

Memorandum



To: Hon. Mayor and City Commission
From: Russ Blackburn, City Manager
Date: Thursday, February 26, 2009
Subject: Annual Performance Review/Self Assessment

It is my honor to serve as the Gainesville City Manager. Within each of the employment agreements for the Charter Officers, there is a provision which anticipates that the Mayor and the City Commission will provide feedback to the Charter Officers annually. The Performance Review for the Charter Officers will be scheduled in late March or early April 2009.

In preparation of this performance review, I am providing to you a self assessment of my performance as manager, and as administrative leader of general government. Within my self assessment, I have highlighted the major areas of my responsibilities, including organizational management, intergovernmental relations, and relationships with the City Commission. I will be scheduling individual meetings with each Commissioner to allow you an opportunity to discuss on a one-on-one basis your observations, concerns, and suggestions for the future.

I feel fortunate and honored to serve the Mayor and City Commissioners as your City Manager. The City of Gainesville continues to make progress in the services we deliver in spite of the downturn in the economy and severe restrictions on revenue imposed by the Florida Legislature. I look forward to your feedback and to my continued progression in providing assistance to you in leading and managing the operations of General Government.

Please contact me if I can provide additional information.

RB/rs

Attachments

cc: Charter Officers
Leadership Team

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City Manager's Self Assessment

December 2007 - December 2008

1. Organization Management

Organizational leadership and management during a period of financial instability requires a commitment to the organization's vision. Throughout the year I have worked with department directors and managers to lead and guide the departments to fulfill our quest to transform the organization. At least every two weeks, I meet with a leadership team of department directors to discuss current issues and to highlight our focus on achievement of strategic initiatives. In 2008, a revised management communication forum was implemented; bimonthly, all managers meet as a group to share accomplishments and issues impacting the organization. A standard element of these management forums is the use of small group break out sessions in which managers strengthen team understanding and report issues of importance to others in attendance. A team of mid-level managers and a separate team of non managers are meeting in early 2009 to develop recommendations for increasing revenues, decreasing expenditures, and challenging our service assumptions in advance of the FY 2010 budget update.

As City Manager one of my top priorities last year was to communicate the organization's financial status to employees. To facilitate organizational wide information sharing, an interactive Intranet presence was established through which regular budget updates were provided to all employees. In addition to intranet information, regular hard copy updates were provided in memo form. I met in an open meeting with staff from each department to personally provide financial updates and to allow employees to voice their concerns regarding budgetary issues.

In spite of the constant drumbeat of negative financial news, in 2008, I continued to focus the organization on developing as a quantifiable output focused organization. Each general government department was required to prepare a management plan. The departmental management plans identify the department mission, performance indicators and benchmark services as compared to known leaders through out the state and nation. Although the City, due to financial constraints, was forced to drop its membership in the International City/County

Management Association Performance Management Consortium, we have continued performance management and benchmarking using our national and state contacts.

Just as the City Commission has adopted a two year Strategic Plan, each City department conducts a Strategic Planning Session that involves key staff members who assist the departments as they transition the Commissions' goals and initiatives to departmental goals. The list of projects and objectives initiated and/or accomplished in the past twelve months is extensive. A few of the more significant accomplishments include:

- *Phase 1 of the Traffic Management System* – Traffic signals from Waldo Road to I-75 were synchronized. As an added bonus, employees from the Public Works Department and GPD were able to monitor each intersection for activity and issues throughout the BCS National Championship celebration.
- *Fire and Rescue Station 8* – Design of the station is underway and an engine for the station has been funded. Monies for employees of the station are planned in the FY 10 budget.
- *Implementing Gainesville Corporate University* – Continuous learning and certification opportunities are provided to all City employees.
- *Aggressively Worked to Annex Contiguous Properties* – After years of discussion and review, the Butler Plaza regional retail center, including 140 acres of undeveloped land was annexed.
- *Annexation Referendum* – A cross functional employee team conducted the City's first major successful annexation referendum since 2000. An estimated six thousand, S.W. 20th Avenue area residents will officially be City residents on June 1, 2009.
- *Redesigned Web Site* – A team of employees from the Information Technology and Marketing and Communication Departments totally redesigned the City web site. In house redesign saved approximately \$45,000.
- *Joint Crime Analysis Unit* – GPD and Sheriff Sadie Darnell worked together to create a joint crime analysis unit.
- *Homeless Services* – Assistant City Manager Fred Murry worked throughout most of the year with a community team to identify a location for the One Stop Service Center. Staff anticipates presenting a consensus recommendation to the City Commission early in 2009.

