the building boom, which has since slowed to a trickle. "That's one place we may go, and there are some part-timers in public works," Human Resources Director Marjorie Adler said. **Salerno** said he learned of the deficit on April 17 -- three days after the city's elections. Gonzalo Sanabria, who lost by a 10 percent margin to Commissioner Maria Anderson, has asked state authorities to investigate. 'Failure to investigate will forever taint this election result and dramatically hurt the 'fundamental fair election practices' theories ...' " Sanabria wrote in a letter to Florida Gov. Charlie Crist and the state attorney general. He asked the attorney general and the Florida Department of Elections to investigate the "potential and apparent holdback and manipulation of fiscal data by Coral Gables officials." "Such crucial and pertinent information . . . prior to the election would have substantially and materially changed the outcome of the votes," he wrote, adding that if that is the case found by the authorities, "then the final results for the contested seat 3 should be annulled and a special election should be held."

Finance Director Don Nelson said that, while he had seen a decline in revenues in building and zoning as well as in other departments in monthly reviews starting in January, he had not had a "complete picture" until days after the election. "It was a gradual decline of revenues, but it wasn't like it was all known in January, February or March or beginning of April," Nelson said. He said staff had begun to analyze the figures just as **Salerno** was hired in order to prepare for the mid-year report. **Salerno** started his new job on April 6. "When we put them all together, all the funds and analyzed them, was last week," Nelson said Friday. "Individually, you monitor these. But there was no overall picture."

Nelson said three components made up the shortfall: a 4 percent drop in estimated revenues; a 2 percent payout to members of the fire and general employees union retroactive to June -- which

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cost the city just under \$1 million; and the transfer of \$2 million from reserves, as approved by the commission in October, to balance the budget.

Salerno said there would be more measures to address the shortfall in the coming months. He said he would develop a strategy after the preliminary property values are reported in June from the Miami-Dade County Property Appraiser's Office. "Until then, we don't know the magnitude of the challenge."

Commissioners Wayne Withers and Ralph Cabrera said they would rather see pay cuts and wage freezes than layoffs. "I would be willing, as a commissioner, as a leader of the city, to take a reduction in pay," Withers said. "We are all in this together. And across America there are a lot of companies where people are saying, 'You know what? Instead of Bob or Sally or Estela being laid off, I'll take a cut in salary.' "

Both Cabrera and Withers would like to explore outsourcing some of the 20 or so positions that are vacant as well as for future vacancies. Both commissioners, along with Commissioner Maria Anderson, said they were willing to tap further into the reserves, which are at about \$8 million after the \$2 million transfer is accounted for. "We're going to have to look at taking some monies out of the reserve, but I don't know how much," Anderson said. Anderson said she was going to "let the manager give us a plan. "He told us it would be a multi-pronged effort. It wouldn't be one thing." Like the other commissioners, she also said she "had no knowledge" of the shortfall before she met with **Salerno** on Monday. "He told me he began to finalize the numbers right after the election."

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PATRICK G. SALERNO
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Herald, The (FL)

April 26, 2009

City reneges on wage increaseAuthor: *ELAINE DE VALLE edevaille@MiamiHerald.com*

City employees in Coral Gables who thought they had raises locked in for the next two years are back at square one: City Manager **Pat Salerno** has withdrawn the offer the administration had made to the general employees union weeks earlier. It was the first cost-cutting measure the manager made after discovering on April 17 that the city had a projected \$9.2 million shortfall for the year ending Sept. 30. Projections call for an \$8 million shortfall next year due to dwindling revenues and unexpected personnel costs.

Even though commissioners had approved the contract, the union had yet to sign off on it. The contract called for a 5 percent cost of living increase next year. "We were ready to vote," said Victor Goizueta, vice president of the Coral Gables Employees Association. "Everything was agreed on with the interim city manager. We sent the proposal to our attorney. He got back to us Monday," Goizueta said.

Human Resources Director Marjorie Adler sent the letter rescinding the offer Tuesday. "It has been brought to my attention that the city is facing a significant financial shortfall for the current fiscal year," she wrote. "The city will be facing further financial difficulties in the next fiscal year. "Under these circumstances, we are compelled to take our latest proposals off the table and to notify you that there is no agreement."

The move saves the city about \$1 million, **Salerno** said. "The city is not in a position to financially afford the offer that was on the table," **Salerno** said. But a 2 percent wage increase retroactive to July 2007 for all members of the fire and general employees union was not part of the contract negotiations, so checks that employees got in the past two weeks do not have to be returned. "That was part of their arbitration award," Adler said, referring to an independent arbitrator's decision that those employees were entitled to the same 2 percent increase given to members of the police union because of a "me too" clause.

The clause says any benefit received by one group is automatically granted to the other two unions.

Goizueta said he believes the members would have ratified the contract and that employees were not happy with the administration's last-minute withdrawal.

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Miami Herald, The (FL)

April 9, 2009

CORAL GABLES: Coral Gables' city manager is driving his own car for now
The new city manager is not yet driving a new car after news leaked that the city was
buying him one for \$36,500.

Author: *ELAINE DE VALLE, edevall@MiamiHerald.com*

The new top boss in Coral Gables is tooling around in a white Mercedes Benz E320 -- his own personal car.

City Manager **Pat Salerno**, who started his new job Monday, has not yet received the city-purchased vehicle agreed to in his contract. But he almost did.

City staff had ordered the boss a new ride on March 31: a black 2009 Lincoln MKS for \$36,500. According to the city's purchase order, the city would get a \$10,000 trade-in credit for the 2005 Lincoln Town Car driven by former manager David Brown, who was forced to retire early after police said he acted criminally to cover up spending on his city-issued credit card. But the requisition order written by Patricia Arocha from the automotive department was never approved, and -- after the potential purchase was leaked to the weekly Coral Gables Gazette -- the shopping has been put on hold.

Last month, **Salerno**, who was Sunrise city manager for 18 years, was hired for \$190,000 a year. The package included a city-paid car, cellphone and \$500 monthly allowance. He said Tuesday the car was not a priority. "The days are filled with many, many issues that I am trying to get up to speed on," **Salerno** said, adding that he had met with department heads Monday and again on Tuesday. "Out of all the important things going on in this city, the car is not even on the radar screen," **Salerno** said. "It never was something I had to get on the first day or the first week."

The new manager, who was sworn in Monday at a ceremony at City Hall, also said he planned to pore over the city code and the procurement regulations, one of which requires commission approval for anything more than \$25,000 that is not put out to public bid. Arocha said her boss Clive Cork, the former automotive director who retired in January but works for the city part time, told her to order the car. Cork could not be reached for comment Tuesday. Arocha said the city never approved the purchase.

Good thing, say some residents. "The residents are fed up with the fiascoes, mismanagement and the disregard to the wastefulness of tax dollars, and the city officials still don't care," said Juan Carlos Diaz-Padron, a member of the city's insurance advisory board. "We all know we are in the middle of an economic crisis. Every household in America is making financial adjustments. Coral Gables should be no different," Diaz-Padron said, adding that the gold Town Car that Brown "used to drive was the perfect car to have given to the new city manager."

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Roxcy Bolton, a longtime city activist, paid the manager a visit Monday to make her first request: "Would you give up the \$36,000 car and take David Brown's car? It's a nice car; it's a good car; it's a safe car. It's not wise for the city to buy a \$36,000 car."

Assistant City Manager Maria Alberro Jimenez, who served as interim boss until **Salerno** arrived, took the blame. She said she was the one who told Cork to start comparison shopping. Jimenez said she asked **Salerno** shortly after he was hired about the vehicle he wanted. **Salerno** asked what Brown had driven and, when told it was a Town Car, said he wanted to downgrade. **Salerno** confirmed the story. "I was not interested in a model of that nature but certainly something of a lesser model," he said.

Said Jimenez: "I thought this was something I had to get for him before he started. But it wasn't important to him." **Salerno** said he isn't even sold on the Lincoln MKS. "All they were doing was getting a price," **Salerno** said. "I want to explore what the options are. I might explore a hybrid. "Right now, I'm fine driving my car."

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Miami Herald, The (FL)

March 26, 2009

CORAL GABLES: Former Sunrise official to lead Coral Gables Commissioners voted to offer the top administrative post in the city to the former manager of Sunrise -- for at least \$266,000 in total compensation.

Author: *ELAINE DE VALLE, edevall@MiamiHerald.com*

The new city manager in Coral Gables may not start until next month, but he is already on the job.

Former Sunrise City Manager **Pat Salerno**, who accepted the job after commissioners voted 4-1 to offer it to him Tuesday, said he could not wait to learn everything he can about his new city, where he is also looking for a home this week.

"I will be reading everything I can read -- documents that are online, reports, plans, whatever is of any significance as far as explaining where the city's been, what it's been doing, where it's headed," **Salerno** said, adding he is also going to get familiar with the city code. "That stuff I will start now," he said late Tuesday. "When you get there, certainly, you are going to want to understand both the individual council member's and the collective council's needs, the employees' needs, the citizens' needs and get to meet neighborhood leaders and leaders of those special interest groups that may be in the city, like environmental interests, and meet and discuss with employee organizations that represent labor and get to know them."

Salerno will be paid \$190,000 a year and other benefits which were negotiated by Gables Mayor Don Slesnick over the course of several days. They include an additional 15 percent -- or \$28,500 -- for a qualified pension plan, in lieu of the city's retirement plan, which has grown and has become an issue.

"I thought it was unfair that he work here without investing something for his future," Slesnick said, "but I did not feel badly about negotiating a deal that was beneficial to the city because he already had one city retirement." The deal also includes "unrestricted use" of a city-owned vehicle -- with insurance and maintenance and gasoline paid for by the city -- a cell phone or personal communication device, three weeks of vacation time in the first year to increase annually, health insurance for him and his family, disability coverage, life insurance coverage equal to one year of salary and a \$500 a month expense allowance. "This allows the manager to lead a CEO life," Slesnick said.

Salerno, who says he fell in love with the Gables when he was a student at the University of Miami, also gets a safety net: a severance of 75 percent of his salary -- or \$142,500 -- if his employment is ended "without just cause" during the first five years. But **Salerno** has a track record of staying in place: He was city manager in Sunrise for 18 years, far more than the average manager life span, where he is credited with bringing much growth to Sunrise. But

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Commissioner Ralph Cabrera, the sole dissenting voice, questioned whether he was worth that much. The salary range advertised was between \$175,000 and \$225,000. "We're looking at a package of about \$266,000" Cabrera said, adding that his sum did not include unknown "professional membership fees" also to be paid for by the city. But Slesnick said he thought it was an appropriate amount, adding the assistant city manager and city attorney are "probably compensated above that."

Assistant City Managers Maria Alberro Jimenez, who has served as interim city manager in the transition, and Dona Lubin have annual salaries of \$163,072 and \$147,559 respectively. City Attorney Elizabeth Hernandez makes \$188,536 a year. "I think, in comparison, the total amount you've calculated is a very, very modest amount compared to other managers in this area," Slesnick told Cabrera.

The city manager in North Miami Beach -- which is comparable in size, with 42,000 residents, to the Gables -- makes \$200,000 a year salary. Other benefits include a 10 percent discretionary bonus per year, one-year severance pay if he is fired within the first year, a yearly cost-of-living increase and a \$9,000 per year car allowance.

In Miami Beach -- with almost double the population -- the manager's salary is \$231,300. Former City Manager David Brown made \$185,700 a year before he was forced out in November, partially because of problems with his city-issued Visa card.

Cabrera asked to have the resolution amended so **Salerno** would be required to submit reports of his expenses to the commission. "I'd like to learn from past mistakes," Cabrera said, referring to Brown's expenses. But Slesnick -- who said the \$500 monthly fee is in lieu of the city-issued credit card which has a much larger limit -- noted that commissioners do not have to file reports on their \$400 monthly allowance. He also said he had to trust **Salerno**. "When I vote for this, I am putting my faith and confidence in him," Slesnick said. "I have been burned before for putting my faith and confidence . . . but I have to believe the money will be used for the benefit of the city. I found Mr. **Salerno** to be a very good person to work with."

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Wichita Eagle, The (KS)
November 21, 2008

5-MINUTE EAGLE

Salerno censured for renegeing on Wichita

Wichita still doesn't have a detailed explanation for why **Pat Salerno** backed out of his contract to be Wichita's next city manager. But the International City/County Management Association has voted to publicly censure **Salerno** for violating its ethics policy, which says managers should show up for work if they've accepted the job.

