

COLIN BAENZIGER  ASSOCIATES
EXECUTIVE RECRUITING

Section 6

Craig M. Coffey

*Gainesville City Manager
Candidate Report*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>PAGE</u>
COVER LETTER AND RESUME	1
CANDIDATE INTRODUCTION	7
BACKGROUND CHECKS	15
CB&A REFERENCE NOTES	19
INTERNET SEARCH	29

Cover Letter and Resume

Craig Michael Coffey

10 Trail Run, Flagler Beach, FL 32136
(386) 264-3696/cgc Coffey@cfl.rr.com (386) 868-9226 (alt)

Dear City Commissioners:

I am writing to you today regarding the position of City Manager as advertised.

To tell you a little bit about myself, I am an ethical, hardworking individual with a strong desire to succeed. I have a friendly, flexible management style that is creative, effective and proactive. I believe in leadership by example and excel at attracting and retaining a team of quality staff. I have proven this in my most recent position and in all past positions held. I can put this same management style and leadership to work for you.

Having worked my way through city and county government positions for over 30 years (18 years as chief executive) and 16 year of military service as an officer, I have gained invaluable experience and a thorough knowledge of every facet of local government. Customer service, strategic problem solving, and a selfless dedication to the public is at my core.

Throughout my career, I have been able to rise to any challenge by effectively managing change, utilizing technology, building effective teams, and being financially savvy. Whether that challenge is a natural disaster, budgetary issue, a Commissioner initiative, or simply managing the needs of a large organization, finding creative ways to solve problems and turn those challenges into opportunities has been a hallmark of my service. As your City Manager, together as a team, we will rise to any challenge and face it head-on --- making Gainesville a Smarter City, expanding job diversity, fostering greater equity, and planning for a better future.

In summary, I believe I have the education, experience, and personal qualities necessary to be an effective leader to succeed in helping achieve the Commission's vision of the future. I would welcome the opportunity to meet each of you in further consideration for this position.

Most Sincerely,

Craig M. Coffey

Craig M. Coffey

RESUME

Craig Michael Coffey

10 Trail Run, Flagler Beach, FL 32136

(386) 264-3696 (cell)/cgcoffey@cfl.rr.com/(386) 868-9226(alt)

OBJECTIVE

To be a City Manager for a progressive community with a high quality of life that continually strives for excellence.

EDUCATION

Master of Public Administration, University of Central Florida, Orlando, FL

B.S., Land Use Analysis (Planning), Eastern Michigan University, Ypsilanti, MI

RELEVANT PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

County Administrator, Flagler County, Florida - 2007 to 2019

Responsibilities Included: Oversight and management of all day-to-day aspects of the County. This included nearly 400 full-time employees, in a variety of typical and atypical county departments, plus enterprise funds (Water, Sewer, Solid Waste, and Airport). Financial responsibilities involve developing/managing a \$66 million general fund budget, within a \$220 million overall budget, over 1.1 million sf of public building space and over 10,000 acres of public land, a fleet of more than 800 vehicles, \$30-\$50 million in capital projects annually, and hundreds of contracts and services annually.

Major Accomplishments:

- Led and/or managed three major natural disasters (Fire-5,000 acres+ and Hurricanes) before, during and after to include over \$50 million in long term recovery projects – County, FEMA, and HMPG projects. Essentially served as incident commander for Hurricanes Matthew and Irma.
- Acquired two small private water and sewer utility systems.
- Created voluntary and mandatory special assessment districts for capital projects such as seawalls, protective dunes, and a stormwater retrofit project.
- Negotiated multiple, multi-year, union contracts for firefighters (IAFF) and one contract with the PEA union. Was able to include fitness-for-duty provisions and incentives for special teams for firefighters.
- Led the County through the great recession when the County lost half of its taxable property valuation and led the state in unemployment and mortgage foreclosure – strategies were comprehensive and included such things as: service realignments and mission essential evaluations, cost cutting, cost saving investments, new revenue sourcing, layoffs and restructuring, and line-item budgeting.
- Successfully passed an Environmentally Sensitive Lands (ESL) Funding Voted Referendum, 20-year Local Option Sales Tax; and increased Tourism Tax Rate by 2%.
- Obtained millions in State legislative appropriations, successfully passed and blocked State legislation in accord with the legislative priorities of the County Commission.
- Privatized Custodial Services, Landscaping Maintenance, & Interfacility Ambulance Transport Services.
- Successfully merged the City of Bunnell Fire Department into the County's Fire/Rescue Department.
- Brought Economic Development and Tourism in-house as County Departments. Since then, Economic Development helped create more than 400 jobs, \$200 million in economic output, and \$22 million in capital investment since coming in-house. Likewise, Tourism increased revenues by over 30%.
- Led transfer of tourism tax collection from the State Dept. of Revenue to the County Tax Collector.
- Worked jointly w/Supervisor of Elections to Upgrade Election Equipment and Cyber Security.
- Refinanced all County debt saving County taxpayers millions of dollars.

Section 6

- Secured new financing for over \$100 million in funding for over 20 different financing instruments.
- Improved the County's Bond Rating from A+ to AA- saving millions in debt issued/refinanced.
- Created an employee clinic and fitness facility, plus implemented a comprehensive incentivized wellness program, and affiliated Canada drug prescription program.
- Managed County's self-insured health insurance program to nearly flatline health insurance costs to include reinsurance, with minimal changes in benefits to County employees.
- Completed hundreds of millions of dollars in capital projects including road construction and resurfacing, bridges, parks, stormwater, utilities, beautification, and government buildings, including a new County Jail and new I-95 County Interchange. On average \$30-\$50 Million per year.
- Merged Sheriff fleet and Sheriff IT operations w/County BOCC saving money and gaining efficiencies.
- Acquired two new constitutional outreach service facilities and leased and remodeled another.
- Recruited and retained an all-star staff recognized at State and National levels.
- Created a popular citizen's academy for citizen outreach and to develop volunteer pool.
- Developed in-depth new employee orientation program w/organizational cultural emersion.
- Created a 11+ mile, 25million+ Dune Protection/Restoration Project, with funding from the tourism tax, FDEP, Private HOA, a CDD, and FEMA funding to prevent the reflooding of hundreds of homes, prevent homes from collapse into the ocean, and to protect millions more in infrastructure and homes. Constructed project in-house, 209 private property easements (97% success), FDEP and ACOE permits, turtle relocation, 3 interlocal agreements w/other local governments.
- Acquired over 6,000 public acres during tenure and managed over 10,000 passive park acres.
- Successful as local sponsor with Army Corps of Engineers in obtaining National Civil Works Review Board approval for a 2.6-mile Shoreline Protection Project in Flagler Beach.
- Successful in obtaining \$17 million in federal funds for initial construction of 2.6 mile, ACOE project plus an additional \$16 million from FDOT for the remaining 3.65 miles of City of Flagler Beach shoreline (6.25 miles in total).
- Constructed over 20 miles of new multipurpose trails and over 8 miles of new mountain bike trails.
- Airport – Worked to bring County Executive Airport into black - County owned spaces fully occupied, built new hangars and new air traffic control tower, acquired over 70,000 sf of market space in foreclosure purchase for \$2.75 million; constructed new runway; rebranded airport; opened south side of airport for economic development with infrastructure (130 developable acres), added 172 additional acres to airport, constructed over \$35 million in new airport capital improvement projects, repaid inherited, State economic building grant in default; Attracted new Florida National Guard facilities in excess of \$30 million.
- Revamped budget for transparency and ease of citizen use, 9 budget awards (10th in progress)
- Begin High School Fire Leadership Academy with EMT (Certificate Eligible -1st in State) to develop pipeline of local firefighter-paramedics.
- Built a free public potable water supply point for disadvantaged rural residents with private donations.
- Created community paramedicine program to conduct home visits and stop frequent flyers.
- Created Ocean Rescue Program to overcome Coast Guard coverage gap -- based on citizen initiative.
- Expanded ALS Paramedic Ambulance Service into west side to improve rural response times.
- Worked to keep the State of Florida Agricultural Museum open as a County tourism destination by obtaining direct state support and grants, restructuring organization, integrating some county support and constructing improvements/infrastructure.
- Developed partnerships with City of Bunnell, School Board, and County and others to restructure funding, operations, and mission to keep the Carver Gym (Community Hub) open in a disadvantaged neighborhood. Assisted forming foundation, annual auction, outside funding support agreements
- Developed a contiguous, \$1.6 million, ocean seawall project from start-to-finish and coordinated 19 property owners with voluntary assessment to save homes and property following Hurricane Matthew.

County Administrator, DeSoto County, Florida - 2005 to 2007

Responsibilities Included: Oversight and management of all aspects of the County. This included 225 full-time employees, in a variety of typical county departments (Fire/EMS, Landfill, Public Works, Finance/Purchasing, Parks, Development) plus enterprise funds (Water, Sewer, Solid Waste, and Civic Center). Financial responsibilities involve developing/managing a \$24 million general fund budget, within a \$90 million overall budget. Also, served as Clerk on the Board (1944 special act) for everything outside of courts and recording – i.e. handled audits, attestation, payroll, check issuance.

Major Accomplishments:

- Negotiated a 30 Year, 4 County, Interlocal Agreement and Master Water Supply Agreement as a member of a Regional Water Supply Authority. (Led negotiations for the County)
- Secured the free donation of a 160acre, \$2.4 Million Wastewater Treatment Plant Site.
- Developed a Water-Sewer Utility Business Plan to include Capital Projects to bring the utilities from start-up mode to profitability to include securing over \$8,000,000 of private upfront capital.
- Developed, negotiated, and oversaw the merger of the City-County Fire/EMS Departments.
- Initiated a Countywide Demolition Program leading to over 107 Demolitions (previously none)
- Oversaw the rebuilding and reopening of a \$10 million Agri-Civic Center following Hurricane Charley with booked daily events ranging from \$5,000 to \$100,000 in scope.
- Attracted and located several large manufacturers with new jobs and millions of dollars of new capital investment in the County.
- Resolved Landfill cell construction stoppage in order to construct new cell opened March 2007.
- Implemented first ever County curbside garbage collection program in 2006.
- Completed massive rewrite of County's Comprehensive Plan Amendment written by previous administration and consultant after poor ORC report from DCA.
- Created Housing Department by reassigning excess staff and administered \$10 million grant for post hurricane housing recovery to include unique plan to closeout FEMA housing parks.
- Developed extensive Adult Entertainment and Mining Ordinances.
- Began Small Quantity Generator (HAZMAT) program as required by law and new ongoing Fire/Life Safety Inspection Program.
- Managed major CIP projects including two major park projects, \$15,000,000 of utility improvements and millions in transportation improvements.

City Administrator, City of Hawarden, Iowa - 1999 to 2005

Responsibilities Included: Oversight and management of all aspects of the City. This included 32 full-time employees and 20+ seasonal employees, in a variety of typical city departments (Police, Public Works, Finance, Parks, Ambulance, Recreation, etc.), plus 9 Utilities (Water, Sewer, Gas, Electric, Telephone, Cell Phone, Cable, High Speed Internet, and Solid Waste). Financial responsibilities involved developing/managing a \$12 million operating budget (\$20 million total resources). In addition, I also served as the Economic Development Director for the Hawarden Area Partnership for Progress (HAPP).

Major Accomplishments:

- Initiated/Facilitated the merger of the Development Corporation and Chamber of Commerce.
- Facilitated the partnering of multiple groups to undertake a \$2.4 million combined City Hall, Community Center, and Child-Care Campus Project to include the passage of a \$950,000 bond referendum, grants, project development, and construction (Historic. 1925 High School)
- Re-wrote Employee Personnel manual, re-negotiated union contracts, implemented training certifications w/incentives, and re-established a uniform program, working with City employees.
- Re-formed and chaired a six-county regional economic development and marketing group.