- *Wild Spaces/Public Places* – Staff provided assistance and information to a group of citizens whom advocated for the successful passage of the one half cent sales tax referendum.
- *Accreditation* – Public Works was awarded full accreditation by the American Public Works Association.
- *Community Redevelopment* – Completed the reconstruction of N.W. 5th Avenue, completed Jefferson at 2nd, the Palms, and University House; completed improvements to University Avenue. Completed a concept plan for the development of the GRU support site.
- *Buck Bay* – Provided relocation assistance to 19 families.
- *RTS* – Passenger riders surpassed 9,000,000! Initiated a bus rapid transit study.
- *HEATWAVE* – The Gainesville Police Department and the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs Department, in cooperation with other youth service providers, conducted a summer youth crime prevention program, which successfully reduced juvenile crime in the summer of 2008.

The past 12 months have been significant in the achievement and completion of a number of major capital improvements, projects include reconstruction of the North East and West Side pools, installed 1,090 linear ft. of storm water pipe, installed 3,174 linear feet of new sidewalks, and replaced 8,312 linear ft. of sidewalks.

II. Personnel Management

Achieving the City Commission's goals and objectives requires highly motivated employees. I emphasize the importance of getting the right person in the right position, two-way communication, ethics, accountability, and teamwork. The City of Gainesville organization continues to place a high priority on recruiting and retaining a diverse workforce, and selecting the most qualified individuals to be a part of its organization.

To be accessible to our employees, each month I meet with employees within one of our major departments. These departmental meetings provide an opportunity for me to share

information regarding City Commission priorities, to emphasize elements of the organization's vision, and to engage employees to share their concerns.

Effective Leadership and management of our workforce are made possible by the adoption of unifying organization systems. The City Human Resource Policies had not undergone a comprehensive update since the 1960s. In 2008, I worked collaboratively with the other Charter Officers and a team from Human Resources to evaluate the City's human resource policies. A number of elements of the policies were brought forward to the City Commission for revision. I anticipate the remaining substantive policies will be proposed for review by the Commission in 2009. One of my highest priorities is the realization of Gainesville Corporate University (GCU) as the City's one stop program for continuous learning and communication of the organization's values. As a key system, GCU is off to a fast start and is receiving outstanding feedback.

The City Commission, the community, and I were stunned in 2008 by the ethical lapses of several members of the Gainesville Police Department (GPD). Historically GPD has been known locally and nationally as one of the most progressive and ethical police organizations in the nation. In part, because of our outstanding reputation, the actions of these individuals are more startling. Immediately upon learning of the accusations against the individual officers, each case was investigated by Internal Affairs, or in one case the FDLE. The information gathered through the investigations resulted in the quick separation of each of the officers involved. A review of the investigations revealed that there was no link between the officers or their actions. In addition to ensuring that the individuals were held accountable for their actions, system changes were made within the police department's organizational structure. Director of Human Resources, Sandy Barnard, has agreed to provide to the Police Department the same human resource tools and procedure review provided to other departments. The Department has conducted a four-hour training session for all employees focusing on ethical decision making, and has conducted two (2) sessions for managers, which is designed to help managers identify and prevent harassment or discrimination of any form. Through out the year, I have worked closely with Chief Botsford to ensure that employees were held

accountable, that structural changes occurred where needed, and that appropriate training was provided to all employees.

In 2008, I spent a great deal of my time shepherding the revision of the City's human resource system and working one-on-one with department leaders to effectively respond to complex personnel issues. The system and individual focus has been crucial since it is vital that our system creates a unifying approach to human resource management and individual actions set a standard for the expectations of all Gainesville employees.

III. Fiscal Management

Throughout 2008, the City of Gainesville and the State of Florida continued to experience financial distress. Revenues were constrained by legislative and voter action while expenditures for items such as gasoline, diesel, and asphalt increased dramatically.

In the recent past, once a budget is approved by the City Commission, staff's main focus is on implementing the projects and programs included within the budget. The past year of 2008 has been anything but normal; sales and property tax revenues continued to decline as the year progressed. To ensure that the City operated on a sound fiscal basis, I enacted a soft freeze on filling vacant positions and worked with the department directors to eliminate lower priority expenditures. Ending fiscal year 2008 within budget required team work and innovation by all members of the City staff. The end result for FY 08 was that the City, through fiscally responsible leadership, was able to weather for the time being the worst financial correction in recent memory.