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(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Wichita Eagle, The (KS)
July 8, 2008

AT LAST MINUTE, SALERNO REJECTS CITY

Author: *BRENT D. WISTROM, The Wichita Eagle*

Pat Salerno signed the contract, he visited Wichita to hunt for a new home, and he chatted with city officials as recently as last week. But Monday morning the incoming city manager called and said, "I just don't feel right," Mayor Carl Brewer said, recalling the brief conversation. Now that **Salerno** is out, it looks like the city is the one on the hook - at least until City Council members decide what's next. It could take months and thousands of more dollars to find a long-term manager. Then there's the money already spent. Up to \$4,000 worth of **Salerno's** trips to Wichita are billable to the city, under the contract he signed June 10.

City Attorney Gary Rebenstorf said he hasn't tallied any expenses yet. But he said he is exploring options to protect taxpayer cash. The city already has paid \$7,000 in fees to a search firm and about \$4,100 for food and travel expenses related to **Salerno's** hiring. "It was our time that was really wasted on this entire process and the citizen's time wasted on it," Brewer said. **Salerno** didn't return The Eagle's call to his cell phone. Meanwhile, a new interim manager will be needed. Interim City Manager Ed Flentje's contract runs out Friday, the last business day before **Salerno** was supposed to start. Flentje told The Eagle he is willing to help with the on-going city budget process. But he said he will not extend his contract because he has committed to return to teaching at Wichita State University and has vacation plans. It's unclear who might fill the void, but three high-ranking city officials applied for the permanent job months ago.

Finding a long-term manager using a national search firm could take four to six months, Brewer said. And city officials, in explaining why they interviewed only **Salerno** out of a pool of more than 30 candidates, have said the pool of qualified people is shallow. Monday afternoon, Brewer and other City Council members appeared shocked and disappointed about **Salerno's** decision. "**Pat** gave no indication he had second thoughts about taking the job," Brewer said at a news conference that followed a one-hour, 12-minute closed-door meeting. Brewer called it an "unfortunate and unprofessional decision." He also said the move violates the ethics guidelines of the International City/County Management Association, the largest professional organization and one in which **Salerno** is a member. Brewer also said **Salerno** told him he had not taken any other jobs. Brewer said **Salerno's** move shouldn't cloud the city's hunt for a new manager. "The only probable disadvantage we have is now they have a pretty good idea of what we're willing to offer," he said.

Salerno was to receive \$215,000 a year, the largest salary ever offered by the city. That's about \$20,000 more than the national median for managers of cities with 250,000 to 499,999 people, according to a 2007 International City/County Management Association survey of six cities. **Salerno** also would have received a \$700-a-month car allowance and a \$125-a-month cell phone allowance.

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Wichita Eagle, The (KS)
June 11, 2008

SALERNO HIRED AT \$215,000 A YEAR

Author: *BRENT D. WISTROM AND BECCY TANNER, The Wichita Eagle*

Pat Salerno, who will become Wichita city manager July 14, will make \$215,000 a year, the largest salary in the city's history, but \$5,000 shy of his previous job. His contract also includes a \$700-a-month car allowance and \$125 a month for his cell phone, according to the contract approved by City Council members Tuesday. That's enough to lease a 2007 BMW 5 Series and more than enough get Sprint's most robust individual cell phone plan. The city will also cover up to \$4,000 in travel expenses for house hunting in Wichita and all other documented moving expenses.

Salerno, 57, now lives in Sunrise, Fla., a suburb of Fort Lauderdale, where he was city manager for about 18 years. If he's ever fired, he'll be entitled to the same deal former City Manager George Kolb had - six months' pay, plus an extra month's pay for each year he works here. "We think it was a fair wage based on what the market was actually presenting itself, and based on looking at his experience and what he's capable of doing," Mayor Carl Brewer said. "Where we're wanting to go, he's already been there and he's already did it."

When Sunrise city commissioners forced **Salerno** out in January, he made \$220,000 a year. His original contract did not specify car or phone allowances, but it provided him a car equipped with a mobile phone and \$100 in expenses per month. The contract provided **Salerno** a severance package worth nearly \$800,000 in pay and accumulated sick and vacation time. Wichita City Council members, who approved **Salerno's** contract in a 6-0 vote, are confident he is the right person for the job, despite warnings from some former Sunrise employees and current city commission members that he is secretive and autocratic.

Many civic leaders in Sunrise say **Salerno** turned the city's ailing budget around, lured a professional sports arena and attracted a flurry of new corporate headquarters to the growing suburb. Some also praise him for redeveloping the city's older and more deteriorated neighborhoods - although others say they think the focus was always on the newly annexed parts of town. "Sunrise was transformed into a vibrant, attractive destination city," said Brewer, who visited the city late last month with Vice Mayor Sue Schlapp. "Many of the challenges that we face here in Wichita are similar to those Pat resolved in Sunrise."

One and only **Salerno** was the only candidate the City Council interviewed and the only one recommended by a 17-member committee that examined resumes.

Interim City Manager Ed Flentje said there are few available candidates nationwide who have experience managing large cities. Some are reluctant to leave their home cities because of family ties, and others opt for a career change or retirement to avoid the pressure of being a city manager,

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he said. "This is a big job," Flentje said. "A big, time-consuming job." Flentje's contract with the city ends July 1, but he said he has agreed to stay on during a transition period. He will talk with council members and **Salerno** before deciding how long he'll stay.

Rickie Coleman, president and leader of the community group Sunflower Community Action, is among several in the community who criticize the city for hiring the only candidate it interviewed. But she said Sunflower, which had repeated run-ins with former manager Kolb, hopes to move on. "We definitely hope we have a better response working with him than the last one," she said. The selection committee, largely made up of high-profile business people and civic leaders, reviewed about 30 resumes. Only nine got a "very serious" look, said Steve Martens, the committee's chairman. "I was particularly impressed with his strong belief of being aggressive with economic development," Martens said.

Sunrise is substantially different than Wichita because it is a densely packed suburb of about 91,000 people that doesn't have a distinct downtown. Much of Sunrise was annexed and developed during **Salerno's** 18-year tenure. As a result of age and maintenance, it has substantially fewer blighted neighborhoods and far fewer deteriorating streets than Wichita. Sunrise's rapid growth and rising property values also enriched its city coffers, allowing it to reduce property tax rates 12 years in a row while offering cash incentives to lure new businesses. Between 1990 and 2006, Sunrise's population grew at the same rate - 41 percent - as the state of Florida.

A record of success

Wichita City Council members and search committee members think that **Salerno's** track record in Sunrise is reason enough to bring him to Wichita. City Council member Paul Gray said there's no guarantee that **Salerno's** success in Sunrise will translate here. But he said that track record is important. "If you want someone that can win the championship for you, it's much better to get somebody who's been there and, you know, been kind of branded by fire and hardened by the success of it," he said. Wess Galyon, a committee member and president and chief executive of the Wichita Area Builders Association, compared **Salerno** to the late city manager Chris Cherches. "Chris had the best interests of the community at heart in terms of beautification, arts and quality of life, and **Salerno** shares that," he said. "We need that. I think we've lost that focus." Ray Frederick, board chairman of the Wichita Independent Business Association, said he liked **Salerno's** record of building relationships with the business community. "We talked when he was here how critical it is to build relationships with developers and business owners and corporations. All those ballplayers need to be at the table and to keep and build on the success and vision we see happening in downtown Wichita now."

In an interview Tuesday afternoon, **Salerno** said he hasn't decided where he will live or when he may visit to look for a house. As for city business, **Salerno** said his first move will be to meet with City Council members, city employees, business groups, grassroots organizations, media and others. "It's an exciting opportunity to help the mayor and council move the community forward and be the best it can be."

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Salerno's job perks

- \$215,000 annual salary
- \$700 monthly car allowance
- \$125 monthly cell phone allowance
- Two house-hunting trips, up to \$4,000
- Severance pay, if needed, of six months' pay plus an extra month's pay for each year worked here.

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Miami Herald, The (FL)
January 24, 2008

SUNRISE: Sun sets on longtime, controversial leader - City Manager Pat Salerno will leave behind a Sunrise very different from the one he came to in 1990.

Author: *NATALIE P. McNEAL, nmcneal@MiamiHerald.com*

When Mayor "Big John" Lomelo went to federal prison in 1984, it wasn't long before Sunrise residents decided to ditch the strong-mayor system in favor of a professional city manager. And it wasn't long after that when **Pat Salerno** came to town. In 1990, after a six-month stint as an assistant to Sunrise's first city manager, **Salerno** took over the reins of this West Broward suburb, and he hasn't let go since. That all ends Friday. City commissioners voted 3-2 Tuesday to ask **Salerno** to resign by the end of the week -- or be fired. He had not yet turned in a resignation letter Wednesday night. "It's time for a new Sunrise," said City Commissioner Sheila Alu at the meeting where **Salerno** was asked to step down.

Indeed, love **Salerno** or hate him -- and people seem to fall squarely in one camp or the other -- a new Sunrise is exactly what he built. When he took office, Sunrise was a sleepy enclave of retired New Yorkers, best known for its abundance of neighborhood bagel shops and pizza places. But **Salerno** will leave behind a huge sports-and-concert arena, the BankAtlantic Center. Next to it is Sawgrass Mills, a mall that, while planned before he got here, has grown into one of the state's busiest tourist attractions.

The arena is home to the Florida Panthers hockey team. And surrounding all this are condos and offices that supporters credit **Salerno** with bringing in. And in the midst of all this? The road many visitors use to get there? **Pat Salerno Drive**.

Known as a controlling leader, **Salerno**, 56, also leaves behind no assistant city managers to take over the helm, leaving the City Commission to initially put the fire chief in charge. When then-Pembroke Pines Mayor Alex Fekete was asked a few years ago whether his city manager was too powerful, Fekete said: "This is not a **Pat Salerno** form of government where the city manager runs the commission." And for years, **Salerno** maintained popularity with his five bosses on the City Commission.

JOB SEARCHES

But his recent efforts to secure jobs in other cities -- only to decline when he was offered the jobs -- combined with backlash over financial losses in a statewide investment pool and an election last year that changed the chemistry of the commission, brought **Salerno's** tenure to an end this week.

Commissioners said they were surprised to learn from media reports last year that the city had more than \$270 million in a state-run pool partly invested in mortgage-backed securities whose rating had been downgraded. State officials last month restricted withdrawals from the pool, which

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holds surplus money invested by more than 1,000 counties, cities, school districts and other government agencies. Deputy Mayor Roger Wishner, who took office last year after serving in the state Legislature, motioned for the vote for **Salerno's** resignation. Wishner said he "wanted to work things out" with **Salerno**, but couldn't. "You have to make a decision which is in the best interest of the people," Wishner said. Alu and Commissioner Don Rosen joined Wishner in voting to ask for the resignation.

CLASH OF STYLES

Wishner said **Salerno's** management style didn't work for him. Wishner said what really irked him was that he read in the news that Sunrise has more than \$200 million tied up in a state-run investment pool that's performing badly. "We should have known what's going on," Wishner said. Also, **Salerno** treated local news reporters "like the devil," often ignoring their requests for information or interviews. "He won't even return phone calls," Wishner said. Wishner also said he was vexed that the city's building inspectors didn't have laptop computers and that residents couldn't pay utility bills online.

Commissioner Rosen said he likes **Salerno** as a person, but thought that his closeted style of leadership didn't work for him anymore. "I don't like surprises," said Rosen, who was also upset about the investments. But others on the dais didn't agree with letting **Salerno** go. "Some commissioners feel they have to operate a city to feel important," said Commissioner Joseph Scuotto, who joined Mayor Steve Feren in opposing the move to oust **Salerno**. "They have to control the city and just want to put who they want in there." Scuotto said by letting **Salerno** go, giving him only until Friday to leave, the city loses "a lot of institutional knowledge." "He's been a great city manager for the city of Sunrise for the last 18 years," Scuotto said. "He turned the city around, brought in a lot of development and a lot of businesses."

A fierce competitor, **Salerno** often competed with Miramar to lure businesses to the city. Sometimes, he would file public records requests in Miramar to find out the financial packages Miramar had arranged to attract businesses. "He didn't take kindly to being No. 2 to Miramar," Miramar City Manager Bob Payton said Wednesday.

\$700,000 PACKAGE

Wishner said that under **Salerno's** contract, the city will have to pay him 13 months of salary, vacation time and sick leave. He said the total could come to \$700,000. **Salerno** could not be reached for comment Wednesday.

The city plans to do a national search for a city manager, but in the meantime, Fire Chief Bruce Moeller will lead the city in transition. "This is a challenge for me, but one that I am prepared for. I've been a member of city's management staff, and a Sunrise resident, for 10 years," Moeller said Wednesday in a written statement. "I understand the people and dynamics of the city and look forward to continuing my service in a new role."