- Brought the City's new telecommunications utility from start-up in 1999 to profitability. In addition, I was instrumental in expanding additional telecommunication services to include: High-speed Internet, Cell Phone Service, HDTV, 8 new analog channels, and a 150 new Digital TV channels, yet still saving citizen-ratepayers over \$100,000 per year in fees.
- Directly responsible for the receipt of over ten grants worth more than \$500,000 dollars.
- Started the televising of Council meetings, re-started City newsletter, increased press coverage, and significantly expanded City information of the City's Website and community channel.
- Re-negotiated existing, outside City fire service contracts (Cross State), contracted with a smaller, nearby community to provide them 24-hour police protection, and utilized police dept. as code enforcement.
- Reconstructed a destroyed historic downtown building and restored another.
- Issued eight bond/debt issues, implemented ten TIF projects, worked to facilitate multiple business expansions, and re-developed several downtown historic projects.
- Awarded GFOA CAFR audit award 5 consecutive years,
- Completely re-vamped budget format for citizen understanding.
- Develop a detailed capital improvement plan for equipment and facilities.
- Initiated and oversaw the creation of two new residential subdivisions built by the City.

Director of Planning & Public Works, City of Mayfield, Kentucky - 1993 to 1999

Responsibilities Included: Oversight and Management of all aspects of the City outside the offices of Police, Fire, and City Clerk. This oversight/management included 22 full-time employees, 4 seasonal employees, and 3 seasonal subcontractors.

Major Accomplishments:

- Recognized with three state level awards.
- Received 9 out of 9 grants applied for bringing in over \$750,000 in monies.
- Established the City's first ever fire prevention/code enforcement department.
- Re-wrote the City's Comprehensive Plan and most land development regulations.
- Completely re-developed three City parks and created a new park.
- Initiated a Main Street program to re-develop the downtown including the re-development of several downtown buildings and beginning of the downtown streetscape project.
- Created a comprehensive city sidewalk replacement program resulting in the replacement of miles of sidewalk at a reduced cost to the City.
- Designed and developed major drainage improvements citywide protecting homes and property.
- Negotiated a large annexation for the development of a new shopping center south of the City
- Represented the City with the State DOT on eminent domain process for a new bypass.

City Planner (Equal to Planner III), City of Melbourne, Florida - 1988 to 1993

Responsibilities Included: Infrastructure capacity management, re-writing land development regulations, site plan reviews, writing recommendations to the BZA, Planning and Zoning Board, and City Council, comprehensive plan amendments, census forecasts, regional project reviews, re-development area planning, advising on various CDBG and CIP Projects, budget development and submittal, downtown re-development, facility location studies, and business license review.

Captain, Military Police Officer, U.S. Army Reserves, - 1984 to 2000

Responsible Positions Served: Company Commander, Platoon Leader, Battalion S-1 (Admin), S-3 (Training/Operations), etc. Served over 8 months of active duty service with the 810th MP Company (Tampa) as a Platoon Leader attached to 82nd Airborne in Saudi Arabia and Iraq in support of Operation Desert Shield/Storm. First reserve unit to ever earn 82nd Airborne combat patch. Formally ended service in January 2003 to devote more time to family and civilian positions.

REFERENCES AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

Candidate Introduction

CRAIG M. COFFEY

EDUCATION

Master of Public Administration, University of Central Florida, Orlando, FL
B.S., Land Use Analysis (Planning), Eastern Michigan University, Ypsilanti, MI

EXPERIENCE

County Administrator , Flagler County, Florida	2007 to 2019
County Administrator , DeSoto County, Florida	2005 to 2007
City Administrator , City of Hawarden, Iowa	1999 to 2005
Dir. of Planning & Public Works , City of Mayfield, Kentucky	1993 to 1999
City Planner (Equal to Planner III) , City of Melbourne, Florida	1988 to 1993
Captain, Military Police Officer , U.S. Army Reserves,	1984 to 2000

BACKGROUND

Flagler County is a rapidly growing coastal county in northeast Florida, approximately 50 miles south of Jacksonville. With its most recent population estimates at approximately 110,000, it is predominantly residential in nature, with an expanding retail and service base to support the residential growth. The County is host to 5 municipal jurisdictions, as well as 19 miles of both beach and Intercoastal waterway on the east and large freshwater lakes on the west.

The County has nearly 400 full-time employees, in a variety of typical and atypical county departments, including enterprise funds (Water, Sewer, Solid Waste, and Airport). The County Administrator oversees all but the three employees in the County Attorney's Office. Financial responsibilities involved developing/managing a \$66 million general fund budget, within an overall budget of \$220 million for FY 18/19. The County (and conversely the County Administrator) also manages over 1.1 million sf of public building space, over 10,000 acres of public land, a fleet of more than 800 vehicles, \$30-\$50 million in capital projects annually, and hundreds of contracts and procurements annually.

The three most significant issues facing the County are:

- **Revenue Needs.** Although property values have stabilized the County is challenged with where to invest limited resources: competitive wages for employees, state mandates, hurricane recovery, rising operating costs, accommodating growth, and recovery from the stagnate years of the great recession. These needs in turn had to be balanced with keeping property taxes in check and moving the County forward.
- **Disaster Related Storm Hardening.** Hit with two hurricanes in back-to-back years, along with several strong nor'easters the protective dunes of the County were severely depleted

CRAIG M. COFFEY

threatening hundreds of individual homes directly on the shoreline and hundreds more inland with oceanic flooding. Adding to this was also storm surge flooding threatening hundreds of residences near the Intracoastal. We were able to put together over a \$40 million plan with federal, state, county, city and private resources and approvals to develop and implement a comprehensive shoreline protective dune master plan to address the threat facing our residents.

- Growth – As with many locations in Florida today, growth in Flagler has returned to record levels surpassing peak 2007 levels. At times hailed as one the fastest growing Counties in the United (percentage wise) it comes with the challenges that such rapid growth brings such as: infrastructure, staffing, quality of life, and economic diversification. Tackling this issue was a multi-prong undertaking with the land development code, capital projects, economic recruitment and strategic planning.

To me, the City of Gainesville’s City Manager position represents both an opportunity and challenge. The opportunity lies with a Commission that has the mindset to set a high bar of excellence, to be a one of a kind --- “Citizen-Centered” City. With many cities and counties this is not always the case. The challenge is cutting this new path and all that it entails, essentially achieving what has not yet been achieved. It allows me to bring to bear a 30-year career of demonstrated leadership, innovation, customer service, fiscal savvy, and strong team building. With approximately 12-15 years left in my career I can make the City of Gainesville into a national leader, that will in-turn allow me to capstone a lifetime of public service.

As a manager, I have a flexible, friendly management style and approach employees with the core belief that every employee is important. At the end of the day, the employees do the work in the community and are often what residents primarily think of (negatively or positively) when they think of the organization. Having been on my own since the age of 16 and having worked my way up over my career I appreciate everyone in the organization. I think of local government as a team sport, with leaders needed at every level of organization from the Commissioner to the custodian and everyone in between. It would be my responsibility to develop that depth of leadership and to set the table for success by working to provide the necessary resources, training, guidance, and organizational culture for employees to shine and achieve the Commission’s goals.

The elected officials I have served with would likely say that I am highly competent, professional, ethical, hardworking and dedicated. Staff would likely say they appreciate my openness, support, professionalism, willingness to listen to their ideas, treatment as peers, and demonstrated leadership by example. Both groups would see me as an effective leader who can get things done. Examples of these skills would have been evident throughout my career, but especially highlighted during the great recession, when the County lost half of its property value over a 5-year period, and through two natural disasters in one fiscal year.

Some of my greatest strengths are developing solutions others don’t or can’t, and the persistence in getting things done. As a County team, we have been able to accomplish many things in often

CRAIG M. COFFEY

adverse conditions. Whether we have had to work through financial constraints, overcome regulatory obstacles, face disasters, or building consensus, residents expect us to achieve results. For example, a current project underway is the construction of a retrofit stormwater system to solve a 50+ year old problem. Faced with subdivisions that pre-dated current development standards, with no drainage system we had a mess with limited resources. As the subdivisions built-out ever increasing and prolonged flooding occurred. While over the years other administrators avoided the problem or gave up due the complexity, we were able to work together with residents, the Commission, legislators, public works and regulatory agencies to develop and fund a \$10 million-dollar solution, with a cost of less than 10% to residents. This involved over 100 meetings, grants, appropriations, land acquisition, special districts, and consensus building.

In terms of weaknesses, I do not always celebrate success as much as I probably should in today's media environment. I tend to consider making positive improvements for the community as part of my responsibilities and the role of the organization. However, residents do like to hear what you are doing with their dollars and the positive progress of the City. I do believe I have improved in this area through such things as citizen academies, social media, newsletters, town halls, and our website. I have also learned to use these celebrations as a way to recognize the efforts of outstanding staff members and roll such successes into our annual report to our residents.

Performance measures or benchmarks are an integral part of most forward-thinking organizations and are critical to monitor overall progress towards organizational goals. Over my career, I have always developed a strategic plan with my Board that has integrated action plans and clear, measurable benchmarks. This in turn, is rolled to into resource planning as part of the annual budget process and specific tasks, and objectives/measures for individual department accountability. Although a strategic plan may last 3-5 years, progress is reviewed annually at the Board level and is part of any annual report and additionally, factors into personnel performance evaluations. It has been my experience that this generally provides a good method of focusing the entire organization and everyone's role and responsibility for success. The most recent strategic plan I worked with is contained in the Flagler County Budget for 2018/19 (<http://online.fliphtml5.com/gtls/zyco/>) preface pages 14-70, with an example of measurable departmental goals and objectives on pages 3-8 and 3-9. Laying out concrete, strategic, measurable objectives to implement the City's bold vision and initiatives will be key to bringing the City of Gainesville's theoretical to reality.

One of the achievements I am most proud of is serving a leading role in the turnaround of the Flagler County Airport. Faced with multiple vacancies, high interest debt, lack of updated infrastructure, an economic grant default, and no director heading into the downturn, we had some challenges. We worked hard to fill space vacancies and today there are none, I hired and retained a great airport director, refinanced debt, and constructed over \$35 million in infrastructure improvements. The \$35 million was primarily through grants of which the County provided just over \$1.5 million in match. The airport acquired over 70,000 s.f. of marketable building space, purchased for \$2.75 million, from a bank foreclosure. We paid back the economic grant with zero

CRAIG M. COFFEY

interest in seven years, renegotiated fuel contracts, and built many revenue generating hangars. We were able to add several hundred acres to the airport, build an air traffic control tower, and attract several retail, aviation, and industrial tenants. The pride comes from the fact that the success was not a single, easy solution, but that success involved many different solutions over time that included a team approach, hard work, innovation from County staff, and the strong support of the Board.

In terms of a mistake, I regret not being able to resolve a recent sick building issue we had with the Sheriff's Operation Center. The County manages over 1.1 million square feet, of which the Operations Center is less than 40,000 s.f. The County followed all the due diligence in acquiring the property and completely reconstructed the building to standard with full compliance to the current building code and replaced almost everything entirely new. Although occupied for two and half years following reconstruction, it is perceived to be a sick building by many of the deputies working there. Having tested the building multiple times (including CDC) and not found any evidence of mold or other contamination the issue devolved into a political and legal hot potato with multiple sides, with different agendas, not really working together to resolve the issue. I wish I could have done a better job unifying the groups and resolving the conflicts, realizing that some issues just take years to work through or may be unsolvable. However, I have learned lessons on approach, communication, messaging and perception that I will carry forward and make me a better manager.