Preparation of the fiscal years 2009/10 budget continued our financial trend of working with reduced property and sales tax revenues. In January of 2008, Florida voters approved doubling the homestead exemption and capped the potential growth in commercial property tax values and revenue. Adoption of Amendment One followed adoption by the Florida Legislature of property tax reform statutes in 2007, which mandated that the City roll back the anticipated millage to 3% less than the adopted fiscal year 2005 millage. Providing a

recommended budget to the City Commission within these parameters required a comprehensive review of City revenues and expenditures. Balancing the FY09/10 budget represented the work of the entire staff and City Commission. Early in the budget process, a cross functional team of non-management employees was assembled and charged with recommending innovative revenues and expenditure reductions. Examples of the ideas recommended by this team include the 4 x 10 hour day work week for administrative employees, which is saving almost \$100,000 per year; and the proposal to automatically turn off desk top computers after hours, which is projected to save \$35,000 annually. I am proud of the efforts of the department heads to reduce expenditures while preserving core services.

A crucial aspect of financial management of the organization is review of expenditure trends and implementation of strategies to reduce or control costs. The Risk Management Department has aggressively worked to reduce Worker's Compensation costs and to bring injured employees safely back to work in a timely manner. Worker's Compensation expenditures have been reduced by over \$400,000 with a decrease in time off of the job. These reductions have occurred through cooperative efforts between the City's wellness staff and Worker's Compensation professionals.

Through our centralized Administrative Services Department, the City monitors fiscal health, purchasing actions, human resources, risk reduction, and budgeting. The City Commission is provided quarterly reports on the financial status of the organization, including detailed expenditures for each element of general government. For the twelfth year in a row, the City's FY 08 Budget and Comprehensive Annual Financial Report have received the Governmental Finance Officers Association Distinguished Budget and Financial Reporting Awards. Only 2% of municipalities nationwide receive these recognitions.

The City continues to maintain an excellent bond rating, and indicators such as millage, debt per capita, and employees per capita are stable. The City Commission and staff face a changed future with property revenues capped and demands for increased services. I will continue to search for opportunities to increase efficiencies and to align expenditures with revenues.

IV. Personal Qualities

A dominant characteristic of my approach to local government is a commitment to providing excellent service to the City Commission and to the citizens of Gainesville. I believe to be successful; the organization must have a vision, set goals, live our values, involve stakeholders, act with integrity, and follow through.

On a personal note, I am involved in our community not only as your City Manager, but also as an individual contributing to the growth and improvement of Gainesville. I serve on the Board of United Way of North Central Florida, the Combined Communications Center Administrative Board, the Gainesville Area Chamber of Commerce Board, the Heart of Florida Regional Coalition Coordinating Board; I am a member of Rotary International, and serve as a Board Member of the Florida City/County Management Association.

V. Relations with the Community

As your City Manager, I strive to be accessible to the organization and to the community. During the past year, I have attended and participated in community meetings, spoken before service organizations and neighborhood associations, and have personally met with a number of key business representatives within our community. Under my direction, staff attends and provides information to groups such as the Black on Black Crime Task Force, and an extensive list of service organizations and community groups. Within the past year, I have made presentations to the Black on Black Crime Task Force, The Downtown Owners and Tenants Association, Women for Wise Growth, The Community Campus Council (CCC) Breakfast and the City Commission Neighborhood outreach meetings. Through these and other visits and presentations, I am an advocate of the Commission's adopted policy.

The best way to know how you are doing in service delivery and public perception is to ask residents. In 2008, a citizen survey was administered using the National Citizen Survey assessment tool. I was extremely pleased with the responses of citizens regarding the knowledge and responsiveness of staff. Citizens responding to survey questions ranked their staff higher than other Florida local governments in knowledge, responsiveness, courtesy, and overall impression. Teams of City employees have reviewed the results of the survey and are engaged in developing and implementing strategies to improve our performance in areas where survey results indicated room for improvement.

An inspiring indicator of the community's confidence in the leadership of Gainesville and of the perceived value of City services was the voter approval of the Wild Spaces/Public Places referendum. City staff assisted the advocates for the sales tax measure by providing information on future needs and gave concrete examples of how previously funded infrastructure projects had been constructed on time and within budget.

To be successful at community outreach and communication, the City must employ a number of tools to assist in getting out our message. *The City Manager's Bi-weekly Report*, letters to the editor, the Annual Citizens' Report, and the Citizens' Academy are all vehicles that are used by the Commission and staff to help citizens understand the issues and services provided by City government. Municipal Minutes, the City's electronic newsletter, was awarded a SAVVY by the International City/County Communications and Marketing Association as the best on-line newsletter among international competitors.