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PATRICK G. SALERNO
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

News-Press, The (Fort Myers, FL)
June 6, 2007

FM council selects new city manager

Author: *JOEL MORONEY*

Patrick G. Salerno, 56, longtime manager of the City of Sunrise just across Alligator Alley, was selected to become the first professional city manager of Fort Myers.

If he accepts, **Salerno** will be charged with overseeing a growing city of 63,000, a budget of \$80 million and a payroll that includes more than 800 city employees.

The city cannot pay **Salerno's** current \$210,000 salary -- the job will pay about \$150,000.

But **Salerno** said he is eligible for retirement benefits from his current position, where he has been since 1990.

Council hopes to have a signed contract yet this week with a start date of July 1.

William P. Mitchell, an assistant city manager of Newport News, Va., collected four of council's seven votes and will be the alternate candidate if a deal cannot be struck with **Salerno**.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
PATRICK G. SALERNO
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

South Florida Sun-Sentinel
Posted March 15 2007

Election results threaten domineering city manager in Sunrise
By Jennifer Gollan

Sunrise – Support from voters in the eastern and central neighborhoods ferried former state Rep. Roger Wishner to a decisive victory Tuesday over 14-year incumbent Irwin Harlem. Wishner's triumph over Harlem and political novice James DePelisi in the race for a seat on the Sunrise City Commission signaled a shift in voting patterns. Some civic leaders say it also portends a move away from the city's centralized power structure to a more open form of government. "The tide is turning," said Larry Sofield, president of the East Sunrise Residents Association. "Now the working people are voting ... not just the retirees. They are getting more and more involved because they are tired of ... going along with whatever the city manager [**Pat Salerno**] wants."

Wishner, 49, won more votes from the city's central and eastern swaths, largely populated with middle-class families, with a cut-property-taxes-and-government-waste mantra. Harlem, 79, fell short despite a campaign strategy that had proved successful for many of his predecessors: cultivating support from retirees and others in Sunrise Lakes condominiums. DePelisi, 40, snagged the most votes in the city's western precincts. Wishner, who got about 40 percent of the vote, said he intends to join with Commissioners Sheila Alu and Donald Rosen, who have advocated for open government, to form a majority on key decisions that come before the commission. The shift may pressure **Salerno** to cede more control over city affairs to the commission. "His [**Salerno's**] management style is obviously going to have to be different with a new majority," Wishner said.

Rosen, who has called for **Salerno's** ouster, agreed. "The commission has abdicated its responsibility to **Salerno**," Rosen said. "**Mr. Salerno** needs to be more responsive to the commission and needs to stop working deals and then presenting them to the commission. If he can't stop doing that, it may be time for a change."

Salerno, Mayor Steven Feren and Commissioner Joseph Scutto could not be reached Wednesday, despite two messages left for each.

Salerno congratulated Wishner on his win in a brief telephone conversation Wednesday, Wishner said. The two are to meet by the end of the week. Wishner served as a Sunrise commissioner from 1987 to 1999 and a state representative from 2000 to 2004. Wishner said he intends to ask **Salerno** to set a timeline for construction of a new public safety complex, search for auditors to scrutinize the city's finances and help Sunrise Lakes residents displaced by Hurricane Wilma return to their homes. As an added measure of accountability, Wishner said, he will ask **Salerno** to document his business affairs in writing.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
PATRICK G. SALERNO
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

No thanks, Florida city manager tells Surrey
Surrey Leader, Surrey, Canada

By Kevin Diakiw, Staff Reporter
Feb 09 2007

A new city manager being sought from Florida withdrew his application four days before the deal was to be finalized, The Leader has learned. **Patrick Salerno** was expected to tell Commission (elected politicians) in Sunrise, Florida Tuesday he was leaving for Surrey. He's been top manager in Sunrise for 17 years. Surrey council was to give final approval to his hire on Monday after a fairly long process that was often hung up on visa approvals. In a surprise development Thursday morning, **Salerno**, 55, withdrew from the job "for personal and family reasons," said Mayor Dianne Watts. He was to fill the position vacated by Umendra Mital, who resigned early last year.

Watts said in an interview from Ottawa Thursday she's upset with the latest development. "I'm disappointed," Watts said. "There's a lot of expertise and knowledge he would have helped us with." Sources say Surrey was offering **Salerno** more than \$200,000 annually, a figure described as on par with Mital's former salary.

Salerno was to be huge coup for this city. In 1998, he put Sunrise on the map when he secured a venue for the Florida Panthers, convincing a group of public and private partners to build a \$212 million hockey arena in the city. To sweeten the deal, **Salerno** and Commission offered \$26 million worth of municipal incentives, including land, police, fire and paramedic services. Salerno was praised lavishly for the stick-handling, with an off-ramp to the stadium named "**Pat Salerno Drive**."

Sunrise Mayor Steve Feren said in one Florida newspaper "Sunrise is the envy of every other city – the city manager is responsible for a lot of that." **Salerno** has the reputation as a hard worker and the person to go to when a deal needs to be sealed. It's those qualities Surrey council was seeking for this city.

Salerno has been short-listed for several other city manager positions in the U.S. over the past decade, and also dropped out of the running for some of those spots. Watts said council will meet at an in-camera meeting Monday to determine the next steps necessary in securing a city manager.

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PATRICK G. SALERNO
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)**

South Florida Sun - Sentinel - Fort Lauderdale, Fla.
Jan 21, 2007

SUNRISE SET TO END STAFF'S POST-WILMA POWERS

Jennifer Gollan

After Hurricane Wilma hit in 2005, city officials immediately called a state of emergency and handed extraordinary power to the city's top brass to clean up the debris left behind. The emergency order instated that October extended decision-making powers -- on issues such as hiring and spending related to hurricane cleanup and restoration work -- to City Manager **Pat Salerno**; Marcia Peterson, who directs the Purchasing Division of the city's Central Services Department; and Laura Toebe, the finance director.

But now, more than 14 months later, city commissioners are ready to retake control. The City Commission on Jan. 8 unanimously voted to retake authority over hiring and spending decisions related to the hurricane. Final approval of the decision is expected at the meeting on Tuesday.

Commissioner Sheila Alu also publicly requested that city staff provide her with a tab for the cleanup, estimated to have crept into the millions. "I'm not saying I have a problem giving this power to staff, but it's now many months later," Alu said at the Jan. 8 meeting. "I want to know what we've spent; we [commissioners] have no idea."

Salerno said the cleanup tally is in flux and won't be ready until February. Early estimates indicate that "we've spent millions on debris removal alone," **Salerno** said.

Sunrise paid \$7.5 million to AshBritt Inc. of Pompano Beach to collect debris after Hurricane Wilma, according to financial records provided by the city. AshBritt was one of a handful of companies hired for that type of work.

Salerno said he favored keeping the emergency ordinance unchanged to expedite the city's recovery. The city still isn't completely back to normal, he said. For example, city officials -- scattered to temporary offices after Hurricane Wilma ripped off part of the roof at City Hall -- returned just several weeks ago to their newly repaired offices on Oakland Park Boulevard. And the city continues to plant trees in areas stripped bare by the hurricane, **Salerno** said.

"You gave authority to deal with the worst disaster in the city's history, and we are still not complete with all that work," **Salerno** said. "... It will be years before we're finished."

According to the emergency ordinance, Peterson was permitted to approve contracts for amounts of more than \$25,000; and **Salerno**, together with Toebe, was permitted to shift funds between departments and offices to secure contracts and services. **Salerno** also was allowed to approve expenditures for facilities and operations. If final approval is granted Tuesday, city commissioners would take back control of those powers

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PATRICK G. SALERNO
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

South Florida Sun - Sentinel - Fort Lauderdale, Fla.
Sep 17, 2006

SUNRISE INTENDS TO ERECT NEW CITY HALL BUILDING TO GO ON LAND NEAR SAWGRASS MILLS MALL

Jennifer Gollan Staff Writer

Commissioners last year tucked away almost \$29 million in the city's budget for a new City Hall and plaza. Now, after lining up a coveted plot of land near the Sawgrass Mills outlet mall last month, officials are ready to move ahead with City Hall's construction. Sort of. Commissioner Sheila Alu, at a recent review of the city's proposed 2006-2007 budget, expressed concern that the city's estimate for the project was too vague. "At what point will we actually know what we're going to spend on City Hall?" Alu asked. "These are just estimates right now," City Manager **Pat Salerno** replied. "You have approved a budget in prior years for the project and you authorized a land swap."

Sunrise Mayor Steven Feren, in a recent interview, appeared to have forgotten how the city would finance the building. He explained that a "very small millage (property tax) rate" on a bond measure approved in the 1980s would partly finance the City Hall. Feren could not be reached for comment on the apparent discrepancy, despite messages left with his assistant.

But in a telephone interview, **Salerno** said city commissioners approved \$28.9 million in October for the new City Hall and plaza, paid for mostly with \$20 million in revenue bonds. The new building will include offices for commissioners and city employees, who have outgrown Sunrise's City Hall on Oakland Park Boulevard, **Salerno** said.

Many city employees were temporarily displaced to other buildings when Hurricane Wilma last year damaged City Hall. Repairs costing \$1.5 million are to be finished in mid-October. Commissioners last year tucked away almost \$29 million in the city's budget for a new City Hall and plaza. Now, after lining up a coveted plot of land near the Sawgrass Mills outlet mall last month, officials are ready to move ahead with City Hall's construction. Sort of. Commissioner Sheila Alu, at a recent review of the city's proposed 2006-2007 budget, expressed concern that the city's estimate for the project was too vague. "At what point will we actually know what we're going to spend on City Hall?" Alu asked. "These are just estimates right now," City Manager **Pat Salerno** replied. "You have approved a budget in prior years for the project and you authorized a land swap."

Last month, the city struck a deal with an investment group for 6.5 acres of land on Panther Parkway to build the new City Hall. With 100,000 square feet of office space, along with an outdoor plaza, it will be wedged between the BankAtlantic Center to the north, and Metropica, composed of condominiums, shops and offices being constructed to the south. In exchange for the new land, Sawgrass 17 Acres Partnership, which includes Joseph Kavana, chairman and chief executive officer of Miami-based K-Group Holdings Inc. (owns Metropica), received 6.9 acres of property on the west side of Panther Parkway at Northwest 21st Street. Kavana did not return calls requesting comment. Kavana's land was worth \$8.7 million, while the city's property was worth \$6.5 million, according to a city report.

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A few years ago, Sunrise offered K-Group \$15.8 million in tax incentives until 2025 as Metropica is completed. Kavana met or spoke on the telephone with **Salerno** on 29 occasions from January 2005 through

August of this year, making him **Salerno's** most frequent appointment outside of city employees, according to copies of **Salerno's** meeting calendars. "We have been talking with them about the northern parcel [near Metropica]," Feren said. "It is one of the things that the city used to help convince them to build the project, because having a brand- new City Hall, connecting their building to the Sawgrass Mills area, makes it more worthwhile for them to build there."

Estimates for the new city hall and plaza were based on the scope of the projects and the cost of construction materials, **Salerno** said. "That was just a figure that [City Manager] Pat [**Salerno**] told us was his best guesstimate at the time," Feren said, referring to the estimate for the new city hall in the back of the city's 2005-2006 budget. "It is just a number on the page in the book."

The city intends to hire an architect for the new City Hall before summer 2007, Feren said. Construction could begin in late 2007 or early 2008

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PATRICK G. SALERNO
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

South Florida Sun - Sentinel - Fort Lauderdale, Fla.
Nov 28, 2004

SUNRISE OKS CONTRACT WITH EX-OFFICIAL FORMER FINANCE DIRECTOR TO EARN \$80 AN HOUR AS A CONSULTANT

Jeremy Milarsky Staff Writer

Facing the Oct. 29 retirement of city Finance Director Ruth Castellon, City Manager **Pat Salerno** asked Sunrise city commissioners to hire Castellon for one year as an outside consultant, paying her at a rate of \$80 an hour. **Salerno** said hiring Castellon, 57, on a contractual basis would make the transition easier.

Commissioners agreed, voting 4-1 to approve the contract at a meeting last month. Commissioner Don Rosen dissented.

Before her retirement, Castellon worked for the city for 16 years, 11 of them as finance director. She earned an annual salary of \$121,100 at the time she left, according to city records. Her former department is key in city politics, because Sunrise's finance workers help put together the city's budget annually, and that budget plays a major part in the decision on how much property owners pay in annual taxes.

Commissioners, for example, have touted the fact that Sunrise's property tax rate has decreased for the last 10 years. Many property owners have paid more to the city, however, because of rising property values.

Rosen said he voted against the contract because, to him, it doesn't make sense to pay an outside consultant to help run the finance department when that department already has a director. Former assistant finance director Laura Toebe has been acting director in Castellon's place since Nov. 1.