I have worked with all types of employees and have used different management styles depending on the individual. Some require minimal guidance and oversight, some only need coaching, while others require much more input and essentially more direct coordination. I believe most individuals if lacking in an area can be developed over time, but in rare cases sometimes separation is required. Over the course of my career, it I have participated in or lead pay-classification studies, layoffs, restructuring, union negotiations, and performance-based terminations. Almost none of these tasks are easy and all require compassion, understanding, thoroughness, and professionalism.

Some of the major challenges I see facing the new City Manager are:

- **Implementing the Gainesville Answer to the Gainesville Question** - This is large complex initiative that is a main driving force for the City Commission. The new manager must access the current status and then continually advance the initiative forward towards a complete "Citizen Centered, People Empowered" local government. Described as turning an aircraft carrier, it will fall on the manager to lead staff in this turn, as well as identifying implementation steps and resources, as well as building the partnerships necessary to successfully meet this challenge.
- **Areas of Strategic Focus and Commission Initiatives** – Outside of the Customer focused vision above the Commission has identified other specific strategic focuses and initiatives. These will require detailed plans and ongoing progress monitoring, as well as the ability to move forward multiple Commission priorities simultaneously and still retain

CRAIG M. COFFEY

capacity for new Commissioner initiatives. As a County manager for over a decade managing multiple priorities is business as usual.

- **Maintaining Quality of Life** – Rapid growth is occurring in the City of Gainesville and around the City in unincorporated Alachua County. This growth will present new challenges to maintaining the quality of life. Fiscal discipline is an integral part of this as well. The incoming City Manager must be on top of these issues and deal with them as they occur. Although somewhat transactional, it will be important to ensure that base government functions are running at high levels as even greater levels of excellence are pursued.
- **Increasing Organization Excellence** – While a good organization already, the Board has indicated it hopes to develop the organization into a new vision of citizen interaction and responsiveness. The new City Manager will have to have that mindset and develop the organization strategies that will achieve the Board’s initiatives and transform the organization culture.

During the first six months it will be critical for the incoming City Manager to hit the ground running and quickly get to work on implementing the forward-thinking goals of the Commission and community. This will entail things such as:

- Fully understanding the Commissioners individually and the details of Commission’s strategic direction, expectations and top priorities to include a specific focus on the Citizen-Centered Gainesville.
- Team building with City staff and the other charter officers, understanding everyone’s needs and capabilities, as well as getting their perspectives and approaches on issues.
- Touring all the City facilities, looking at any problems firsthand, and fully understanding the natural geography and development patterns of the City.
- Building relationships with private and public community leaders to include County, University and business leaders, and state officials to understand mutual concerns, positions, and potential partnerships/collaborations.
- Assessing the City’s financial position, to include the newly adopted budget and reviewing anticipated future financial trends to include any projected downturns or additional needs to carry out City initiatives.
- Evaluating progress for the four areas of strategic focus, as well as looking forward towards the next steps necessary to: improve youth programs, increase mobility for residents, achieve zero waste, and becoming a smarter city.
- Involvement/participation in the Community professionally and personally.

I have always been open and available to the media, even with difficult issues and events. It is key to work with the media to get facts out and try to ensure accurate, quality coverage of the City. For the last decade I have meet weekly with the media and sought to explain projects and situations in great detail so they would have a fuller and more technical understanding of issues. These regular meetings and overall openness have paid off dividends in the fairness of coverage

CRAIG M. COFFEY

and in overall media relations/trust. In cases of emergencies they have proven a vital link to our residents with emergency broadcasts.

Social media is integral part of the media landscape and for the younger age demographic of the City it may likely serve as a primary news source. The challenge is making social media relevant for daily life, for all ages and not just in time of emergencies. Social media should be robust, interesting, interconnected with other media, and value-added. I have launched such an effort with Flagler County over the last two years with some success in the number of followers and impact of information flow. Facebook, Twitter, Next Door, and many other social media will be an integral part and likely the primary communication tool of the “Citizen-Centered Gainesville” transformation.

I do not anticipate anyone contacting the County with negative comments about me except potentially a few individuals who have maintained a decade long conflict with the County (and me) and/or who have run for and lost County Commission races. There is nothing embarrassing in my background, I have always been a moral, ethical individual, with a strong track record of accomplishment.

In my spare time, I enjoy playing softball, fishing, traveling and spending time with my family (my wife of 27 years and three sons ages 15, 19, and 22).

SIX ADJECTIVES OR PHRASES I WOULD USE TO DESCRIBE MYSELF

- Creative/Innovative
- Hardworking
- Effective
- Knowledgeable
- Ethical
- Leader

REASON FOR DEPARTING CURRENT POSITION

Having great success for many years in Flagler County I believe I can make an even more positive impact in a larger, stable organization with a proactive Commission such as the City of Gainesville. Although I still had support from the majority of the Board and could have stayed on, I wanted to remove myself as an issue with an incoming Board member, and amicably and professionally transition to a new opportunity.

CRAIG M. COFFEY

CURRENT / MOST RECENT SALARY

My final compensation at Flagler County was \$163,500 plus a monthly vehicle allowance totaling \$4,800 annually. I was in the State of Florida FRS Senior Management Retirement category.

CB&A Background Checks

Background Check Summary
CRAIG M. COFFEY

Criminal Records Checks:

Nationwide Criminal Records Search	No Records Found
County	
Flagler, FL	No Records Found
Desoto County, FL	No Records Found
Sioux County, IA	No Records Found
State	
Florida	No Records Found
Iowa	No Records Found

Civil Records Checks:

County	
Flagler, FL	No Records Found
Desoto County, FL	No Records Found
Sioux County, IA	No Records Found
Federal	
Florida	No Records Found
Iowa	No Records Found

Motor Vehicle

Florida	No Records Found
---------	------------------

Credit

Excellent

Bankruptcy

No Records Found

Education

Confirmed

Employment

Confirmed

Background Check Summary
CRAIG M. COFFEY

Under the Fair Credit Reporting Act, 15 U.S.C. 1681-1681Y, credit and bankruptcy information are very sensitive and should not be used in the consideration of hiring. The information is included for each candidate because we do not want you to be surprised if third parties raise what they consider to be a concern.

**Background Check Summary
CRAIG M. COFFEY
Personal Disclosure**

Personal Disclosure Questionnaire

Name of Applicant: Craig Michael Coffey

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
2. Have you ever been accused of or have been involved in a domestic violence or abuse incident?
Yes No
3. Have you ever declared bankruptcy or been an owner in a business that did so?
Yes No
4. Have you ever been the subject of a civil rights violation complaint that was investigated or resulted in a lawsuit?
Yes No
5. Have you ever been the subject of a sexual harassment complaint that was investigated or resulted in a lawsuit?
Yes No
6. Have you ever been convicted of driving while intoxicated?
Yes No
7. Have you ever sued a current or former employer?
Yes No
8. Do you have a personal My Space, Face Book or other type of Web Page?
Yes No
9. Do you have a personal Twitter Account?
Yes No
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

11. Please provide a list of any lawsuits in which you are or have been a party either as plaintiff or defendant.

None personally ever - professionally had one in DeSoto County that I was listed as County Administrator in a code enforcement case, the County successfully won the case. In Flagler none for professional actions personally, and I cannot recall any specific lawsuits, but may have been listed in some of the legal actions against the County.

Attested to: Craig M. Coffey
Signature of Applicant

Please email this form via PDF DOCUMENT to Lynelle@cb-asso.com or via fax to (888) 539-6531 no later than 5:00 PM PST 08/12/19.

CB&A Reference Notes

**Reference Notes
Craig Coffey**

Charlie Ericksen – Commissioner, Flagler County, FL 386-503-6143

Mr. Ericksen first met and began working with Mr. Coffey in 2012. He knew of him from attending County meetings, but did not get to know him or work with him until he was elected. They have continued to stay in contact since Mr. Coffey's departure from the County.

Mr. Coffey's job performance was above average. He worked extremely hard all of the time, sometimes putting in a 24 hour day during hurricane recovery. He is quite talented and can juggle multiple projects all at the same time while keeping the Commissioners current and answer any of their given questions about those projects at any time. He genuinely loves his work and puts the necessary time in to get the job done.

When it comes to decisions, Mr. Coffey makes good ones. He is also quite talented at hiring personnel. He had a wonderful staff who has stepped up since he left so much that the new administrator commented that he has never seen such a tremendous staff in all his years working in other municipalities.

Mr. Ericksen would characterize Mr. Coffey as someone who is innovative, a change agent, and someone who maintains an organization at a high performance level. He is all business when he shows up and is most likely thinking about business on his drive home.

Anytime Mr. Coffey was asked to be at meetings in the community he would attend. The Commissioners were more of the face of the County, but he was always the person behind the scenes giving information and support. He was the quarterback for the team.

One controversial issue that occurred during Mr. Coffey's tenure had to do with the building that was purchased for the new Sheriff's office. The County bought an old hospital and after the purchase they found some problems with the soil. Unfortunately, Mr. Coffey took a beating for that even though it was not his decision, it was voted on by the Commission.

Mr. Ericksen is not aware of anything in Mr. Coffey's background that would be construed as embarrassing if the press were to go digging. The only people who might disagree with what Mr. Ericksen has stated could be some of the newly elected Commissioners who were elected on the basis of removing Mr. Coffey from his role. If Mr. Ericksen were the sole decision maker, he would hire Mr. Coffey in a minute.

Words or phrases used to describe Craig Coffey:

- Willing to spend time on solving problems,
- Always had an answer,
- Good a staff development, and
- Has excellent ideas.

Reference Notes
Craig Coffey

Strengths: A hardworking individual who truly enjoys his work.

Weaknesses: Works too much.

Nate McLaughlin – Former Commissioner, Flagler County, FL 386-503-1761

Mr. McLaughlin first met Mr. Coffey when he was hired and brought on to the County in 2007. They worked together for over eight years. Even though they both no longer work at the County they have continued to stay in contact.

Mr. Coffey is an incredibly honorable person with an amazing mind. He is a true leader who is willing to take the error, but knows when he is doing the right thing and does not worry about the naysayers.

In terms of decisions Mr. Coffey was a big picture person, but also understood the details. He and Mr. McLaughlin did not always agree on everything, but they were always professional when moving forward. Furthermore, he was a good judge of character and hired good people for the organization.

Mr. Coffey is an affable person who is approachable, easy to get along with and is not a smooth politician. He can communicate what is happening but stays above the political fray. He is excessively patient with people, but is not a schmoozer and is not afraid to say what he is thinking.

Mr. McLaughlin would characterize Mr. Coffey as someone who is innovative, a change agent, and someone who maintains the organization at a high performance level. He is innovative where he needs to be while still respecting the traditions of people who have been in the community for multiple generations.

Mr. Coffey absolutely kept Mr. McLaughlin informed about what was happening in the organization. His reports were always thorough and his door was always open for questions from all of the commissioners. He communicates well in a one on one setting, however, to the masses he does need a bit of help.

Mr. McLaughlin cannot envision Mr. Coffey sitting behind a desk managing processes. He is always on the go and can rally the troops behind the vision of an organization. He is excellent at getting people's buy in on projects that benefit the community.

When it comes to finances Mr. Coffey is well versed. He guided them through the recession in 2008 because of his excellent fund management. He can pinch a penny but when something has to be done he pursues it while being fiscally conservative.

**Reference Notes
Craig Coffey**

Mr. Coffey had some political issues he had to deal with at the County because he was the administrator and he was always good about talking people off the ledge especially with upset board members or citizens.

Mr. Coffey left the County because one commissioner, who was a bully to most people, was after him. The majority of the Board wanted to keep him in his position, however he was not being treated fairly by a few of the Commissioners was not good and he decided to leave.