VI. Relations to other Governments

Although not successful, The County Manager and I jointly nominated Gainesville and Alachua County for an ICMA intergovernmental cooperation award. As the Mayor and Commission are aware, in most of the State, City/County relations are characterized by animosity and friction. The City of Gainesville and Alachua County have worked successfully on an orderly annexation plan, which when officially adopted in 2009 will constitute a ground breaking guide for cooperative annexation. The difficult but successful work on the Annexation Transition

Agreement completed in 2007, and the Fire Services agreement set a tone for the City's annexation of the Butler Plaza and approval by the voters of annexation of the S.W. 20th Avenue area.

Relations with the State of Florida and all municipalities continue to be strained. Although the City has a close relationship with our local delegation, cities were again vilified in the 2008 legislative session. As a result of a concerted effort between GRU and General Government, our delegation successfully won for Gainesville an appropriation of \$500,000 for the Payne's Prairie Sheet Flow project. I facilitated the legislative strategy for this initiative and helped to communicate the importance of the project.

As a host community, our relationship with the University of Florida is multi-dimensional. The City and University staffs are cordial and collaborative on public safety issues. Public Works is serving as the project manager for the reconstruction of S.W. Archer Road and enjoys a cooperative relationship with the University. At the direction of the City Commission, staff exhaustively met with University officials to negotiate the payment by the University of a fire service fee. Ultimately, the University declined to offset its fire impact on the City of Gainesville and its citizens.

To foster improved relationships with the local governments in the County, I facilitate a monthly meeting with the managers of the Alachua County cities and Alachua County.

Community Redevelopment Agency Executive Director

As Executive Director of the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA), I am pleased with the progress made on revitalizing the core of Gainesville. Four (4) major projects were completed: Jefferson at 2nd, University House, the Palms, and the Waldo Road Wal-Mart. Construction is well under way on the Hampton Inn, with an anticipated opening date of July 2009.

Wilson Miller and Associates completed a redevelopment plan for the Southeast Gainesville Renaissance Initiative (SEGRI) area and is assisting staff to identify developers to implement the plan. Although the downturn in the economy has impacted the demand for new housing

throughout the community, staff finalized the RFP and will distribute the requests soon after the first of the year.

VII. Relationship with the City Commission

It is my goal to treat the Mayor and all Commissioners equally well. I constantly monitor staff to ensure that employees treat the Commission with respect. I share information with the City Commission about the status of program implementation through a number of tools. On a weekly basis, I meet with each Commissioner to provide information on the Commission's upcoming agenda items. Background papers, *The City Manager's Bi-weekly Report*, and financial status reports are all methodologies used to communicate with the Commission.

Newly elected Commissioners Poe and Hawkins were welcomed as leaders of the City organization in the spring of 2008. Soon after the election, I organized an orientation to general government and coordinated with the other Charter Officers to conduct a thorough orientation. My goal and hope was that Commissioners Poe and Hawkins felt welcomed and would quickly gather the information and resources to be successful in their elected positions. The orientation covered topics ranging from financial policies to planning processes, and included on site tours and overviews of most City departments.

Through out the past year, staff has responded to the continuing challenge of ensuring that the City Commission was informed as the legislature considered numerous options to reduce local government revenues. Voter adoption of Amendment One further reduced City revenues and exacerbated a difficult financial correction. These financial challenges necessitated close communication with the Commission and staff. At my direction, the Legislative and Grants Administrator provided regular updates on proposals under consideration by the legislature.

In June of 2008, the Commission identified goals and objectives for a two-year period. Under my direction, staff has aggressively implemented the goals and initiatives of the Commission. A quarterly report describing progress in achieving the initiatives has been provided to the Commission, and the FY 09/10 budget process was constructed around the priorities

established in the adopted Strategic Plan. Members of the City Commission have increased ownership of the Strategic Plan by assigning monitoring of most initiatives to a standing committee and identifying Commissioner sponsors to advocate achievement of initiatives.

On rare occasions, an incident may occur that warrants a telephone notification and discussion with Commission members. I call each member and impart the same information thoroughly.

VIII. City Powers and Duties

The City of Gainesville is in compliance with, and exceeds, the requirements of City ordinances. Systems are maintained for finance, procurement, human resources, information technology, budgeting, property inventory control, and risk management.

The City budget process integrates capital, information technology, and operating expenditures and revenues in an award-winning document. A copy of the most recent Citizen' Report is included in the Commission packet for this assessment.