"I find it against what I consider to be normal policy," Rosen said. **Salerno** said keeping Castellon as a consultant is necessary, given the financial complexity of the city -- Sunrise has a \$76 million annual budget and at least two special-taxing districts.

Also, Castellon retired two years before city officials originally expected her to do so, **Salerno** said. "The finance director has a significant role in the health of the city," he said. "And we didn't have that extra two years to go on."

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PATRICK G. SALERNO
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SUNRISE COMMISSION TO VOTE ON SETTLEMENT WITH POLICE UNION

South Florida Sun - Sentinel - Fort Lauderdale, Fla.
Jeremy Milarsky Staff Writer
Sep 1, 2004

A lengthy and heated political battle between Sunrise officials and the city's police labor union may come to an end this week.

City commissioners Thursday evening will be asked to approve a three-year contract with the union. The proposed agreement calls for improved wages and a more generous pension plan for more than 150 members of the Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 80, which represents Sunrise police officers. "I thought it was a very fair increase [to the pension plan]," said police Officer David Lokaj, president of the union.

The union's current contract with the city expired Oct. 1, 2003. Negotiations between union officials and representatives of the city administration dragged for almost a year.

A major sticking point was Sunrise's so-called pension "cap" system, which limited the amount of money city officials poured into an officers' pension fund if the stock market performed poorly.

Sunrise offers its employees a pension plan in which both the city government and the individual employee contribute to the investment fund. But if the city's share of the cost for maintaining that fund exceeds 10 percent of the employees' total payroll, the remaining cost is split 50-50 with public safety employees.

The proposed agreement raises that "cap" to 18 percent, so the city would absorb more of the cost of maintaining the pension fund, City Manager **Pat Salerno** said. Union members approved the contract proposal on Friday by a 3-1 margin, Lokaj said. "I think [union representatives] got an outstanding contract for their members," **Salerno** said.

After voting on the contract during a first reading, commissioners also will discuss **Salerno's** budget proposal for the next fiscal year, which begins Oct. 1.

Under **Salerno's** proposal, Sunrise property owners will pay the city about \$6.23 per \$1,000 of taxable property value next year, a decrease from the city's current tax rate.

Commissioners plan to meet at 5 p.m. Thursday at City Hall, 10770 W. Oakland Park Blvd.

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PATRICK G. SALERNO
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SUNRISE OFFICIALS EXPECT DROP IN FIRE TAX REVENUES

South Florida Sun - Sentinel - Fort Lauderdale, Fla.
Jeremy Milarsky Staff Writer
Aug 6, 2004

Despite more than \$48 million in new construction over the past year, City Manager **Pat Salerno** expects the city's special property tax for fire protection to bring in less money next year, according to a budget proposal released this week.

That's because more businesses are successfully applying for exemptions to the tax, **Salerno** said. The tax costs homeowners \$89.50 annually. Businesses pay a higher fee based on the physical size of their property, but some nonprofit businesses can avoid the tax by asking for an exemption.

Sunrise officials collected \$4.8 million in fire taxes this year. During the next fiscal year, which begins Oct. 1, **Salerno** expects the city to collect only \$4.6 million, according to his proposed budget for fiscal year 2005.

Reduced revenue from the flat fire tax was one of many challenges city staff members faced when drafting the \$75.8 million budget proposal last month, **Salerno** said.

That proposal calls for the same property tax rate as the current year's: \$6.24 per \$1,000 of taxable value. Under the proposed rate, the owner of a \$150,000 home who claims the state's \$25,000 homestead exemption would pay \$779.63 in taxes next year.

Commissioners have planned a public hearing to discuss the budget for Sept. 13.

"Everybody goes through each page, line by line," Commissioner Sheila Alu said.

Salerno said drafting this year's budget was especially difficult because of rising costs associated with employees. According to the budget proposal, Sunrise salary costs will increase an average of 6 percent next year. The city will cut two full-time positions and add 13 part-time positions.

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PAY RAISES ON SUNRISE AGENDA OFFICIAL OBJECTS TO THE TIMING OF PROPOSAL

South Florida Sun - Sentinel - Fort Lauderdale, Fla.
Jeremy Milarsky Staff Writer
Mar 23, 2004

What would normally be a routine decision to reward the city's highest-level managers may turn into a political debate this evening, as city commissioners decide whether to grant 115 supervisors in City Hall a 2.5 percent pay raise next year.

City Manager **Pat Salerno** proposed the raise as an annual "merit increase," a salary increase granted to the employee for doing a good job. But at least one city commissioner has questioned the timing of the pay raise since city officials are in the midst of tense contract negotiations with Sunrise's police union.

Members of the Fraternal Order of Police Lodge No. 80 are asking for a salary hike of at least 5 percent annually to cover the cost of living during the next three years. The union's contract with the city expired Oct. 1. Officers and sergeants in the union also receive a merit increase each year. Mayor Steve Feren pointed out that the police officers usually receive a more generous merit raise than the city's supervisors. "Their merit pay is more than the supervisory employees'," he said.

Salerno's proposal is a routine decision that, by city law, must be considered by commissioners annually, Feren said. Usually, it is approved with little or no controversy.

But city commissioner Sheila Alu, who said she thinks the city's administrators deserve raises, questioned the timing of **Salerno's** proposal. She wondered whether it sent the wrong message to union members in the midst of contract talks. "I just don't think this is a good time," she said last week.

Salerno, who is not among the group of employees included in the proposal, could not be reached for comment.

Like Alu, police Officer David Lokaj, president of the police union, did not object to the city's supervisors and department heads getting a raise, but he said he hopes some of the city's wealth will be spread to union members as well. "I don't understand the reason why they're doing it now," he said. Employees affected by the proposal include Police Chief David Boyett and Fire Chief Bruce Moeller. If approved, the pay raises would become effective on each employee's anniversary date during the current fiscal year.

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PATRICK G. SALERNO
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**SUNRISE LEADERS SEEK TO REDUCE MANAGER'S POWER
TWO COMMISSIONERS WANT NEW PROCEDURE.**

South Florida Sun - Sentinel - Fort Lauderdale, Fla.
Christy McKerney Staff writer
Aug 26, 2003

Shirley Sumner has only to look around to see the results of City Manager **Pat Salerno's** decade-long reign over Sunrise. The Office Depot Center. Sawgrass Corporate Park. Tidy neighborhoods. "I do sometimes wonder why we elect commissioners, because **Pat** seems to have all the good ideas," said the 85-year-old Sunrise Lakes activist, acknowledging how much power **Salerno** has over the city.

Sumner likes it this way.

But for the first time in recent memory, several commissioners are openly complaining the 52-year-old **Salerno** has so much control over city affairs -- particularly over information they need to make decisions -- that elected officials are kept in the dark.

Commissioner Sheila Alu has drafted an ordinance that would allow the commission to put items on their own agenda -- a responsibility that solely rests with the city manager. The proposal, which also gives a majority of commissioners authority to overrule the mayor on how meetings are conducted, is up for discussion tonight.

"As representatives of the people, we need to take a more aggressive stand and say that here's what the people of Sunrise really want and not just look at one person's or one staff member's opinion all the time," said Commissioner Don Rosen. While Alu and Rosen were elected two years ago on a wave of voter dissatisfaction that ousted two incumbents, the proposed changes will likely be symbolic. Veteran commissioners said they don't see a need to change.

Salerno wouldn't comment on the proposal. "The current agenda procedures were established by the commission in the late '80s and were in place when I became city manager. Any consideration of changes is a commission issue," he said in a statement issued through his secretary.

Through times of public accolades, apathy and occasional sharp criticism by business foes and watchdogs over **Salerno's** secretive management style, the commission has embraced **Salerno's** behind-the-scenes deal-making. "No matter what you want to say about **Pat's** management style, whether you're for or against it, the plain fact of the matter is that nobody can argue with his results," said Mayor Steve Feren.

Feren and Commissioners Joseph Scuotto and Irwin Harlem said they don't see a need to change.

With an annual salary of \$168,170, **Salerno**, who took the job in 1991, is one of the highest-paid city managers in the county. The city provides him a \$1,200 allowance, the unlimited use of a new

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Lincoln Town car leased by the city, a free cell phone with unlimited business and personal calls and all his accrued sick leave. If he retired today, the city would pay him more than \$167,000 for 2,000 hours of sick leave alone.

"We pay him a good price, and we're happy with what he does," Scuotto said. Feren and Scuotto said they know **Salerno** will place their wishes on the commission agenda.

But commissioners shouldn't have to ask the city manager, a non- elected official, Alu and Rosen said. "This was why we were elected," Rosen said. "The commission should stand together to represent the people of Sunrise and say to the manager, we have the right to put things on the agenda, we have the right to override one person saying no, if we honestly believe that it's in the best interest of the people of Sunrise."

Alu's patience with **Salerno's** control over every facet of City Hall snapped recently after she asked the City Clerk for a public document and was told she'd have to get it from the city manager. That type of secrecy, and not getting enough information about proposed fee increases, keep elected officials from doing their job, she said.

After **Salerno** said a summer camp fee increase was necessary, commissioners agreed to raise summer camp fees last month.

Later, after seeing increased fees for fire-rescue and recreation, Alu tried to change her vote against raising the summer camp fees and was told by the mayor that she couldn't. After Alu complained, **Salerno** compromised with smaller increases. But Alu is still not sure whether any increase was necessary. She was told the program for 700 kids costs \$959,500, but when asked how the figure was arrived at, she said she never got a satisfactory answer.

Earlier this spring, commissioners increased benefits for themselves and city management.

If she had been told the city was in such a tight budget year, Alu said, she would not have voted for the increases.

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JUDGE TOSSES PART OF MALL SUIT
CITY ACCUSED OF NEGOTIATING PRIVATE DEAL

Sun Sentinel - Fort Lauderdale
CHRISTY McKERNEY Staff Writer
Aug 11, 2000

A Broward Circuit Court judge has cleared the city of allegations it violated the state Government in the Sunshine Law in dealings to bring a \$200 million upscale fashion mall next to Sawgrass Mills shopping center. Judge George A. Brescher this week dismissed portions of a Sawgrass Mills civil lawsuit that the city violated the Sunshine Law when City Manager **Pat Salerno** and city staff negotiated privately with H. Wayne Huizenga's Sunrise Land Group over a nine-month period beginning in 1998.

Sunrise Land Group wants to build a two-story fashion mall on a 150-acre tract of land across the street from Sawgrass Mills and next to the National Car Rental Center. The mall is in the planning stage. "I believe the order speaks for itself," City Attorney Jeff Olson said. "This does not end the case, although it ends really, I think, the guts of the case." Calls for comment from Sawgrass Mills were not returned. The city has moved to dismiss Sawgrass Mills' allegations that the city violated its civil rights by treating Sunrise Land Group differently than it treated Sawgrass Mills. The judge's ruling leaves the civil rights portion of the lawsuit intact.

The lawsuit was brought after the city staff and Sunrise Land Group last year negotiated a surprise deal that would include construction of the mall and a 13-acre city linear park surrounding it. Commissioners, as well as the public, were unaware of the negotiations prior to distribution of the commission meeting's agenda packet, which included the agreement. Commissioners were briefed separately by the city manager after receiving the packet and before approving the document at a public hearing April 27, 1999.

Brescher said the Sunshine Law only applies to meetings of a board or commission, not of an executive staff and a private party, such as the Sawgrass Land Group. The judge disagreed with Sawgrass Mills' allegation that the city manager and staff delegated decision-making authority to the city manager and staff. The judge also found that the city gave reasonable notice to the public under the Sunshine Law.

Sawgrass Mills had contended the city failed to give reasonable notice to the public. Two public hearings regarding the development of regional effect for the proposed mall were put off this week at the request of Sunrise Land Group, the city said. The agreement between the city and Sunrise Land Group stipulates that three out of four anchor stores must come from a short list including Nordstrom's, Bloomingdales, Saks or Neiman-Marcus. The mall would include exclusive department and specialty stores and hotel and office space.

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SUIT AGAINST CITY, HUIZENGA TOSSED OUT

Sun Sentinel - Fort Lauderdale
STAFF REPORTS
Aug 7, 1999

A Broward circuit judge has thrown out a lawsuit against three Wayne Huizenga entities, two hotel companies, the city of Sunrise and City Manager **Pat Salerno**.

Peter Giant Bowleg, of Margate, was suing the group for \$43.2 million, saying they stole his idea to build hotels and other developments in the area near Sawgrass Mills mall, where National Car Rental Center was later built and a hotel and other projects are planned.

On Thursday, the case was dismissed with prejudice, meaning it cannot be amended and refiled. Bowleg said on Friday he will appeal the ruling.