Mr. McLaughlin is not aware of Mr. Coffey having anything in his background that would be thought of as embarrassing. If Mr. McLaughlin were on the Board he would hire Mr. Coffey in a minute.

Words or phrases used to describe Craig Coffey:

- Personal integrity,
- Focused,
- Informed,
- Good work ethic,
- Organized, and
- Invaluable understanding of Florida statutes.

Strengths: An experienced professional who works hard and makes good decisions in the best interest of the organization and community.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Sally Sherman – Deputy County Administrator, Flagler County, FL 407-474-8978

Ms. Sherman has known Mr. Coffey since 2008 when she came on board at the County. They worked together until he left in March 2019. They continue to stay in contact.

Mr. Coffey was an outstanding administrator who worked as hard as his staff worked. He is innovative and has a great way of thinking outside the box. He makes others want to perform better.

When it comes to decisions Mr. Coffey makes good ones, especially in terms of hiring personnel. He thoroughly evaluates candidates to ensure they are the right match for the organization. He has the best skills Ms. Sherman has seen in her 40 plus years of her career in terms of team building.

Ms. Sherman would characterize Mr. Coffey as innovative. He made some strides when handling the utility system and working through some challenges that materialized based on others' involvement. He worked through them and also looked at innovative ways to partner with other County agencies to make up for some deficiencies. Additionally, he spearheaded the beach

**Reference Notes
Craig Coffey**

restoration after the hurricanes, that no one thought would happen. How he lobbied for funding at the State and Federal level for that project was a work of art.

Mr. Coffey works exceptionally well with people in the community. If he is presented with an idea he will work through it with that person or group letting them know what can and cannot be accomplished. He is outstanding when it comes to interacting with people in the public.

Ms. Sherman often watched Mr. Coffey maneuvered his way through the budget and she witnessed how innovative he was meeting the goals of the Commission. He worked well through the strategic planning process giving the Commission and the staff a playbook for present and future projects.

The new Sheriff's operations center that was the impetus for Mr. Coffey's departure from the County is the only controversial issue Ms. Sherman can recall. However, as someone who worked closely with him she will warn that what was presented by the media was not the whole truth. When it came down to it some of the Commissioners said that it was either the Sheriff leaves or Mr. Coffey does, and the Sheriff turned on him.

Ms. Sherman is not aware of anything from Mr. Coffey's background that would be thought of as embarrassing if the press were to investigate. If she were given the opportunity to hire him she would do so immediately.

Words or phrases used to describe Craig Coffey:

- Innovative,
- Hard worker,
- Honest,
- Good leader,
- A follower when necessary, and
- Mentor.

Strengths: An excellent administrator who is a creative thinker and a fantastic leader.

Weaknesses: When Mr. Coffey is told something he takes people at their word and believes people when he should question them.

**Helga Van Eckert – Executive Director, Economic Opportunity Department,
Flagler County, FL 386-313-4071**

Ms. Van Eckert first met Mr. Coffey in 2012 when she started with the County. Mr. Coffey led the charge for the County to take on Economic Development when the private Economic Development Department was dissolved. She was brought in and they operate as a quasi-government that reports to the County. They worked together until Mr. Coffey left in March 2019. They have continued to stay in contact since that time.

**Reference Notes
Craig Coffey**

Mr. Coffey listened to his directors, got to know each project, and was fully aware of what was happening in the County, making connections between departments to help the organization move forward smoothly. He was always open to exploring more challenging ideas to better the County as opposed to sticking to the status quo. However, he did not pursue those ideas to make changes for the sake of change, but he always does them for the right reasons.

In terms of decisions Mr. Coffey makes good ones. His decisions were always strong and for the betterment of the County. He was also additionally as good at making decisions regarding personnel. His executive team grew stronger as time went on, from what she saw.

Everyday some sort of problem or emergency had to be dealt with at the County. Mr. Coffey did a fine job of dealing with those situations and usually approached them with out of the box thinking. When hurricanes Michael and Irma came through he was there 24/7 overseeing all of the operations ensuring everyone was where they needed to be, especially during the recovery efforts.

One issue that took place while Mr. Coffey was at the County had to do with a restaurant that leased some land at a County owned park. The restaurant was badly damaged during the hurricanes and afterwards they worked with the owner to devise a plan to build a new facility. When the plan came before the commission to have it approved it was opposed by the residents and it was not passed.

Ms. Van Eckert is not aware of anything from Mr. Coffey's background that would prove to be unflattering to his character. He is a leader who does a fine job as a Manager and who harbors strong relationships with other municipalities, city managers, etc.

Words or phrases used to describe Craig Coffey:

- Engaged,
- Creative,
- Innovative,
- Communicative,
- Process oriented, and
- Open door policy.

Strengths: An honest leader who listens and has his finger on the pulse of his organization.

Weaknesses: None identified.

David Sullivan – Commissioner, Flagler County, FL 386-503-4236

Mr. Sullivan was elected to the Commission in 2016 and began working with Mr. Coffey at that time. They worked together until Mr. Coffey left the County in 2019, but have remained in contact.

Reference Notes
Craig Coffey

Mr. Coffey was effective in his role at the County and accomplished quite a bit while he was there. He is excellent with details and understands how to get things done. He is knowledgeable in how to do his job and knows the rules and regulations of government administration. He is also confident and an excellent listener.

In terms of decisions, Mr. Coffey made solid decisions. He did not shy away from making them and would always consult with the Commission on anything significant. Additionally, he made excellent decisions when it came to hiring and handling personnel.

By the time Mr. Sullivan came into office Mr. Coffey had already carried out the innovative ideas that helped the organization reach a high level of performance. At the time the two gentlemen worked together at the County he was engaged with keeping the organization running at that level.

One controversial issue that Mr. Sullivan remembers dealt with one of the County's long time employees who went into the Florida Retirement System and six months later came back to work. People did not understand the nuances of how that worked and they thought this employee was double dipping. The misunderstanding was cleared up and everyone realized that it was done legally and above board.

Mr. Sullivan has no knowledge of anything in Mr. Coffey's background that would be looked upon as unflattering by any future employer if the press were to go digging. Mr. Sullivan knows of no one else who would have a different opinion or disagree with what he has stated.

Words or phrases used to describe Craig Coffey:

- Strong,
- Intelligent,
- Leader,
- Dedicated to his job, and
- Good family man.

Strengths: An effective leader who works hard and accomplishes the goals set forth for the organization and community.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Barbara Revels – Former Commissioner, Flagler County, FL 386-439-3130

Ms. Revels met Mr. Coffey in 2008. They worked together at the County until her term ended in 2016. They continue to have some, occasional contact.

**Reference Notes
Craig Coffey**

Mr. Coffey was a solid manager who was good at putting together a team, and was excellent at budgeting. Ms. Revels would give him an overall A rating. He thinks outside the box and came up with excellent solutions especially with budgetary concerns.

When decisions arose, Mr. Coffey performed well. Even though they had a few controversial issues and they may not have always agreed on everything, he did not usually move forward without consulting the Commission on some level.

To a degree Mr. Coffey was customer service oriented. For the most part he had a strong team of department heads to whom he would delegate, however, sometimes with the constant complainers in the community a wall would go up. That was mostly because they could not be satisfied no matter the situation.

A few controversial issues arose during Mr. Coffey's employment at the County including the issue with the restoration of the restaurant at the park after the hurricane and the purchase of the old hospital building for the new Sheriff's operations center. Some tension arose between him and the Sheriff, but that was the Council's doing and not Mr. Coffey's.

Ms. Revels is not aware of any areas of concern from Mr. Coffey's background that would arise if he were to be investigated. He was a good manager who did some excellent things for their County.

Words or phrases used to describe Craig Coffey:

- Excellent work ethic,
- Creative,
- Budget minded, and
- Ethical.

Strengths: A hardworking administrator who is an excellent team builder and well versed in budgeting.

Weaknesses: Sometimes Mr. Coffey pushes on full steam ahead and he might offend people in the process and could have been more visible in the community.

Mandy Hines – Administrator, DeSoto County, FL 863-993-4800

Ms. Hines met Mr. Coffey when he was hired in DeSoto in 2005. She reported to him for two years when he left in 2007. They continued to stay in professional contact when he moved on to Flagler County.

**Reference Notes
Craig Coffey**

Mr. Coffey's job performance was quite strong and he was always committed. His work output was above average. He has a good personality and gets along well with others. He is charismatic, extroverted, and talks to people, including strangers, with ease.

When it comes to decisions in general Mr. Coffey does well. He also is good with decisions in regards to hiring personnel. He did a fine job of that based on what he had to work with and he was always fair with his staff.

Ms. Hines would characterize Mr. Coffey as someone who is innovative and a change agent. He will get his head around everything and if something is not working he will make changes in the necessary areas.

Mr. Coffey was accessible and when Ms. Hines needed clarification or had questions he was available. He was highly engaged in the key areas of the organization and was never one to sit behind a desk and merely manage processes.

Ms. Hines knows that some controversies arose during Mr. Coffey's time in Flagler County. It was about a position with the Clerk's office and the administration from what she recalls. She knows that he did not leave because he did not perform well, but that his leaving was politically motivated and one of the commissioners ran on the premise of removing him from the position.

Ms. Hines is not aware of any embarrassing information that would come to light if Mr. Coffey was investigated by the press. She would hire him if she were given the opportunity.

Words or phrases used to describe Craig Coffey:

- Dedicated,
- Hardworking,
- Compassionate towards people,
- Trustworthy,
- Dedicated to the organization.

Strengths: An experienced and hardworking individual who has an excellent personality and who works well with others.

Weaknesses: None identified.

George Hanns – Former Commissioner, Flagler County, FL 386-931-0872

Mr. Hanns first met Mr. Coffey in 2007 when he came to Flagler County. They worked together for nine years and have continued to stay in contact after Mr. Hanns retired from office.

**Reference Notes
Craig Coffey**

Mr. Coffey is a wonderful individual and Mr. Hanns was most impressed that he did not take any political sides. He was up front with communication, excellent at juggling many projects at once, and a good leader who created a high morale amongst his staff. Additionally, he is easy going but firm and will get the job done.

Being out in the community was something that Mr. Coffey did frequently. He was highly involved in the community, represented the County well, and was well liked and respected by his peers. He is very knowledgeable in many areas and is very well rounded.

In terms of communication, Mr. Hanns was well informed. Mr. Coffey was always accessible to him and he would go to great lengths to explain things to people. Mr. Hanns could call on Mr. Coffey anytime day or night or weekends. Mr. Coffey was excellent with follow through and the Board was never blindsided at meetings.

The only controversial situation that might come to light if someone were to investigate Mr. Coffey would be the issue with the hospital building renovation. Mr. Hanns does not know of anything from his background or professional or personal behavior that would be construed as embarrassing.

Mr. Coffey is the type of person who if he tells you something, he is going to do it. He is someone that others should pattern themselves after if he/she wants to be a good administrator. Anyone who has him in their employ would be fortunate.

Words or phrases used to describe Craig Coffey:

- Professional,
- Caring,
- Devoted,
- Dedicated, and
- Gets the job done.

Strengths: A highly professional individual who works hard and accomplishes the goals of the organization.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Prepared by: Heather Linares
Colin Baenziger & Associates

CB&A Internet Research

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Craig Coffey
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Palm Coast Observer, The (FL)
June 13, 2019

Captain's BBQ sues county
Author: JONATHAN SIMMONS

Captain's BBQ filed suit against the Flagler County government on June 7, seeking in excess of \$15,000 and alleging that the county breached its contract with the restaurant when it reneged on a new lease agreement the county approved with Captain's last November. The building the restaurant leases in the county-owned park has structural problems.