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RESIDENTS JOIN CRITICS IN SUNRISE CITY OFFICIALS COME UNDER ATTACK

Sun Sentinel - Fort Lauderdale

BRITTANY WALLMAN STAFF WRITER STAFF WRITER

Jun 19, 1999

At first, angry executives at corporate giant Sawgrass Mills complained that City Commissioners had abdicated their authority to City Manager **Pat Salerno**. Now some worried residents are saying the same. Weeks after the city and **Salerno** were sued by Sawgrass Mills for cutting a secretive deal for a competing mall, residents are starting to take notice. **Salerno** was also secretive in 1996 when he brought National Car Rental Center to town, among other ventures.

It's not an appointed city manager following the lead of an elected commission, residents say, but vice versa. "Perhaps you need someone to watch him," said Sunrise Lakes resident and condo leader Norm Willner. "But you can't say he's doing a lousy job." It's his bosses -the commissioners - under critical scrutiny. "I'm upset with how this city's being run," Willner said. "The commission is, I think, worthless." "There is no government in Sunrise," said Commissioner Roger Wishner, often a critic of **Salerno** and commissioners. There is one person in Sunrise that controls everything, 100 percent," he said of **Salerno**. "The other people up on that city commission should just resign and leave their seats vacant, because that's basically what you have up there. You have a vacancy in the city of Sunrise."

A lawsuit filed by Sawgrass Mills/Mills Corp. against the city recently brought attention to **Salerno's** strength and secrecy, after he met privately for six months to bring a rival mall to town. "And where's the mayor in all this?" asked resident Bill Frazzetto. "What, is it like the Queen of look good and doesn't do anything?" "You have an army of Sunrise residents building, who are about to go out into the front lines in the fight for openness and fairness in municipal government," said Mills Corp. executive vice president Mark Rivers. "It's not just us anymore."

In a full-page newspaper advertisement, Mills Corp. on Friday made a plea: "Are the Sunrise City Commissioners Listening?" the ad reads. By mid-day, Rivers said about 250 people had called the phone number listed on the ad. About 400 responded to a previous one. The ad attacks the "secret hasty deal" to bring a rival mall in. "Take Action Now," it reads. "Your City Commissioners are elected to work for you. Are they lately?" "I've been disturbed by that for a long, long time," said Sunrise Lakes resident Stan Berman. " (**Salerno**) does what he wants to do and that's the end of it." As an unelected city manager, **Salerno** has freedoms commissioners don't have. He can approve spending of money and can direct staff efforts toward projects of his liking.

Commissioners allow him to do so and nearly always approve what he puts before them, with little debate or discussion. They also don't give him an annual evaluation. "I've never heard of this kind of thing, where one person was the nexus of control with so little oversight," Frazzetto said.

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(Articles are in reverse chronological order)**

Salerno conducted himself similarly as Cobb County, Ga., manager, until he was fired before coming to Sunrise in 1991. In 1996, his secret talks to lure Huizenga's hockey arena were criticized but not by the mayor or commissioners.

To some, the weak commission/strong manager arrangement makes sense and has had good results. "The city has to go on with progress," said Sunrise Lakes resident and condo leader David Paris, "and if the man has knowledge, let him do it."

Sunrise Lakes resident Mike Rothman sees some good in it: quick meetings. On the other hand, Rothman said, "the man has so much clout and power. I don't know if it's dangerous or what." While Mayor Steve Feren declined comment, commissioners Irwin Harlem, Fran Klauber and Joseph Scuotto said they have more input behind the scenes than spectators know. But that arrangement pushes them into legal gray areas, according to Sunshine Law experts like Pat Gleason of the state Attorney General's Office. Commissioners aren't allowed to hold confabs with the city manager one by one on a particular issue, if the effect is to hold a de facto meeting in private. City attorney Jeffrey Olson has said that's not happening.

Harlem said he keeps checks on **Salerno** by going to City Hall and asking questions. He's just quiet on the dais, he said, out of fear the print media would misquote him. Scuotto said he keeps some ideas quiet at meetings to avoid controversy, such as an idea he's working with **Salerno** on to require homeowners to have uniform mailboxes. But he said he has plenty of input behind the scenes. "The problem is maybe there are people who don't feel they've seen enough of a show," Commissioner Fran Klauber said. "Some people who come, they're very negative, and this is their entertainment. I'm sorry I'm not up there clawing people's eyes out."

If the city wasn't getting so much done, **Salerno** said, his "perceived power" wouldn't be an issue. It's not that commissioners blindly agree to everything he offers them, it's that he only offers them what he knows they'll want. "There's one thing that is common among all five of them: They all have the objective of making the city the most it can be for the benefit of its residents," **Salerno** said.

Rivers, from the Mills Corp., said now that he has a brigade of concerned citizens, the grassroots campaign can begin. He'll hold meetings with these people interested in making commissioners more responsive. "Residents have sort of had this lingering, building concern about Sunrise government," Rivers said, "and they feel that someone is finally taking on the playground bully."

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LIKE BATMAN, CITY MANAGER KEEPS HIS WORK UNDERCOVER

Sun Sentinel - Fort Lauderdale
BRITTANY WALLMAN Staff Writer
May 16, 1999

City Manager **Pat Salerno** is proud of his new nickname, "Batman," after his City Hall was likened to "the bat cave -- underground, undercover and top secret." He figures that makes him protector of the city, and makes his latest critic, a senior executive from his city's biggest taxpayer, Sawgrass Mills, "the Joker." It's a fitting title for **Salerno**, a city manager with seemingly superhuman powers. Able to single-handedly make multimillion-dollar projects appear from behind closed doors. Able to turn the City Commission into a virtual rubber stamp, rarely, if ever, voting down an item. **Salerno**, 48, is arguably the most powerful sitting city manager in South Florida. While his hubris and secretive operational style got him ousted from his last job, as manager of Cobb County, Ga., Sunrise commissioners have honored the New York native with more money, praise and power.

The city's west side provides more proof every day of his workings, as first an arena, then new roads, restaurants, hotels, offices and apartments are built or planned. The area is shaping up as a downtown in the Everglades, accessible by major highways in all directions. For that, **Salerno** is often credited. For the way it was achieved, he's the butt of criticism. "**Salerno's** situation is the extreme," said Ron Wainshal, a Sunrise resident who has fought for information on a 10-story office building, a deal that emerged from secrecy to city agenda, complete with a \$500,000 taxpayer giveaway. "I don't know of too many cities with such a strong city manager and such a weak, by choice, city commission." "Sunrise certainly is a unique city when it comes to how the public's business is operated," said Sunrise Commissioner Roger Wishner, the lone voice of occasional dais dissent. "My colleagues sometimes believe that little or no discussion on these issues is the best. They truly have a firm belief that **Pat** can really do no wrong and he can't make mistakes."

Mayor Steve Feren declined to comment. Commissioners Fran Klauber, Joseph Scuotto and Irwin Harlem said they have input behind the scenes, preferring to ask questions privately instead of before the public. "Go look at the other cities, that's all I can say," Scuotto said. "Somebody must be doing the right thing." "I think the one overall statement I have to make," Klauber said, "is that the city manager doesn't vote." "He works for us. He works for me," Harlem said. "And he does know what I'm looking for." **Salerno's** leash has grown longer through the years, as he has grown to know the commissioners, three of whom he has worked with 10 years or more. He said he knows their visions and doesn't bring ideas to them "half-baked."

Salerno, who was hired in 1990, is paid \$128,214 to rule over a staff of 1,200 and a \$282 million budget. He is not subject to annual evaluation. If commissioners even suggest publicly that he leave, he can take his buyout package and run. In the past year, commissioners expanded his spending powers. They gave him an 11 percent raise. They named a road after him. He is allowed to work clandestine deals without tipping off commissioners first. He can spend taxpayer money on

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consultants and use up staff time, as evidenced with the latest "Sunrise Surprise," the proposed \$200 million-plus mall that would be built across the street from Sawgrass Mills.

In that deal, **Salerno** negotiated for about six months with Alex Muxo, lieutenant for H. Wayne Huizenga, hired consultants, then let commissioners in on the secret just days before their vote. It was, as almost always, unanimous. He conducted similarly secret deals to bring the National Car Rental Center and countless other projects to the city. **Salerno** couldn't cite a time an agenda item had been voted down. "I would grant you that it's a unique situation, that you have five very focused individuals, and I think their visions are parallel. Without that, nothing gets done -- zero," he said. But his secretive style didn't gel with his last employer -- the Cobb County, Ga., commission -- which forced him to resign in 1989 as county manager in a secret meeting later ruled to have been a violation of open meetings laws. Newspaper accounts recount the acrimonious end of a two-year job, and the ring of familiarity it had with his previous employers, the Chatham, Ga., County Commission, when they heard he was accused of squelching the information flow.

Many say **Salerno's** reign reminds them of the strong mayor days. Only this autocrat, they say, isn't answerable to voters. "What you're dealing with here is a city commission which acts just because **Pat Salerno** asked them to," said James Dausch, senior executive vice president of Mills Corp., the one **Salerno** dubbed "the Joker" at the last commission meeting. "They play it so close to the chest it forces you to be adversarial just to get information that any other city would give without batting an eye."

Like many of **Salerno's** critics, Wainshal tempers his words with praise. "He does a lot of good, but {commissioners} have abdicated responsibility on their part. Effectively **Pat's** boundaries are so broad now, he can do what he pleases. And he does that in a very intelligent way: If you don't share information, the opposition has no time to mobilize," Wainshal said. Commissioners rarely debate or even discuss in public. Most business, except items requiring public hearings, is put on the "consent agenda," meaning the items will be passed all at once without talk.

Some commissioner-manager debate takes place over the phone, outside the public's earshot. "I think people can communicate better one-on-one," **Salerno** said, calling "preposterous" the idea that he's circumventing the Sunshine Law's rules on open government, which are designed to let the public in on not just the final votes, but the deliberative process, too. Unlike other cities, Sunrise conducts no public workshops, where commissioners or the public could debate a proposal. The city passed its strict sign law in August without any workshops beforehand. The small-business community is now up in arms. In Pembroke Pines and now Hollywood, officials turned to public workshops to test the waters and solicit opinions.

The lack of input serves to embolden **Salerno**, as projects sail through free of public derailment. If commissioners want workshops, **Salerno** said, they can have them. "Some communities decide they need a workshop to decide whether to landscape a median strip on a little strip of road," he said. "But those are not forward-looking communities." **Salerno** said Mills Corp., parent of Sawgrass Mills, has created the secrecy issue to drum up controversy over the proposed mall. But Mills Corp. is the latest in a line of people pounding on the cone of silence over City Hall. "If you are working

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for the people, why don't you ask the people?" a frustrated businessman, Randy Horn, implored in February, after finding out about the new sign law. At Sawgrass Estates, across the street from the proposed upscale mall, Bridget Zelinka said she likes the new wall the city built to drown out traffic honks and squeals. But "the people here directly affected were never part of the process," Zelinka said. "They never considered our feelings or even questioned us. They come up with these beautiful plans. They don't inform the people until the plans are made." That's what tennis players at the city's complex have been grouching about. They said they're the ones who use the courts, but no one ever asked them for thoughts on a \$2 million renovation.

When **Salerno** in April 1998 sprung a \$20 million "Neighborhood Renaissance Plan" to do projects all over the city, it was brought to commissioners with no commission or public discussion beforehand. It passed unanimously one day after it was made available to the unknowing public. **Salerno** said it was the product of commissioners' desires. "When you -- I don't want to say discourage -- but when you don't encourage public input, you may be missing something you don't realize you're missing," said Lou Hendrix, a 13-year member of the city's planning board and a founding member of a citizen's action group that supported the switch from strong mayor to a city manager form of government.

Throughout the years, Hendrix said, the city has moved farther and farther in a direction that pinches out the public. For example, nonresidents aren't allowed to give public comment at commission meetings, and in certain hearings, affected residents must have responded by a certain date and according to complicated procedures.

In May, when 25 upset condo dwellers showed up to protest a bagel operation they thought would stink, commissioners allowed only one of them to speak, saying he alone had come close to stating "with particularity the comprehensive land development regulation that would be violated." "This was a done deal," Stan Berman, 70, said at the time. "We had no chance in it." Hendrix lives in the New Orleans Lake homes, just outside Plantation. "If I think of the hundreds of times I've spoken at the city of Plantation," she said, thankful they listened to her Sunrise enclave's thoughts on what would happen across the street. Mayor Feren on Tuesday noticed that for the second meeting in a row, there was no one to speak at public comment. "I think it's something to be proud of," he told fellow commissioners. "We must be doing something right, if no one wants to complain." Hendrix said she flipped on the television and caught that quote. She lauds **Salerno** and the commission for their work, but wonders whether they're afraid of what their public has to say. "If you say anything negative, well then you're the bad guy. You're out to get them. Life's not that way. At least it's not to me," she said. "But you know the real issue," Commissioner Wishner said, "is that does the public want more discussion and more debate about these issues? The answer is clearly no, because I don't get phone calls."

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**SAWGRASS MILLS BLASTS PLAN FOR NEW MALL
CITY MANAGER DEALT BEHIND SCENES ON DEAL**

Sun Sentinel - Fort Lauderdale
ALAN CHERRY Staff Writer
Apr 28, 1999

The secretive dealings of City Manager **Pat Salerno** continued to pay dividends on Tuesday evening with an agreement that could bring one of the finest shopping centers in the United States to town.

However, it may have strained relations with the city's largest retailer, Sawgrass Mills. "That such a project could be hatched without consultation with us, despite our request for information and your statement that nothing was going on, is calculated to guarantee our strong and persistent opposition," said a Tuesday letter from a senior vice president from The Mills Corporation to **Salerno**. **Salerno** fired back to the company a written reply that said, "Your letter demonstrates that, once again, the Mills Corporation's prime motive is its own self interest."

Commissioners agreed, 4-0, to a pact for a \$200 million new extravagant mall, planned by Fort Lauderdale tycoon H. Wayne Huizenga, that targets some of the wealthiest shoppers in South Florida. The 1.2 million-, multistory structure will go on 150 acres owned by Huizenga and will be built through his Sunrise Land Group, an offshoot of Huizenga Holdings. "I was totally in the dark," said Mayor Steven Feren, who **Salerno** excitedly called at home on Friday evening to tell of the deal. "He was like a kid bringing home a straight A report card to show you. He was very pleased and very proud."

To date, most of **Salerno's** behind-the-scenes dealings have led to little more than tepid complaints, yet substantial gains for the city. He worked out of public view to draw the National Car Rental Center and telecommunications giant Nortel to the western end of the city in recent years. With the new shopping center Tuesday, he once again convinced city commissioners his private negotiations were in line with the city's desire to be a shopping, sports, office and entertainment mecca. **Salerno** said he had been negotiating with top Huizenga assistant Alex Muxo for months. The city manager used his authority to hire city consultants without commission approval. He is allowed to spend up to \$10,000 on such services without special permission -- a power commissioners gave him long before the new mall was proposed. He also mobilized city staff and didn't tell elected officials until late Friday, after a deal was worked out and ready for a vote. Tuesday's commission review was buried on the meeting's public agenda as an agreement "for certain development matters and the design and development of a linear park."

"I don't think **Pat** thinks of anything but being able to return something to the community," said Commissioner Roger Wishner, who learned of the project when he met **Salerno** for lunch on Saturday. "We are looking at something that is the highest and best quality that it can be." The pact states the city's desire to cooperate and expedite permits when possible. The deal also allows the developer to use neighboring city property for wetlands and drainage. In exchange, the Sunrise

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Land Group must give the city a \$500,000 linear park at the site, as well as provide approximately \$500,000 in other improvements to accommodate the park. **Salerno's** stealthy negotiations on the new mall over the past six to eight months matches the way the city manager of eight years sometimes prefers to do public business, especially in the big deals.

In April 1996 on a Sunday, **Salerno** presented commissioners a privately negotiated deal to exchange millions of dollars in city services for making Sunrise the site of the National Car Rental Center -- a 21,000-seat building costing \$184 million that two years later would be the home of the Huizenga-controlled Florida Panthers hockey team. At the time, the city was in a bidding war with Fort Lauderdale to land the project. For 15 months in 1994-95, he quietly met with Nortel to move its 400-employee Latin American headquarters out of Miami-Dade County to Sunrise, in exchange for \$300,000 from the city. He lined up the deal behind closed doors, and commissioners agreed to it with plaudits for his efforts. Feren said too much advance publicity can doom a major project. "Sometimes that is the way the city has to operate," he said. This time, however, the city rankled The Mills Corporation's Senior Executive Vice President James F. Dausch. "Such a project would have potentially serious negative implications for Sawgrass Mills and the surrounding areas," Dausch wrote.

The proposed new mall is across the street from the huge Sawgrass Mills mall and would be the northern neighbor to the National Car Rental Center. The acreage has often been mentioned as a potential site for a professional baseball stadium. The shopping center kills those rumors. **Salerno** said he never denied the possibility of a mall on the property and that at one point Sawgrass Mills considered using the site. "I guess the real point of your letter is The Mills Corporation doesn't want another mall unless The Mills Corporation is the developer," **Salerno** wrote. The city agreement with the new mall, fashioned by **Salerno** and his staff, requires it be on par with two of the most luxurious shopping venues in the nation -- Phipps Plaza in Atlanta and The Somerset Collection in Troy, Mich. The new Sunrise mall is expected to take two to three years to finish. Three of the proposed mall's four anchors are to be a Saks Fifth Avenue, Bloomingdale's, Neiman Marcus, Lord & Taylor, Macy's or Nordstrom, the city deal says. Skeptical marketing experts say the shopping center's goal is unrealistic because many of those stores already have leasing deals at other malls, among other reasons.

A city-hired consultant said there was room in South Florida for a high-end shopping complex. Muxo, with Sunrise Land Group, concurs. "This is not just another mall," he said.

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SUNRISE MANAGER TO GET 2ND RAISE

Sun Sentinel - Fort Lauderdale
BRITTANY WALLMAN Staff Writer
Mar 24, 1999

City commissioners voted themselves a raise Tuesday night, giving City Manager **Pat Salerno** his second pay boost in six months.

Commissioners will receive a 6 percent raise, on top of their current \$20,691.22 salary. They also receive a pension and a \$400 a month stipend that requires no receipts. **Salerno** received a 5 percent raise on his \$115,198 salary in October and now will get a 6 percent raise retroactive to October. The raise brings his salary to \$128,214, plus a car, mobile phone with unlimited use and \$100 a month expense account with no accounting or receipts required. He accepted the job in 1991 making \$82,096, according to city records.

The city manager's raise stirred a short debate, in which commissioner Roger Wishner questioned the large increase and the mayor defended it. The vote was unanimous.

"He's the hardest working person I know," Mayor Steve Feren said.

Salerno thanked them for the raise and added that while he may make more than other Broward managers, some of them, such as Fort Lauderdale's, receive additional compensation such as a housing stipend.

Salerno receives a 5 percent raise automatically each year and is not subject to annual evaluation by the city commission.

His responsibilities include managing the city's \$275.6 million budget and executing the will of the five city commissioners.

In contrast to **Salerno's** salary, the city manager of Fort Lauderdale, population 149,700, makes \$125,000; in Hollywood, population 126,900, the city manager makes \$124,592; in Pembroke Pines, population 112,692, the salary is \$122,553; in Coral Springs, population 107,000, the salary is between \$117,000 and \$120,000; in Weston, population, 38,000, the pay is \$105,000.

Last year, commissioners of this 77,000-population city gave themselves a 5.5 percent raise and gave themselves and **Salerno** a pension. The Tuesday night raises were folded into a resolution giving city supervisors and managers their annual 3.5 percent cost of living adjustment.

It was placed on the consent agenda, which allows items to be passed all at once with no discussion, unless it's specifically removed from that list. Wishner pulled it from the list.

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SUNRISE OFFICERS STEP UP ATTACK

Sun Sentinel - Fort Lauderdale
BRITTANY WALLMAN Staff Writer
Oct 28, 1998

Buoyed by two police chief resignations last week, in Hollywood and Davie, Sunrise's officers have stepped up their attack on city commissioners, the city manager and the police chief.

Police officers carried their contract angst to the people Tuesday night, lining the street in front of City Hall in their blue union T- shirts, picket signs aloft.

"Sunrise, Stop Abusing Your Police," the shirts and placards admonished.

Police were surprised to find picket signs suddenly banned inside City Hall when they went to complete their protest in the commission chambers. City Manager **Pat Salerno** posted a directive saying the signs' sharp edges could be dangerous, are distracting and create a circus-like atmosphere.

The officers, members of the Police Benevolent Association union in the Sunrise Police Department, want increased pension benefits.

The 19-month contract dispute has elevated hostilities between the rank and file and administrators. Police have mailed fliers to voters, placed a cartoon in a weekly paper and conducted silent protests at commission meetings prior to Tuesday's off-duty picketing.

Sunrise union representative, Detective Miles Robison, said negotiations have shown Police Chief Dave Boyett's tendency to follow the city manager, rather than leading his force.

"We want a chief who will look into the needs of the officers," Robison said.

The union has threatened a no-confidence vote against **Salerno** and formed a referendum committee to institute term limits and elections by district on the commission. The commission has several longtime members, and several live in the same area. Boyett said he expects the fervor to die down when the contract is settled.

He received a no-confidence vote in his previous job as police chief in Norman, Okla., during contract negotiations in 1994, he said.

"It's just part of the job of being police chief," Boyett said. "It's a difficult job."

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LAW FIRM SETTLES, PAYS SUNRISE \$4.15 MILLION

Sun Sentinel - Fort Lauderdale
BRITTANY WALLMAN Staff Writer
May 27, 1998

A law firm accused of bungling a city lawsuit will pay \$4.15 million to settle a suit filed against it by the city. Sunrise sued Atlanta firm Phillips & Reid, now Phillips, Cook & Lowe, claiming malpractice in a case against the city's civic center contractor.

The city was having troubles with its planned civic and cultural center _ a \$26 million project that is not yet open. When Sunrise hired Phillips & Reid in 1992, officials thought they were hiring the nation's preeminent construction litigation experts. According to the 1993 lawsuit, a Sunrise employee even gave a testimonial about the firm that was printed in a brochure for National Construction Law Center, an entity whose address was the Phillips & Reid office.

But the city had hired a firm with a past. The Phillips & Reid story is repetitive; in its various incarnations, the firm has been chastised or sued several times for mind-boggling bills and ugly losses. In Broward County, the School Board is pursuing a case against the firm. That case is a near duplicate of the Sunrise case _ a fight against a contractor, a hefty legal bill and a loss. The School Board paid the firm \$2.1 million and the contractor \$420,000. In 1996, Sunrise paid \$2.77 million in judgments, mostly to contractor James R. Tucker Inc., and paid more than \$2 million in legal fees to Phillips & Reid. That represented more than 17,200 hours of attorneys' hours, a feat impossible for the complexity of the case and number of lawyers, the lawsuit said. The City Commission voted unanimously Tuesday night to accept the settlement, which is to be paid by Phillips & Reid's insurer.

"We're very pleased," City Manager **Pat Salerno** said. **Salerno** declined to reveal the spending plan he has for the money, saying he will tell the commission first. "I think justice has been done, and that's all I can say about it," said Stuart Michelson, one of the city's attorneys on the case. About \$500,000 will go to Michelson and co-counsel Bill Scherer of Conrad, Scherer & Jenne, **Salerno** said.

The civic and cultural center, at 10610 Oakland Park Boulevard, still is not open, but **Salerno** vows an opening before the summer _ two contractors, two law firms and five years after ground was broken. Michelson, who represented Sunrise in its case, said he will file a suit against the firm on behalf of the school district in state court this week.

James R. Tucker Inc., the contractor Sunrise paid Phillips & Reid to sue, has also turned around and sued Phillips & Reid, charging the firm engaged in "scorched earth litigation" with no legal basis, putting Tucker out of business.

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SUNRISE MANAGER'S JOB CANDIDACY SEEN AS COMPLIMENT

Sun Sentinel - Fort Lauderdale
ALAN CHERRY Staff Writer
Sep 11, 1997

City Manager **Pat Salerno's** candidacy to be the boss of Naperville, Ill., is being viewed almost with a sense of pride here. "It is pretty flattering," City Commissioner Fran Klauber said. "It used to be people didn't even put the city of Sunrise's address on their business cards, now it is a whole turnaround." **Salerno** is among seven candidates to be the next city manager of Naperville, a Chicago suburb of 110,000 with a reputation as one of the finest communities in America. A Washington-based organization, Zero Population Growth, last month ranked Naperville as the most child-friendly community in the United States.

Sunrise, with 75,000 residents, is too small to make the list, which includes cities over 100,000. Sunrise commissioners applaud the recognition, say they are not sure **Salerno** would take the job, and generally express confidence the town would be fine if he chooses to leave. "Would the city stop running? No," Mayor Steven Feren said. "We have two assistants to the city manager, or administrative assistants . . . who would certainly have the ability to keep things going." Sunrise has little experience dealing with the departure of a city manager.