The previous county administration, under then-County Administrator **Craig Coffey**, had proposed that the restaurant move elsewhere within the park, in a new building to be built at Captain's expense. That would let the restaurant operate without interruption, whereas attempting to rebuild the current building in place would mean displacing the business during reconstruction, potentially violating the county's lease with Captain's. For Captain's, the relocation would have allowed an increase in size to 150 seats, a number that would make it easier to obtain a liquor license.

In November, the County Commission voted 3-2 in favor of the proposed changes at Bings. That meeting was County Commissioner Nate McLaughlin's last meeting as a commissioner, and the vote was held over the objections of incoming Commissioner Joe Mullins. But two weeks later, with Mullins on the commission, the board voted 4-0 to reconsider its previous approval, even though the lease had already been signed. And on June 3, it decided to have the Captain's building inspected again to see if it is truly beyond repair, and then, if so, to have a modestly-sized replacement restaurant building, without any seating expansion, built for Captain's at the county's expense. In addition, the county decided not to guarantee an extension of Captain's lease beyond 2026. But according to Captain's BBQ attorney Casey Arnold, Captain's has a valid lease: The one executed by the county after the commission's vote in November.

The county, Arnold wrote in his complaint, did not have the legal authority to void the November lease after its execution. The county, Arnold wrote, was making changes to the lease without the restaurant's consent, and, "Such actions or resolutions by the Commission would be an unconstitutional impairment of Plaintiff's contractual rights." The complaint lists four counts: Breach of contract, breach of the covenant of good faith and fair dealing, declaratory judgement that the November 2018 lease remains valid, and a judgement against the county for performance of the amended lease, and for damages and attorney's fees. County Attorney Al Hadeed notified commissioners of the lawsuit by email June 7, writing that the complaint would be forwarded the county's insurer for a coverage determination.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Craig Coffey
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

February 19, 2019

United States District Court, M.D. Florida, Jacksonville Division

Applicable Law: 42 U.S.C. § 1983
Cause: 42 U.S.C. § 1983 Civil Rights Act
Nature of Suit: 440 Civil Rights: Other

STEPHEN LEONARD GUARDINO, JR., Plaintiff, v. **CRAIG COFFEY**, Flagler County
Administrators Department, Defendant.

February 19, 2019

Attorney(s) appearing for the Case
Stephen Leonard Guardino, Jr., Plaintiff, pro se.

ORDER
TIMOTHY J. CORRIGAN, District Judge.

This case is before the Court on Plaintiff's Application to Proceed in District Court without Prepaying Fees or Costs (Doc. 2). On January 7, 2019, the assigned United States Magistrate Judge issued a Report and Recommendation (Doc. 11) recommending that the Application, construed as a Motion to Proceed In Forma Pauperis, be denied and that the complaint be dismissed as frivolous. No party has filed an objection to the Report and Recommendation, and the time in which to do so has passed. See 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1); Fed. R. Civ. P. 72(b); M.D. Fla. R. 6.02(a).

Upon de novo review of the file and for the reasons stated in the Report and Recommendation (Doc. 11), it is hereby.

[CB&A Note: The remainder of the case can be read here:
<https://www.leagle.com/decision/infdco20190220985>]

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Craig Coffey
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Palm Coast Observer, The (FL)
January 17, 2019

County Commission votes 3-2 to accept County Administrator Craig Coffey's resignation
Author: JONATHAN SIMMONS

Flagler County Administrator **Craig Coffey** has resigned, and his deputy Sally Sherman and various department heads are doing the day-to-day work of running the county in his absence as the County Commission prepares to seek a replacement.

That process will begin with an effort to select an interim manager — Sherman can't serve in that role because she's resigning herself, effective Jan. 31 — and then a permanent manager. County officials are reaching out for assistance to the Florida Association of Counties and Florida League of Cities and planning to put out an RFP for a search firm.

The County Commission voted 3-2 the evening of Jan. 9 to accept an amendment to **Coffey's** contract that allowed him to resign, effective end of day Friday, Jan. 11, with his severance package. **Coffey**, who'd been the county administrator since 2007, agreed to submit his resignation on Jan. 10.

The commission made its decision during a special County Commission meeting **Coffey** called Jan. 8 for the evening of Jan. 9. Despite the short notice — about 25 hours' worth — about 80 members of the public showed up, with some **Coffey** opponents wearing black T-shirts that said #Clear-AsCoffey.

“I understand these positions are basically a journey through time, and I have nothing but positive things to say and feel about our wonderful county,” **Coffey** said at the meeting. “I have the greatest respect for our county staff and the many things we've been able to accomplish, whether that's been working through disasters, millions of dollars of capital projects and all the other adventures we've gone through. What I've put before you is a way to part ways on a positive note for everyone.”

The short-notice Jan. 9 meeting replaced a discussion about **Coffey's** contract that had initially been scheduled for the regular County Commission meeting that will be held on Jan. 14. Two commissioners — Commission Chairman Donald O'Brien and Commissioner Joe Mullins — had aired a number of complaints during a Dec. 3 meeting about **Coffey's** decisions, and the board had opted for Jan. 14 to hold a vote on whether to fire **Coffey**.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Craig Coffey
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Daytona Beach News-Journal, The (FL)
January 11, 2019

Letters to the editor
Flagler’s Craig Coffey will be missed

When Flagler County commissioners decided they wanted something done, County Administrator **Craig Coffey** was the person who had to get it done. After the Shark House burned to the ground while firemen could only watch it burn, the county told us they didn’t have the money to install fire hydrants. When we threatened to hold the county responsible for any future fire damage or losses, **Coffey** found the ways and means of getting us fire hydrants. Thank you, **Coffey**, and we wish him well. We hope the county will find another doer like him.

Oren Freshour, Flagler Beach

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Craig Coffey**

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Palm Coast Observer, The (FL)
December 6, 2018

County to consider firing Coffey

Author: JONATHAN SIMMONS

At its next meeting, the Flagler County Commission will discuss whether or not to fire County Administrator **Craig Coffey**, who was hired in 2007. Commissioner Joe Mullins, speaking in his first meeting as a commissioner since he was sworn in just under two weeks ago, made a motion —also his first as commissioner — at the commission’s Dec. 3 meeting to terminate **Coffey**. The motion died for lack of a second: Other commissioners didn’t want to consider such a move without the presence of Commissioner Charlie Ericksen, who was absent.

But Mullins’ proposal was followed by lengthy condemnations of **Coffey’s** performance from not only Mullins, but County Commission Chairman Donald O’Brien and Flagler County Sheriff Rick Staly. **Coffey** sat silently throughout their comments, but said after the meeting that he objected to some of the comments that had been made about his performance, that some had simply not been true, and that he would compose his own response.

O’Brien, after stating that he did not feel it would be right for the commission to actually vote on Mullins’ motion without Ericksen, said that he’d already discussed his concerns with **Coffey** directly.

For O’Brien, “ground zero” for his frustration was **Coffey’s** handling of the Sheriff’s Operations Center building, which the county had constructed upon the bones of the former Memorial Hospital building after buying it in 2013, and which Sheriff’s Office employees have said is a sick building. “Mr. **Coffey** has demonstrated a lack of empathy and caring,” O’Brien said. “Basically, what came across to me [from **Coffey**] was, those employees were faking it, they were not sick, there were no symptoms, or they were just trying to further a worker’s comp claim. And I was appalled by that.”

The issue had also created political blowback and wrecked **Coffey’s** relationship with the Sheriff Rick Staly, O’Brien said, and Staly had told commissioners that he would only deal with them directly, not with **Coffey**.

Coffey also put the commission at a disadvantage, O’Brien said, when he let his deputy administrator, Sally Sherman, retire and then be rehired as a contractor at a higher rate; she was later hired back on as a regular county employee shortly after a state-mandated waiting period designed to discourage retired employees from being rehired when they are already pulling a state retirement, as Sherman is.

“O’Brien was also concerned that some of **Coffey’s** negative comments about the state Legislature in open meetings had damaged the county’s relationship with its legislators.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Craig Coffey**

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

And when the commission discussed its last budget, O'Brien said, **Coffey** had again put commissioners in a difficult position by presenting budget options that would have required tax increases, even though commissioners had told him ahead of time that they did not want to raise taxes.

Most recently, O'Brien said, there was the handling of a proposed expansion of the Captain's BBQ restaurant at Bings Landing, which had generated community outrage. **Coffey** had not scheduled the proposed changes for a workshop. He had instead placed a proposed new lease with Captain's, which would have let the restaurant build a larger location nearer the center of the county park, on the consent agenda for the very last meeting before former commissioner Nate McLaughlin was to be replaced by incoming commissioner Joe Mullins.

The board approved the new lease 3-2 — but, after Mullins took his seat Dec. 3, opted to reconsider the issue in a meeting Jan. 7. "I just think there was poor communication to the public; there was misreading of the political situation," O'Brien said. O'Brien proposed the commission place a discussion about the possibility of firing **Coffey** on its agenda for Jan. 14. Mullins echoed the issues raised by O'Brien about the handling of the Sheriff's Operations Center and Sally Sherman's rehiring.

The handling of the Captain's BBQ proposal, he said, "was an attempt to skirt the public process and make a deal rather than meeting with all the stakeholders." County Commissioner David Sullivan said that while he wouldn't, himself, have proposed **Coffey**'s firing, he was willing to discuss it. Only Commissioner Greg Hansen said outright that he had not seen any cause to fire **Coffey** — a comment that drew derision from the meeting's audience. "Would you all please be quiet?" he said to the crowd of about 100 people. "I just want to state that I think he's had problems, and he and I have sat down and discussed them, and I've seen corrections."

Sheriff Rick Staly, speaking during the meeting's public comment period, said he had seen little leadership from **Coffey** on the matter of the Operations Center. "This building issue is a crisis, and it takes crisis leadership to solve," Staly said. "I have seen virtually no leadership from the administration on this crisis, unless I pushed it. What I have seen is resistance, denial, legal posturing, inappropriate and demeaning comments about my employees to county staff."

Clerk of Court Tom Bexley also said after the meeting that he had been at odds with **Coffey**. Over the past two or three years, Bexley said, the relationship had seemed strained, and, like Staly, he hasn't been meeting with **Coffey** directly.

One issue of contention, he said, has concerned the procurement and rollout of a new, countywide enterprise resource planning, or ERP, software package. "Its frustrating, but we are where we are," he said. "I really don't have an opinion about [whether he should be fired]; the only thing I want to be able to do is continue to work with the country administrator, no matter who it is." Mullins made a motion to consider terminating **Coffey**'s contract during the upcoming Jan. 14 meeting. It passed 4-0.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Craig Coffey
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Daytona Beach News-Journal, The (FL)
April 29, 2018

Q&A with Flagler County Administrator Craig Coffey

Author: Dinah Voyles Pulver

The News-Journal talked with **Craig Coffey**, Flagler County administrator, about the county's project to repair and restore Flagler County's dunes:

What are you doing?

"We're hauling sand in. In some cases we're creating dunes where dunes were completely done away with by the ocean. In other areas, we have huge bluffs and we're putting dunes in and kind of stabilizing the dunes, all trying to protect property and create sea turtle habitat, and really to improve the overall beach."

How much beach are you doing and how much will it cost?

We are doing an 11-mile dune restoration project north of Flagler Beach, and we're doing a separate project within Flagler Beach, north and south of the pier and that's about a mile long project, and we're doing that in conjunction with the city of Flagler Beach. And what we're doing in total is about a \$25 to \$28 million project."

How far along are you?

"We're right at 2.8 miles completed."

What was your biggest challenge?

"We had a lot of challenges but the biggest one I would have to probably point to would be the monetary situation of how to make it all work."