Salerno is only the second one in city history. The first was Dale Sugerman, who came in 1989 after the town dumped its strong-mayor government in exchange for a professional manager. Sugerman hired **Salerno** as an assistant. **Salerno** took over when commissioners ousted Sugerman late in 1990. During **Salerno's** stay in Sunrise, he has brought in new corporate businesses, pushed through a plan for \$50 million in civic improvements and negotiated the deal that is bringing a \$185 million professional hockey arena to the western side of town. "He has done a fantastic job for the city," Commissioner Irwin Harlem said.

Irwin and Klauber joined Feren in saying existing staff would keep the city running if **Salerno** gets the Naperville job. "We have good staff that will pick up the slack," Harlem said. The only words of worry come from Commissioner Roger Wishner, who said the city should have insisted **Salerno** hire an assistant city manager. "We should put back into the budget the assistant city manager position and see to it that position be filled," Wishner said.

Planning for **Salerno's** departure is premature, though. **Salerno** said he had not decided whether to accept an invitation by Naperville officials for a personal interview in about 10 days. Commissioners, who didn't know **Salerno** was looking for work, said they expected to be told if he went for the interview. "There is always the possibility **Pat** will leave one day," Feren said. "The city will cross that bridge when it comes to it."

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SUNRISE SLASHES RATES IN TRASH CONTRACT

Sun Sentinel - Fort Lauderdale
RAFAEL LORENTE Staff Writer
Aug 21, 1996

More than seven months of secret negotiations between the city and All Service Refuse ended last week with a new contract that provides residents and businesses with lower garbage pickup rates. City Commissioners voted 4-0 to give initial approval to the contract after praising City Manager **Pat Salerno** and Harold Carter of All Service Refuse for their work.

Commissioner Fran Klauber was absent.

The new contract, retroactive to April 1, reduces collection costs from \$22.21 a month to \$18.10 a month for single-family homes. Condominiums will have their monthly rates reduced from \$15.11 to \$12.31. Commercial rates vary but also will be about 18 percent lower.

Since the contract is retroactive, the city will credit the money from the last few months over a three month period. "It's a very major rate reduction across the board to all residents and businesses within the city of Sunrise," said Carter, vice president of the company. "It's a major loss of revenue for All Service," Carter said. Carter said he hoped to make up for the money through continued growth in the city.

Sunrise's population of about 77,000 is expected to surpass 85,000 by 2000, according to city records. The new contract runs through March 30, 2002. All Service has held the city's garbage contract without facing competitive bidding since 1967.

Commissioner Irwin Harlem defended the contract with All Service. "If we went out to bid, we wouldn't get the service that we get from All Service today"he said.

Secret negotiations are not new in Sunrise.

During the last few years City Manager **Salerno** has negotiated in secret to get NORTEL and CareFlorida, two major employers, to move their headquarters into the city.

Recently, **Salerno** dealt in secret to get an arena for the Florida Panthers built in the city just south of Oakland Park Boulevard and the Sawgrass Expressway.

A final vote on the new contract is scheduled for the next City Commission meeting, which starts at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday at City Hall, 10770 W. Oakland Park Blvd.

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SUNRISE DEALMAKER HAS SECRET STRATEGY
MANAGER SCORED ARENA WORKING IN SHADOWS

Sun Sentinel - Fort Lauderdale
RAFAEL LORENTE ROBIN BENEDICK Staff Writers
Apr 21, 1996

City Manager **Pat Salerno** is a big sports fan, but he has never been to a Florida Panthers hockey game. He doesn't have time. The dealmaker who negotiated in secret for months to bring a hockey arena to Sunrise was so busy in the days leading up to the final vote that he went several days without seeing his children awake. "I did what I had to," he said. **Salerno** always does.

Like calling commissioners while they're watching the late news and filling them in on the day's arena negotiations. The conversations usually spill over into The Tonight Show. Like coming into the office on Saturdays and Sundays, right after an early-morning Mass at nearby All Saints Catholic Church. Negotiating in secret is nothing unusual for **Salerno**, either. He has planned a number of major projects with little or no public discussion until a vote is scheduled before commissioners. "My style is that I don't try to present anything that's half-baked," **Salerno** said. "It makes me feel good that when I present something I've covered all the bases, I've analyzed all the angles."

Critics such as City Commissioner Roger Wishner complain that **Salerno** practically runs the city by himself. "My biggest concern is that there is not enough discussion publicly about things," Wishner said. But even Wishner, who frequently finds himself at odds with his four City Commission colleagues, concedes that **Salerno** is a whiz when it comes to financing. And despite his criticism, Wishner has voted in favor of some of **Salerno's** most secretive deals, including hundreds of thousands of dollars in incentives to get a major company to move to the city. Mayor Steve Effman said many people in Sunrise see **Salerno** as secretive because they have not become accustomed to the city manager form of government adopted only eight years ago. "He has achieved things in the last few years that have brought the city into its own," Effman said. The citywide improvement project, for example, includes a civic center, a senior center and several new parks. In addition, several large businesses have moved to Sunrise.

Salerno, 45, is Sunrise's second city manager and has held the job since 1991. When he's not cutting deals, he spends his weekends with his wife and two children attending Little League baseball games and eating dinner at restaurants. Dinner is his only meal of the day. For 15 months in 1994-95, **Salerno** negotiated in secret with a Dade County company that was considering a move to Sunrise. But when a deal offering Nortel, formerly Northern Telecom, \$300,000 to move its Latin American headquarters to west Sunrise became public, nobody complained. Commissioner Dan Pearl, who called it the most secret deal since the atomic bomb, joined his colleagues in unanimous approval. **Salerno** got the same response from the commission when he presented his plan to join Sunrise with neighboring Bonaventure. Chances are that a recent deal to get CareFlorida, a healthcare company, to move from Miami to Sunrise, also will be approved by commissioners. That deal also was negotiated in secret. For his part, **Salerno** doesn't see

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himself as secretive, just different in his management style. He sees the job of the city manager as a behind-the-scenes position. Commissioners should be out front, he said. **Salerno** won't even take credit for getting the arena in Sunrise, saying the superior site won. The Florida Panthers and Broward County had to do their part, he said, almost apologetically. **Salerno's** way of keeping commissioners informed of deals he's working on is to call each one individually. He knows when he has the support of at least three of five, a majority, he said recently. That's how **Salerno** was able to put together an incentive package that got H. Wayne Huizenga to turn his back on his hometown of Fort Lauderdale and choose Sunrise for the arena.

Until last Sunday, when the city announced a meeting five hours before it started, Sunrise had never had a public forum to discuss its multimillion-dollar package of incentives. By contrast, Fort Lauderdale held several public meetings to discuss its plans. "The public should have been advised of the public meeting," Sunrise resident Bob Tangeman said. "I think the way you're treating the citizens is wrong. The way this is being handled is wrong." Besides negotiating in secret with officials from the Florida Panthers, **Salerno** worked the county, trying to gain support from groups he thought were important, such as the hoteliers whose businesses would pay the bed tax crucial to financing any arena.

County Commission Chairman John Rodstrom said **Salerno** convinced county leaders and Huizenga that Broward could pay for an arena. Huizenga was planning to sell the team to an out-of-town buyer until **Salerno** showed an arena was feasible in Broward, Rodstrom said. John Fazzino, general manager of the Riverside Hotel and treasurer of the Broward County Hotel and Motel Association, said **Salerno** worked hoteliers until he got some of them to support the site in Sunrise. "He (**Pat**) was one of the first soldiers in the war and he won the battle," Fazzino said. "He never gave up. You've got to give him credit for that."

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FIRE STATIONS TO BE 'MINI CITY HALLS'

Sun Sentinel - Fort Lauderdale
RAFAEL LORENTE Staff Writer
Jan 19, 1996

Residents looking to pay utility bills or take care of other city business will soon have two more places to do it.

Two of the four fire stations Sunrise is building as part of its Community Enrichment Plan will include meeting halls and a counter area for residents to pay utility bills, register their children for athletic programs and conduct other city business.

The stations will be at Sunset Strip and Northwest 68th Avenue and at Weston Road and North New River Circle.

"It's like a mini city hall," City Manager **Pat Salerno** said.

Salerno said the two stations, which will be about 24,000 square feet each, should be completed by early next year.

Commissioners approved the changes to the fire stations earlier this month. The city hall additions added \$450,000 to the cost of each fire station.

The station on Sunset Strip is budgeted for \$3.1 million. The one at Weston Road is budgeted for \$2.9 million.

Besides the fire stations and the city hall components, the new buildings also will have police substations, increasing the visibility of police patrols around the city.

"What we're trying to do is provide a facility that has people there so that you can conduct any city business you would want," **Salerno** said.

Sunrise also plans two traditional fire stations on Northwest 27th Place and on Northwest 136th Avenue

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AMBITIOUS SUNRISE PLAN PRESENTED

Sun Sentinel - Fort Lauderdale
ALAN CHERRY, Staff Writer
Oct 31, 1991

SUNRISE -- The unveiling of a \$42.67 million plan for new public buildings, road paving and other improvements has been greeted with both optimism and skepticism in this financially troubled city. The 15-project proposal, dubbed "Blueprint of a Vision," includes a \$12 million community center, four new or renovated fire stations, the resurfacing of every city road east of University Drive, and the building of two parks. "I think it is super, if it works," activist Maxine Marshall said on Wednesday.

City Manager **Pat Salerno** released the plan late Tuesday after presenting it to city commissioners, who unanimously gave their approval. The multimillion dollar proposal comes five weeks after commissioners approved a 29 percent tax increase to bail the city out of financial troubles. No new taxes will be needed to complete the projects because financing would rely on a \$26 million bond issue program for much of the work. The plan also would rely on the city's continuing to use an existing tax that, without action, will expire in 1992. Money would also come from developers' fees, special assessments, county contributions and other sources. "This is really a bold, creative step into the future," Commissioner Steven Effman said.

Many of the proposals have been on and off the drawing board during the past three years.

Last year, the \$12 million community center, to be built between City Hall and the Public Safety Building on West Oakland Park Boulevard, fizzled because of concerns the city could not afford to operate the building after it opened. **Salerno** said a proposed privately run restaurant at the community center site will help offset the cost of the center, which will be used for recreational and cultural activities. "This idea of spending \$26 million scares the hell out of me," community activist Joe Muller said. Sunrise has suffered from a lack of planning public improvements, Muller said. On the down side, though, Muller said last month's tax increase had shaken his confidence in the city's ability to manage its money. Marshall said the strongest point of **Salerno's** "blueprint" is that it includes work throughout the city. It also does not exacerbate long-standing political divisions between homeowners and condominium owners, young and old, or residents in eastern and western Sunrise. "If it works, I would applaud him from here to eternity because he considered everybody," Marshall said. Much of the work is still three to four years away, **Salerno** said.

PLAN COSTS

Sunrise's proposed public improvement plan:

- COST: \$42.67 million.
- START: First projects a year away.

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- COMPLETION: Three to four years.
- FINANCING: Variety of sources.

PROPOSED PROJECTS

- \$12 MILLION: Build civic, recreation and cultural arts center next to City Hall.
- \$10.18 MILLION: Build two new fire stations, renovate two others.
- \$4.08 MILLION: Build Broward County library next to City Hall.
- \$3 MILLION: Building for the purchasing and building departments.
- \$2.5 MILLION: Miscellaneous park projects, yet to be identified.
- \$2.5 MILLION: Replace water lines east of University Drive.
- \$1.42 MILLION: Develop park on Northwest Eighth Street.
- \$1.4 MILLION: Build restaurant at the civic center.
- \$1.26 MILLION: Build senior center next to City Hall.
- \$1.14 MILLION: Expand the Welleby tennis center on West Oakland Park Boulevard.
- \$1 MILLION: Landscaping and curbing of medians.
- \$750,000: Upgrade City Park on Sunset Strip.
- \$680,000: Resurface all city roads east of University Drive.
- \$400,000: Reconstruct Northwest 68th Avenue from Oakland Park Boulevard to Sunset Strip.
- \$355,000: Renovation of Whiting and Nob Hill halls.

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ACTING CITY MANAGER MAY BECOME PERMANENT

Sun Sentinel - Fort Lauderdale
ALAN CHERRY, Staff Writer
Mar 22, 1991

SUNRISE -- Acting City Manager **Pat Salerno** may not be acting for much longer. City commissioners say it is time he become the permanent boss, without qualifiers on his title. "We need to get this straightened out one way or another," Commissioner Steven Feren said. **Salerno** has been acting city manager since the December firing of Dale Sugerman. **Salerno** served as Sugerman's hand-picked deputy for six months until replacing his former boss as the city's top administrator on Dec. 21.

Commissioners handed the job to **Salerno** at the time without attaching any dates as to when they would lift the "acting" from the title. "I am interested in discussing the matter," said **Salerno**, declining to elaborate or speculate on his future as acting city manager, which pays him \$64,500 a year. Now is the time to make a decision on **Salerno's** future, commissioners say, because city elections are over and because the absence of a permanent boss has hindered attempts to hire new help for the administration.