You've mentioned protecting sea turtles was the second biggest challenge. What extra steps are you being required to take since construction is going to take place through turtle nesting season?

"We have the Sea Turtle Patrol that we hired and they will patrol the beach every day, mark the sea turtle nests, and then there's all kinds of requirements in our construction zone. So if they're in there, we have to relocate them to some of the dunes we've already completed. If they're coming up through an area we may have to wait for them to hatch out and work around it. But we definitely can't interrupt them or in any way disturb the nest."

What about the sand?

"We're getting the sand about an hour away from our site, close to Gainesville ... They actually mix a couple of different sand types to get the type of sand we need, and they mixed that to get the right density and particle size. And they sift it, and it's really a refined project. So, it's good for sea turtles, good for people and it blends in with the natural environment."

But it's not Flagler County's traditional coquina sand?

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Craig Coffey

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

“We’re known for coquina sand, which is generally a bigger particle size and people either love it or hate it ... We’ve noticed over the last 5 to 10 years all kinds of other sands migrating on to our beach though. We have a very fine white sand we’re getting from the north. We’ve had a lot of sand brought in by DEP and the county and homeowners on other projects. And so we have a whole blend.”

What are people saying?

“We’ve had a tremendous response. ... This whole process I think has brought a lot of the community together and realized the importance of the beach and the turtles and the whole everything together. They’ve embraced our staff and the process we’re using.”

The county hired its own staff to lower the cubic yard cost of the project and how’s that going?

“We’re basically building a road on the beach and we’re actually going to save about \$10 a cubic yard. That will allow us to put more sand ... They’re out on the beach, five days a week, 10 hours a day. We’ve had very hot days and inclement weather with sideways rain.”

What happens if there’s another hurricane this summer?

“That’s the billion-dollar question. We’re taking odds in Vegas right now that we’re not going to get hit with a hurricane. We hope we don’t.”

What if you lose all the sand?

“If we lose everything we just did, we are going to be thankful for the residents that we were at least able to protect or minimize the damage to their property and to our facilities and the public.”

What do you see long-term for the beach?

“There has been an erosion process over the last 50 years of our dunes. They’ve been slowly, the slope and height of the dunes, and the diminishment, have been slowly accreting into the ocean. The ocean is going to do what the ocean is going to do and we’re going to have some challenges ahead.”

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Craig Coffey

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Daytona Beach News-Journal, The (FL)

June 21, 2017

County honored for budget presentation

Author: Staff Report

Flagler County is being praised for the eighth consecutive year for its annual budget presentation by the Government Finance Officers Association, according to a media release.

Flagler County's 2016-2017 fiscal year budget was rated in four categories: as a policy document, financial plan, operations guide, and communications device. "This award is the highest form of recognition in governmental budgeting and represents a significant achievement by your organization," Todd Buikema, acting association director, said in a correspondence with county finance director Lorie Bailey-Brown.

Bailey-Brown has worked on award-winning budgets for the county going back to the first budget that received the award — the 2009-2010 budget under Tom Klinker, the former director of the department. Bailey-Brown and her staff — Tammy Patten, budget manager, and Kelly Freshcorn and Brian Eichinger, both budget analysts — are in the midst of pulling together the 2017-2018 budget.

"Staff is mindful of the Government Finance Officers Association standards as they prepare the budget," County Administrator **Craig Coffey** said in the release. "There is some very detailed information the GFOA asks for, and they are looking for a document that stands out above the rest."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Craig Coffey**

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Palm Coast Observer, The (FL)
January 5, 2017

Craig Coffey, Flagler County administrator

Author: BRIAN MCMILLAN

When he was in the Army reserves, **Craig Coffey** learned an important lesson about leadership. “Even during a disaster,” he said, “it’s leadership by example. In the Army, the officers eat last. ... If the troops are sleeping in the mud, you’re sleeping in the mud.”

Coffey was a platoon commander in the first Gulf War, serving in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Iraq. He retired from the military in 2000 after 16 years of duty and went on to earn a masters in public administration from the University of Central Florida.

Now in his 10th year as Flagler County administrator, **Coffey** said he has applied that leadership style with his staff. For example, while the county was being threatened by Hurricane Matthew, **Coffey** asked a lot from his staff, but, “I was right there with them. I was working 18-hour days, sleeping in my office.”

Coffey will need to muster that kind of energy in 2017, as well, as he faces a difficult battle ahead: securing funding to restore the dunes that were washed away by Matthew. To do that, he’ll have to coordinate the efforts of several government agencies, some on the federal level, some on the state level — and none of them seem to agree with each other.

Instead of taking a vacation after Christmas, **Coffey** met with a representative with the Federal Emergency Management Agency because that was the best time for FEMA. “It’s my job to try,” he said. Charlie Ericksen, who is entering his second term as a County Commissioner and works closely with **Coffey**, said the beach funding is going to be a “balancing act.” But, Ericksen said, “He’s always shown he puts in the necessary hours to get the job done and also to be on call. He’s johnny-on-the-spot.”

Coffey prides himself in fighting for his “troops,” which in his current role are the staff members. He defends his staff at County Commission meetings and takes responsibility for everything staff does. “If I’ve OK’d something or let something go, leadership stops with me,” he said.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Craig Coffey**

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Palm Coast Observer, The (FL)
October 22, 2015

County Administrator Coffey's contract renewed

Author: JONATHAN SIMMONS

County Administrator **Craig Coffey's** contract came up for an automatic three-year renewal this week. It wasn't on the agenda for the Monday, Oct. 19, County Commission meeting, although commissioners ultimately took a vote and approved the three-year renewal unanimously. **Coffey's** contract will now continue through Feb. 23, 2019. He's currently paid about \$152,000 per year, plus benefits. But one commissioner raised questions about the wisdom of approving the contract before **Coffey's** performance evaluation, another criticized the evaluation method, and audience members chastised the board in the meeting's public comment period for not adding the issue to the meeting's agenda. Commissioner Charlie Ericksen raised the issue at the meeting, noting that it was the board's last opportunity to discuss the contract renewal and suggesting the commission delay it until after **Coffey's** performance evaluation. Commissioners went into the meeting aware that there would be public interest in the contract renewal: Local online news source FlaglerLive.com had already interviewed most of them for a news story headlined "County Administrator's and Attorney's Contracts May Renew Through 2019 Without Discussion," which was published earlier in the day. After Ericksen spoke at the meeting to make his motion, Commissioner Barbara Revels said his approach "makes sense, as far as extending the contract after airing a review." But no one seconded Ericksen's motion, which then died. Commissioner Frank Meeker said the board could always fire **Coffey** if it needed to. He said later in the meeting that he had full confidence in **Coffey**. Commissioner George Hanns, the commission's longest-serving board member, warned the commission against getting rid of an effective staff member who could be hard to replace. "I know what it's like living through many transitions where when the going gets tough, some people like to bail out and go headhunting and get rid of somebody, and then we're stuck with a mess, and then nobody can come on board and deal with existing conditions," he said. It's not easy to replace that knowledge."

Commissioner Nate McLaughlin said all of **Coffey's** evaluations are available for review, and the process is transparent; he saw no reason not to have the contract renew automatically. Revels agreed with Ericksen when Ericksen called the form used to evaluate **Coffey** "a popularity type of a form" with questions that are "very hard to get any objective measurements out of." Ericksen said he wanted to make it clear that his motion was "not to bash the county administrator." "It's always good to look in the mirror on a regular basis, and as a group, to make sure that we're headed in the right direction with the right leader," he said. "My comments are not to imply that I have negative view of his performance, but ... to also assure the 100,000 individuals out there that we have the right person in place, and we're supporting him, and we truly believe we have that." Revels said she thought it should have been on the agenda. "I think that it would have been more transparent, and more actually supportive, to have notified us and put it on the agenda," she said. McLaughlin motioned to approve **Coffey's** contract, and the board approved it unanimously.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Craig Coffey
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Daytona Beach News-Journal (FL)
December 16, 2014

Flagler County administrator receives 4 percent raise

Author: Julie Murphy

BUNNELL — Flagler County Administrator **Craig Coffey** was given a 4 percent pay increase by the County Commission, but the decision didn't come easily. Joe Mayer, the county's human resources director, requested a 10 percent raise for **Coffey** with an automatic annual merit increase of 3 percent. Mayer told the commission Monday the increase would bring **Coffey's** pay in line with what other administrators make locally, and noted that the administrator in Sumter County — a county of about the same size and character as Flagler — recently received an 11 percent pay increase.

“There is no doubt that he is deserving of it,” Commissioner George Hanns said. “I think 10 percent is a lot in this day and age. A lot of local people are struggling and they look at what he makes and it seems astronomical.” Commissioners in the end approved the 4 percent increase without the automatic 3 percent increase, but the vote was not unanimous. Hanns and Commissioner Charlie Ericksen dissented.

Coffey's annual pay will increase \$5,855 from \$146,383 to \$152,238 with the approval. Hanns noted that all county employees, including **Coffey**, received a 1 percent raise two months ago. “We're not in a position to do it,” Hanns said. “And it just doesn't look good to say to the employees that hundreds of you are deserving, but we're going to give Mr. **Coffey** 10 percent; the rest of you get 1 percent.” Ericksen said by phone Tuesday that the timing wasn't right for a big raise. “This is our first year out of a recession,” he said. “We had some extra money and we gave employees 1 percent.”

The salary comparison provided along with the agenda showed that **Coffey** made about \$1,000 a year more than Putnam County Administrator Rick Leary, who earns \$145,439, though the population of that county is 76,000. Before his raise, **Coffey** earned \$22,000 less than Jim Landon, Palm Coast's city manager.

Resident Jane Gentile-Youd noted that **Coffey** is not solely responsible for the county's 100,000 residents, citing that Landon is manager of a city of 70,000 that makes up the bulk of Flagler's population. She called the requested increase “deplorable.” Property Appraiser Jay Gardner also spoke during public comments.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Craig Coffey

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Daytona Beach News-Journal (FL)

October 12, 2013

Flagler County administrator’s 25 years of service recognized

BUNNELL — Flagler County Administrator **Craig Coffey** was recognized by the International City/County Managers Association for his 25 years of government service. “It’s hard to believe that I’ve been at this for 25 years,” **Coffey** said Wednesday. “I’m tickled to death. I continue to work for a lot of great people, including the current (County Commission).”

The award, called “Celebration of Service,” was announced Sept. 25 at the 99th annual conference of the association, which **Coffey** did not attend, county spokesman Carl Laundrie said. **Coffey** was hired by the Flagler County Commission in December 2007, after serving as county administrator in DeSoto County, Laundrie said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Craig Coffey
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Daytona Beach News-Journal (FL)
May 26, 2013

Palm Coast threatens to sue county over impact fees

Author: Tony Holt

Palm Coast officials want impact fee money from Flagler County they feel the city is entitled to and they're tired of waiting so much so that the mayor has threatened legal action. A road in Palm Coast needs extending, so the money needs to start rolling in soon, Mayor Jon Netts said. He and his fellow council members voiced their displeasure about the situation during a May 21 council meeting. Vice Mayor Bill McGuire said he thought the county was in breach of contract. Netts asked aloud, How long can they sit on our money?

Later during the meeting, Netts turned to City Attorney William Reischmann and asked whether the city could take legal action against the county. You have an agreement with the county, said Reischmann. Like any other contract, its subject to enforcement. But Flagler County officials say they're not dragging their feet or spitefully withholding \$3.5 million in impacts fees from Palm Coast. Their ongoing response is that the county is not contractually bound to fork over the money, so the City Council and city staff need to be patient and appreciate what they are getting.

County officials say there is a valid reason for the wait and the fault lies with the city. Palm Coast was too slow in acquiring land needed for its Palm Harbor Parkway extension project, said Flagler County Administrator **Craig Coffey**. Because the city took so long 18 months to acquire the land, the county found itself bogged down with various other capital improvement projects, **Coffey** said in an interview last week. Drafting a new agreement takes time and that's why the money isn't coming as fast as the city wants, he said.

The rhetoric coming from the City Council, including threats of a lawsuit, is only harming relations between the two governments, **Coffey** said. The threats have been getting bigger and bigger on this issue, said **Coffey**. They can take legal action if they want, but they might not see a dime of their money. That action will not be well received by our board. Both **Coffey** and Flagler County Commission Chairman Nate McLaughlin said the county uses impact fee revenues to pay for its own road projects and whatever is left over will be distributed accordingly.

That money is county transportation impact fee money, **Coffey** said. The county does not have to give it to the city of Palm Coast. The city, however, has a vastly different take. Council members said the county was in violation of a long-standing interlocal agreement.

Palm Coast sets aside millions of dollars for its own street improvements, but that money is to be spent on projects all over the city, Netts said. If the city has to dip into that pot and spend the money on road improvements that are linked to the county's Interstate 95 interchange construction, it would be unfair to the city's residents, he said. If the alternative is (using) our street-improvement dollars, then I'm forced to think about (legal action), said Netts. •

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Craig Coffey
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

A MATTER OF PERSPECTIVE

Palm Coast became an incorporated city in 1999. The county had decided an Interstate 95 interchange needed to be constructed at Matanzas Woods Parkway, a county road that now runs through the city. A high school has since been built along Matanzas Woods Parkway, and city residents along nearby Forest Grove Drive have voiced their concerns about additional traffic coming off the interstate and disrupting traffic in their neighborhood.

The city is extending two roads — Palm Harbor Parkway and Old Kings Road — and connecting them to Matanzas Woods Parkway. Doing so, city officials have said, would divert traffic away from the high school and Forest Grove. Most of the impact fee money would be spent on the Palm Harbor project and a small portion would be used for floodplain mitigation along the extended portion of Old Kings, according to the city.

Coffey said impact fee money will be paid in three increments. The first \$1.5 million will probably be distributed to the city by the end of June. In another six months, another \$1.5 million will be paid. The last \$500,000 will be paid to the city after the Old Kings extension is completed, he said. "We're trying to get it to them as quickly as we can," **Coffey** said of the first installment. One source of contention for Netts is that the county used a portion of its impact fee money to pay for the design of the Matanzas Woods interchange. So the \$3.5 million the county intends to give to the city could have been a larger amount, he said.

In the original interlocal agreement, dated Sept. 29, 2000, the city was authorized to collect all transportation facilities impact fees for new construction within the city limits and hand over the fees to the county on a quarterly basis. The city would be compensated with a service fee of 3 percent of the gross fees collected. Also stated in the agreement is the county's option to "expect local Transportation Facility Impact Fee funds on State arterial roads located in the CITY" whenever funds from the Florida Department of Transportation are not available.

The agreement also included a list of roads within, or partly within, the city's limits that are eligible for improvements using transportation impact fees. Both Old Kings Road and Palm Harbor Parkway are on the list.

In May 2012, the City Council and the County Commission met in a joint workshop that **Coffey** described as "contentious." At the time, Netts insisted the impact fee money belonged to the city. The county chairman, McLaughlin, called Netts' comments "disingenuous." An agreement wasn't reached last year between the two governing boards. McLaughlin said last week that the city's threats of legal action are probably a negotiating strategy.

McLaughlin, who lives in Palm Coast, said the county recently distributed \$12 million of FDOT funds to the city for other road improvements, so the county has no history of holding back when it comes to doling out money for city road projects. "They are welcome to this (impact fee) money when we're done with it," McLaughlin said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Craig Coffey
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Palm Coast Observer, The (FL)
April 11, 2012

County faces deficit

County expenses are estimated to increase \$3.3 million this fiscal year.

Author: Mike Cavaliere

County Administrator **Craig Coffey** hosted a 2012-2013 budget overview Monday morning, April 9, and he started by outlining Flagler's financial challenges in the coming year. Since 2007, local taxable property value has decreased 46%, he said, from about \$12.2 billion to about \$6.6 billion last year. This has led to lost revenues, he added, explaining that in 2007, Flagler collected about \$48 million in property tax and, in 2011, it collected about \$40.3 million. This year, **Coffey** anticipates another \$1.5 million less collected. Also listed as challenges to this year's county budget are increased fuel costs (an increase of 5 cents per gallon would equate to a \$250,000 increase for the year); a 5% millage reduction, totaling a \$2 million loss; Florida Power & Light's projected increases of \$50,000; estimated Medicaid increases of \$250,000; and possible employee cost-of-living adjustments totaling \$750,000.

Coffey's total estimated challenges combine to an extra \$3.3 million the county could have to fund over last year's budget. But operations are more efficient, he said. "We've privatized some stuff," he told the board. "We've replaced landscaping crews." Since 2007, 65 county positions have also been eliminated. And to save gas money, more vans and fewer buses have been used for public transportation. "We've also been focusing a lot on electricity," he said. "But I think the fuel side will be another frontier that we (can work on)." Clarifying that, in his projections, he overestimated shortfalls and underestimated revenues in an effort to be conservative, **Coffey** also cited future concerns, like the potential passing of Amendment 4, which would prohibit increases in the assessed value of homestead property and could cost the county \$1.1 million.

Other valuation reductions were also mentioned, totaling \$500,000, as were operational costs and a jail/Sheriff's office expansion totaling \$3 million, equipment replacements and changes to health insurance and laws. "You'll either have to drastically cut services, or you'll have to raise taxes," he told the board, assuming that Amendment 4 passes the Florida Legislature. "There are no free lunches."

On the positive side of the balance sheet, **Coffey** cited budgetary assistance funds totaling \$1.2 million, for jail planning, reductions to the retirement rate and in fire grants. As for closing the gap between revenues and expenses, "We're faced with the same choices we are every year," **Coffey** said. The board could decide to spend its reserves, it could initiate electric franchise fees, further reduce services, staff, equipment and capital projects, or raise millage. This week alone, **Coffey** told the board, he has 15 to 20 budget meetings to attend. All departments' budgets were turned in March 27. The next budget workshop with the Flagler County Board of County Commissioners is scheduled for May 24, with two follow-up sessions in June, which are planned to cover the entire general fund and most other departments.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Craig Coffey**

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Palm Coast Observer, The (FL)
August 11, 2011

**Flight Operations Sees 11% Spike
Due To Greater Medical Capacities And An Extra Part-Time Employee, Flagler County
Flight Operations Anticipates Increased Revenue And A 10.94% Larger Budget, For The
2011-2012 Fiscal Year, According To County Administrator Craig Coffey.**

Author: Mike Cavaliere

Flagler County's Fire Flight helicopter, the emergency services rig, will be more expensive to operate in the 2011-2012 fiscal year, but it will also bring in more revenue and offer wider service options, according to County Administrator **Craig Coffey**, at the Aug. 8 budget session. "We're anticipating more revenue," **Coffey** said. His projections are due to newly installed medical equipment in the chopper, which will allow for a larger service range, as well as an additional part-time pilot, which will expand the helicopters' hours of availability. "The part-time employee will bring stability," he said.

"We can (now) transport seriously ill patients to different hospitals," added Don Petito, fire chief. He cited a recent incident in which crews were able to relocate a patient in critical condition to a hospital in Miami, which Flagler hasn't been able to do in the past. The anticipated revenue increase is projected at \$44,971. "That's going to lessen the burden on the general fund," **Coffey** said. But more staff and better equipment has its price.

Project flight expenses took a jump from last year's \$293,505 budget, to \$353,894. Most increases came from \$35,500 for the additional pilot, \$24,252 in fuel costs and \$16,900 for maintenance. The price of property casualty insurance is slated to drop \$25,890, due to a lack of incidents. In total, the flight operations budget will see a \$55,029, or 10.94%, increase.

Flagler County Airport

Several alterations and additions are scheduled for the Flagler County Airport in the coming budget year, including airtraffic-control tower extension, runway extension and relocation, master-plan update, construction of T-hangers and partial construction of a south entrance road. An extended water line (\$104,695) is planned for the control tower, which will create a looped system through Belle Terre.

The master plan update (\$200,000) will include aviation activity forecasts with actual air-traffic data, re-evaluation of development of north/southeast flight lines, incorporation of environmental data and updated airspace development. Runway compliance renovations (\$219,750) and design/permitting of runway relocation and extension (\$630,000) will have no operating impact and will allow for additional federal funding.

The partial construction of the new south entrance road (\$1 million) will be paid for half by the state and half with economic development dollars. Additional costs are estimated at more than \$3

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Craig Coffey

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

million. T-hanger construction, and associated ramp and taxilane (\$1 million), will be funded primarily through the state, and is expected to increase annual airport revenue by \$64,800. Most airport projects will be paid for with grants.

Debt service update

From an initial \$3.7 million loan, issued in 2002 to refund a 1991 special assessment revenue bond for extensions and improvements to Colbert Lane, the county is down to under \$1 million left to pay off. In the 2011-2012 fiscal year, \$358,362 will be put toward the loan. The final maturity date is scheduled for July 1, 2014.

A \$6.7 million limited general obligation bond was issued to the county in 2005 for the acquisition of environmentally sensitive lands. This coming budget year, \$670,894 will put toward the loan. Its final maturity date is scheduled for July 1, 2017.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Craig Coffey**

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Palm Coast Observer, The (FL)
January 13, 2011

**Economic Development Clearing The Hurdles
County Administrator Craig Coffey's plan includes increasing Enterprise Flagler's role
and funding incentives.**

Author: Andrew O'Brien

Palm Coast has its plan; County Commissioner Milissa Holland unveiled her plan; and now the county has its own plan for economic development. County Administrator **Craig Coffey** said Jan. 5, in a workshop with the County Commission, that the county faces four hurdles to economic development. The four hurdles are 1) lack of marketing efforts, 2) financing difficulties, 3) cost of land and 4) the time it takes to locate to Flagler County.

Here are **Coffey's** three interwoven strategies to help solve those problems: Solution 1: Marketing **Coffey** said the county needs to hire a professional marketing firm to develop a cohesive, sustained program to market the county. "I'm smart enough to know that we aren't marketing and have no outside presence," **Coffey** explained at the Jan. 5 workshop. Some of **Coffey's** ideas for marketing strategies are identifying the county's assets and then exploiting them.

As an example, **Coffey** explains how the county produces potatoes; however, there is no plant to produce potato chips. Though **Coffey** realizes that might not be the answer, it could be something similar. Years ago, **Coffey** said, the county focused on bringing in a sub-supplier in conjunction with Sea Ray Boats. Because Sea Ray's plant produces boats here, the county attempted to bring in a cloth manufacturer for the boats.

Coffey explains in his plan: "The sub-suppliers typically have a location that relates to raw material, cheap labor or the market locations for their products. With the limited manufacturers we have, there may be a few potential companies that might be candidates for relocation."

Solution 2: Organization, according to **Coffey**, will be a key component to economic development, and that's where Enterprise Flagler comes in. **Coffey** details in his plan the obstacles Enterprise Flagler has had to overcome during the past three years, saying that if the county is serious about economic development, "You have to be serious about hiring professional staff."