Commissioners say the city needs to fill job openings, which include a finance director, purchasing agent and data processing director. One key financial position was filled this week with the hiring of Tariq Riaz as budget officer. Riaz had been serving as a senior productivity analyst for Miami when he was hired by Sunrise. The uncertainty in the administration has discouraged some job candidates, said Commissioner Roger Wishner, who was re-elected to office last week. "The city needs to fill these important positions," Wishner said.

Sugerman hired **Salerno** because of his quiet personality and his experience as the top administrator in Cobb County, Ga. A majority of commissioners voted to fire Sugerman because they said he had a combative personality. When **Salerno** was hired by Sugerman, he said he took the deputy's job in Sunrise so he could spend more time with his family. **Salerno** has yet to move out of the deputy manager's office. Commissioner Steven Effman, who also said he would prefer **Salerno** to accept the job in Sunrise, said it was time to remove the "acting" from his title. "I like this guy," Effman said. "We need to tell **Pat** where he stands."

If **Salerno** takes the job, he will be Sunrise's second city manager since voters cast aside its old strong mayor government in 1988 and handed the administrative duties of the city over to a professional administrator. Effman said he wasn't sure what would happen if **Salerno** turned down the permanent post.

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The Atlanta Constitution
October 23, 1989

Two Cobb Commissioners Bullying Staff, Colleagues Say
By McKay Jenkins, Staff Writer

The forced resignation of Cobb County Manager **Patrick Salerno** has cleared the way for Commissioners Emmett L. Burton and Harvey D. Paschal to bully department heads and muscle their way into a perceived "power vacuum," other board members say. Commissioners Burton and Paschal have repeatedly vented their anger at staff members at public board meetings over the county's budget, road repairs and pending garbage crisis. The attacks often have come over the objections of Commission Chairman Philip L. Secrist. The forced resignation of Cobb County Manager **Patrick Salerno** has cleared the way for two commissioners to bully department heads and muscle their way into a perceived "power vacuum," other board members say.

Commissioners Emmett L. Burton and Harvey D. Paschal have repeatedly vented their anger at staff members at public board meetings over the county's budget, road repairs and pending garbage crisis. The attacks often have come over the objections of Commission Chairman Philip L. Secrist. "I think there has been a major deterioration of what occurs at these meetings," Commissioner Thea J. Powell said. "For a long time, staff has been shaking in their boots, waiting to see who's going to get the guillotine this week." At the Oct. 9 commission meeting, Mr. Burton became enraged at solid waste Director Jarvis Middleton when he said he supported the recommendation of a \$270,000 solid-waste study not to ship Cobb's garbage out of the county. The county's landfill is scheduled to close within a month. "Do you work for us, or do we work for you?" demanded Mr. Burton, an outspoken proponent of out-of-county hauling. "Do what we say and quit arguing with the board."

At the Sept. 26 meeting at which **Mr. Salerno** was asked to resign, Mr. Paschal angrily expressed his frustration with the county manager and staff department heads. "Every time, up to this point in time, we've had to come and ask you, in fact, beg you, and threaten you, in order to get answers back," he said. "That's exactly the reason I don't have any confidence in [you]." **Mr. Salerno** resigned Oct. 3, effective Dec. 2.

Mr. Paschal said Sunday that **Mr. Salerno** consistently blocked communication between departments and the commissioners, in effect screening recommendations before they reached the commission. "You'll never see a department head that I didn't apologize to for his boss not taking the blame," Mr. Paschal said. "What we were trying to do was pull **Pat** out of his shell. I wanted what the man in the field had to say, not what the man in the front office had to say." In a separate interview, Mr. Burton blamed both **Mr. Salerno** and the department heads for delays in board decisions. "Department heads hear what we say, but they don't act," he said. "They operate as if they ran their own companies, with no incentive to work with anybody. You hope people will adjust and become part of the Cobb County family. When commissioners say move, employees gotta move, the way we like it."

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But by leaning on department managers hired by **Mr. Salerno** -particularly the heads of transportation, solid waste and public transit - Mr. Burton and Mr. Paschal are creating dissension that leaves the board little time to discuss county problems, Commissioner Harriet Smith said.

"I think department heads are being browbeaten in public, and I don't like it," Mrs. Smith said. "I think it's going to take three commissioners saying in unison that we are not going to do this anymore. We are elected officials, and it's up to us to determine the course of meetings."

During the discussion of his resignation, **Mr. Salerno** said department heads fear bringing recommendations to the board that might be unpopular with Mr. Paschal or Mr. Burton.

"That's sending a message to them that, 'I better watch what I say at the mee ting,' " **Mr. Salerno** said.

The criticism of employees has become so intense lately that Mr. Secrist has gone to department heads to reassure them their jobs are secure.

"When there is a perceived vacuum - and some may perceive this -there are always those who take the opportunity to work their will," Mr. Secrist said. "The boat is adrift right now while we have a lame-duck manager, and there will be efforts by some individuals to further shake things up."

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The Atlanta Constitution
September 27, 1989

Developers, Homeowners Win Delay of Cobb Budget
McKay Jenkins , Staff Writer

The Cobb County Commission paid heed to a roomful of real estate developers Tuesday and postponed passage of the county's 1990 budget for two weeks. More than 100 developers and homeowners packed the commission hall to protest an increase in development fees they say would worsen an already soft building market in Cobb.

"We have a good county, we have a rich county. The developers are good, and the homeowners are good," said Pat Seay, president of the South Cobb Civic Association. "A stagnant county will be a crime-ridden county. Let's take care of our developers."

The commission asked Finance Director Virgil Moon to bring the budget back in two weeks without the fee increase so it can be compared with the present proposal.

Fiscal 1990 starts Sunday, so the county will operate on a "bare-bones" continuation budget until the new spending plan is approved.

As it stands, the 1990 budget includes no property tax increases. The county would operate on a budget of \$225 million, up 3.5 percent from fiscal 1989. The county's tax digest is expected to grow by about 8 percent in 1990, down from 10 percent in fiscal 1989 - reflecting a slowdown in real estate development, County Manager **Patrick Salerno** said.

The increased development fees are part of a budget philosophy meant to shift the burden of taxes from the shoulders of property owners to those who use county services. New development costs would include charges of \$8,000 for site inspections, \$250 for a land-disturbance permit and \$660 for a plan review from the county development department for a home built in a typical subdivision.

Rate increases also have been proposed for tipping fees at the county landfills, from \$20 to \$23 per ton.

But it was the development fees that brought out the protesters and moved the commissioners to delay their vote.

John Schoen, president of the Cobb Developers Association, said development fees should be borne by everyone in the county because economic growth enhances the county's bottom line.

"We [developers] are major taxpayers, and for that the development community has every right to expect these services," he said.

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The Atlanta Journal Constitution
June 30, 1988

Communication Flows Between City, County On Mutual Problems
Rebecca Nash , Staff Writer

In an effort to improve communication between city and county officials, Smyrna's mayor and City Council met with Cobb County Commission members last week in the first of what will be regular quarterly discussions. The meeting was requested by Mayor Max Bacon and the council in an effort to establish a closer working relationship with the commission. "It's an attempt by both parties to exchange ideas and thoughts," Councilman Jack Shinall said. "Somehow the rapport [between city and county officials] was cut off and we wanted to re-establish it."

The agenda listed Smyrna's requests for in-kind services as primary topics. Bacon and council members asked for guidelines for contacting county departments for specific services such as striping streets, drainage improvements and road construction. "The biggest problem for those of us who've been here a long time is now we don't know who to go through," Bacon told commission members. Commission Chairman Earl Smith said requests for county assistance should be made through the office of Jerry Singer, assistant county manager for development. Smith told Smyrna representatives that the county "always wants to help the cities where we have the expertise." "There's no need to go out and pay for expertise we may have," he added. The agenda, drawn up by Bacon, contained a tongue-in-cheek reference to controversial matters between the city and county.

Under a heading of "The following items will not be discussed" were "Atlanta Road widening, water boundary, double taxation, annexation and water line lawsuit." However, both groups of officials briefly discussed the controversial Atlanta Road median proposed by the state Department of Transportation. "We've got to support widening the road without the median," Smith said. City officials asked for county help with improvement of the South Cobb Drive-Powder Springs Street intersection, where westbound traffic on Powder Springs backs up because there is no left-turn lane. Smith told the group the county will look into the problem. Right of way for a left-turn lane would cost \$43,000, Shinall said.

Other topics discussed at the meeting were:

- Inspection of older buildings, particularly apartments.
- Potential problems with extended-stay motels.
- Cobb's new bus transit system. Paperwork on grant applications for the system is "near completion," according to Smith.

County Manager **Pat Salerno** said a marketing study for the system has been completed and an analysis of the bidding process is in the works. Singling out traffic as the county's biggest problem, Smith told the mayor and the council that educating people to "get them out of their cars" will be a significant part of the system's budget. "It will take several years," he said. Besides Smith, **Salerno** and Singer, county representatives attending were Commissioners Thea Powell, Harvey Paschal and Emmett Burton, and Herman Hill, the chairman's executive assistant.

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The Atlanta Constitution
May 5, 1988

Cobb's manager adds bureaucracy, some foes charge
James Budd, Staff Writer

Several officials in Chatham County said Wednesday they are not surprised by a rift developing between some Cobb County commissioners and County Manager **Pat Salerno**, who was hired last August after nearly two years as Chatham's county manager. One Savannah legislator said the county manager is following a pattern in Cobb similar to his performance in Chatham County, where he seemed "unconcerned for elected officials" and made the government top-heavy.

Salerno, however, has supporters in Savannah, including Chatham Commission Chairman Charles C. Brooks, who said he would hire **Salerno** again. **Salerno** was Chatham's first county manager, which placed extra scrutiny and pressure on him from older employees who didn't like the change, Brooks said.

"The greatest fault I found with **Pat** was all he thought about was his job," he said. "He worked 12 to 14 hours a day. He understood government and knew how to organize it. He did a good job for us."

Some Cobb commissioners, including Chairman Earl Smith, say they are concerned that **Salerno's** fast-track reorganization of Cobb's government has only increased the government's bureaucracy.

Salerno has hired three assistant county managers to oversee six departments each. The assistants, with a combined salary of \$173,285, replaced two administrative coordinators, with a combined salary of \$73,465, who worked under Cobb's previous county manager.

Smith, who said he plans to call a meeting this month with the commission and **Salerno** to discuss the reorganization, said he doesn't believe **Salerno's** job is in jeopardy but is unhappy with some aspects of his performance.

"We have too much bureaucracy and I hate bureaucracy," said Smith.

Chatham County Sheriff Walter Mitchell said he had a continuing feud with **Salerno** over funding for the sheriff's department, and the sheriff accused him of not responding quickly enough to problems with the county's jail.

Salerno, 37, hired assistants from outside the Chatham government and bypassed promotions from within, Mitchell said. "He goes into a county and hires all these people from outside and puts them over people that have been there 20 years," he said.

Rep. Tom Triplett (D-Savannah), chairman of the House Transportation Committee, said Chatham voters approved a 1 percent sales tax in 1985 to improve roads and **Salerno** "didn't build the first road."

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Brooks defended **Salerno**, saying rights of way had to be bought before the roads could be built. The problem was compounded by the county's lack of experience in buying rights of way and engineering. **Salerno** hired experienced consultants to deal with the problem, he said.

Triplett said **Salerno** was perceived as a "big spender" who added to the size of Chatham's government and didn't get along with elected officials.

Salerno did not return a reporter's telephone calls Wednesday.

Cobb Commissioner Harvey Paschal said he initially thought **Salerno's** reorganization would reduce bureaucracy in county government, but has only increased it. Dissatisfaction with **Salerno** surfaced two weeks ago when Paschal received a letter written to him by a county department head that went through five departments, including **Salerno**, for clearance before reaching him 10 days later.

Paschal said he was told on another occasion that all commission inquiries of department heads had to be cleared through **Salerno**.

"I'm bent out of shape," said Paschal. "The general consensus of the public is the commission is letting the hired help dictate to us."

Commissioners Chuck Clay and Thea Powell are supportive of **Salerno**, saying it is too early to judge his job performance.

"I don't see that there's any justification to fire anybody," said Mrs. Powell, who added she supports the county manager's reorganization.

Clay said the feud is the result in part of election-year jitters. Smith, Paschal and Commissioner Emmett Burton, who has been in Jamaica working with a film crew, are up for re-election this year.

"I don't think anybody is under fire," Clay said. "I think it's an election year and people are asking what they are getting for their dollars. As far as anybody being on thin ice, I would say no."

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