In an interview following the workshop, **Coffey** explained the difficulties Enterprise Flagler has had to endure, including budget cuts. In the past three years, the public/private organization's funding went from \$155,000 to about \$125,000 and now is around \$93,000. Additionally, the staff went from three persons to two. "We've lowered funding and cut personnel and asked them to create jobs," **Coffey** said. "In the worst economic times, we've cut the resources they've had available to them, but (we) expect miracles out of them."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Craig Coffey***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Also at the workshop, Holland cited a survey saying there are Enterprise Flagler board members, as well as members of the public, who don't know what the organization does. Holland said that situation needs to be addressed. Later in the workshop, she said she doesn't think it's fair to make job creation the sole responsibility of Enterprise Flagler. "Not only has economic development not been funded adequately, but we haven't given any clear direction," Holland said.

Solution 3: Incentives **Coffey** said incentives are a necessity if the county wants to compete when vying for companies to locate here. "It's leveling the playing field," **Coffey** said. "If you're lacking in an area, you can make up for that (in incentives)." The county will have about \$900,000 left in incentive monies after this year, **Coffey** said at the workshop, adding that it's not a renewable resource, and it can evaporate quickly. He pointed out that the county's quality of life might be second-to-none in Northeast Florida or the entire state, and if it can meet the business needs of a company through incentives, he can win that battle.

Coffey also supports a model to help small businesses in the early stages of their development, through incubators. "These incubators will typically not be manufacturing and assembly, but will be more office space orientated," the plan states. "These startups/relocations may need high-speed Internet, a shared receptionist, business counseling and assistance. The program structure for an incubator is to allow for short stays transitioning into a permanent location."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Craig Coffey
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Daytona Beach News-Journal (FL)
June 9, 2010

Coffey receives one-year extension
Leaders reject original proposal of 3 years
Author: FRANK FERNANDEZ

BUNNELL - Flagler County Administrator **Craig Coffey** got a reprieve from the ax and a one-year contract renewal from a divided County Commission on Monday, including some critical comments about his performance. **Coffey** had asked for a three-year contract extension plus one year of severance pay. But **Coffey's** administrative abilities were hit with a barrage of criticism led by Commissioner Milissa Holland and Vice Chairman Bob Abbott.

Coffey, who is paid \$141,398.40 annually, said he would be willing to accept a one-year extension of his contract and six months of severance pay. That was too much for Holland and Abbott, who voted against **Coffey's** offer. But County Commission Chairman George Hanns and commissioners Barbara Revels and Alan Peterson approved the proposal. Earlier in the meeting the vote was reversed. Abbott made a motion not to renew **Coffey's** contract at all and Holland seconded it. But Hanns, Revels and Peterson voted against the motion.

Coffey said he would work to repair relationships. "Today wasn't a fun process but it gives me some items I can continue to work on and I'll try to rebuild with those commissioners," **Coffey** said after the meeting. "My main focus, as theirs, is Flagler County and that's what we are here about. We operate in the sunshine and unfortunately this played out today. Tomorrow is a new day and you pick up and you move on and you continue to move on for the betterment of Flagler County."

Coffey said he would have, of course, preferred the longer extension. "I'd love to have a three-year renewal similar to the county attorney, but maybe they have more issues with me and I'm in the hot seat all the time . . . and it is what it is. We'll try to the best we can and win them back over," he said. The one-year extension begins Dec. 4.

Holland said she was disappointed by the one-year extension, but she added **Coffey** got the message. "I don't think there was as much of a resounding 'great job Mr. **Coffey**,'" Holland said. "I think it was more we understand there are serious issues, we understand that he has not fulfilled parts of his job. And perhaps, as Chairman Hanns indicated, this will put him on notice and might be an opportunity for us to move forward and that's all I ever cared about. That's what I will continue to fight for. In these very, very tough challenging economic times, we need someone with executive leadership that is going to continue to work really hard with the commission and also understand his role and understand the commission's role."

Holland's opposition of **Coffey** dates back to before he was county administrator. Holland opposed **Coffey's** hiring in November 2007 when she tried to convince Hanns, Abbott and then-

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Craig Coffey

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Commissioner Jim Darby not to approve his hiring. At the time, Holland was joined in her opposition by then-Commissioner Jim O'Connell.

Holland also opposed extending **Coffey's** severance package in 2008 from three months to six months. She lost on that as well. Holland said during the Monday meeting that she felt **Coffey** is unprofessional and aggressive in the way he communicates to some. Holland added that **Coffey** had been disrespectful in suggesting to dissolve a committee looking into the future of the old courthouse without checking with committee members. Holland blasted **Coffey** at a recent workshop dealing with the old courthouse. She criticized how **Coffey** handled a Ginn project that was rejected by county leaders and Ginn is now appealing to the state. She also criticized his handling of drainage issues at Marineland Acres.

Revels said county government has been shrinking and now is not the time to give **Coffey** the boot, particularly in a volatile election year. She said that as an employer she sometimes feels that if she does not get the desired results from employees it may be because she didn't give good directions. Peterson said **Coffey's** contract should be renewed for one year to see if improvements show.

Hanns, meanwhile, defended **Coffey's** performance. "I believe Mr. **Coffey** has done a very good job," Hanns said. "I believe the County Commission has done a good job." Hanns added he didn't want the county to become known as a bad place to be for future county administrator applicants looking for a job. "And they think Flagler County, hmmm, longevity is not too good over there. It's kind of like being the manager for the Chicago Cubs," Hanns said.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Craig Coffey**

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Daytona Beach News-Journal (FL)
August 29, 2009

**Officials look at generating revenue
Electric franchise fee would bring in nearly \$1.2 million**
Author: KARI COBHAM

BUNNELL - Flagler County officials are considering an electric franchise fee that could add up to \$6 to the monthly bills of unincorporated county residents. County Administrator **Craig Coffey** said it's just another revenue source possibility. "As you know we not only have looked at cost-cutting measures, we looked at what other alternative revenue sources are out there," **Coffey** said at Tuesday's County Commission budget workshop. Under the proposed 30-year contract, the county would get a cut of the electric company's total bill receipts while guaranteeing that the government wouldn't go into electricity distribution. The non-exclusive agreement would apply to any electric company serving the county's unincorporated areas - in this case it's Florida Power & Light. "It's a fairly steady stream of revenue coming in," said FPL spokesman Bob Coleman. A 6 percent portion for the county would cost residents \$6 monthly and is predicted to bring in just under \$1.2 million annually, based on \$19.6 million in revenues received by FPL over a 12-month period prior to July. Beverly Beach, Flagler Beach and Marineland currently collect 5.9 percent franchise fees and FPL is in discussion with Bunnell, Coleman said.

Volusia County and Palm Coast do not have franchise fees. **Coffey** said revenues from the fee could be spent on canal upkeep, road and resurfacing projects as well as maintaining service levels in the planning and public works departments. "I can't do it without money and my options are limited," **Coffey** said. "I've got to raise that revenue from a variety of sources." The fee is considered regressive because it doesn't recognize a customer's inability to pay - a condition that commissioners Barbara Revels, Alan Peterson and George Hanns balked at. "I just hate for it to be on somebody's electric bill that's having difficulty paying it already," Revels said. "It's a nice revenue source if it was coming from FPL directly, but if it's passed down through the consumers, we're not helping our own people," Hanns said. Peterson also disagreed with the lack of an opt-out date in a binding contract that covers three decades. Coleman contended that, of the 54 power companies in the state, FPL had the lowest rates at \$107 per 1,000 kilowatts of usage. FPL has requested from state leaders a \$1.2 billion in base-rate increases by 2011 to help fund improvements in the power system and have said a drop in fuel costs for power plants will offset the increase.

Also an alternative fuel source under consideration is a 1 to 5 cent local option fuel tax on every net gallon of motor fuel in the county. "People think we make more money when the price of gas goes up, that's not true," **Coffey** said. "We make it based on the per gallon." County governments can levy up to 12 cents of taxes, including 1 cent on every net gallon of motor and diesel fuel sold and 1 to 6 cents on every net gallon of motor and diesel fuel sold for transportation spending. The county has used those taxes for culvert replacements, maintenance and bridge replacement, **Coffey** said. Diesel fuel is not included in the proposed fuel tax, which must fund capital improvements under the county's adopted comprehensive plan, and would not affect

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Craig Coffey
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

shippers and government agencies, **Coffey** said. "I think this gives us a good opportunity to get our house in order and look toward the future, and certainly next year going in and maybe having more alternatives, not just based on growth but perhaps long-term stability," said Chairwoman Milissa Holland.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Craig Coffey***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Daytona Beach News-Journal (FL)

July 15, 2009

Flagler County lays off emergency director

Author: HEATHER SCOFIELD

BUNNELL - After next week, Flagler County will be operating without its emergency services director. Nate McCollum is one of eight county staffers laid off, so far, this year. Since the economic downturn began, Flagler County has fired 42 staffers and cut an additional 19 jobs through attrition. McCollum's July 24 departure will shave his \$97,572 annual salary from the county's budget next year. "It was a tough call but one that will save the county a substantial amount of money while not significantly affecting services," said **Craig Coffey**, county administrator.

Before taking the emergency services post in Flagler County in 2006, McCollum worked as emergency management coordinator for Indian River County. It was during his eight years there that McCollum created "Tropical Update," a TV show to advise residents of landfall predictions and important emergency information when an oceanic storm was spinning near.

Despite the success that came from bringing the TV show concept with him to Flagler, expanding it to become a staple of the county's televised offerings, the county will now do without, he said. "(The show) is something that requires a special talent, somebody who's comfortable in front of the camera. It's hard to tell somebody they have to do it," McCollum said in a telephone interview Tuesday. In the future, "Tropical Update" will be done only as needed, he said.

Despite accepting the Flagler post, McCollum said he kept his house in Sebastian, where he served as mayor from 2004 to 2006, and only rented a home locally. He'll soon return to his old digs and begin a new job hunt - this time amid much tougher economic conditions. "It's a difficult market out there," McCollum said. "Flagler County is no different than any other county in Florida. There's a lot of reorganizing and restructuring going on."

Coffey said McCollum's duties will be divided between Troy Harper, the county's emergency management division chief, and Flagler County Fire Chief Don Petito. Flagler County spokesman Carl Laundrie said McCollum helped improve the county's post-disaster recovery operations and policies. His work made FEMA declarations, aid applications and recovery procedures routine for county officials and the recovery process much smoother. And the television program he created is one of several ways McCollum helped improve the flow of information to the public during an emergency, Laundrie said. "I always say an informed public is a calm public," McCollum said.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Craig Coffey**

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Daytona Beach News-Journal (FL)
September 6, 2008

**Officials alter administrator's contract
Should he leave, severance pay would be six months**
Author: HEATHER SCOFIELD

BUNNELL - Flagler County Administrator **Craig Coffey** will be paid for six months if he ever departs from the county, commissioners decided Wednesday. **Coffey's** contract was amended to increase the terms of his severance pay from three to six months, should he leave. The change comes less than a year after the former DeSoto County manager accepted the job in Flagler County. Four of five county commissioners were on board with the change proposed at a commission meeting. But Commissioner Milissa Holland said the amendment was premature. "I would be more comfortable if the amendment was addressed on his (employment) anniversary," Holland said.

She'd like to see how **Coffey** fares in his formal annual evaluation that's expected to take place in a few months, Holland told fellow commissioners. But longtime County Commissioner James Darby said **Coffey** is "highly qualified" and has exceeded his expectations since **Coffey** was hired in November of last year. And since those manning the job of administrator in Flagler County have been notoriously subjected to "immediate dismissal" by commissioners, Darby said **Coffey's** performance thus far entitles him to receive the same severance package that past administrators and current County Attorney Al Hadeed has. "This is a standard (contract item) in these types of positions throughout the state," Darby said. "It's not a part of the evaluation process."

Commissioners James O'Connell, George Hanns and Bob Abbott agreed. O'Connell said it is an issue of equity for him. Hanns said the mid-year change was not unusual and he reminded fellow commissioners that they didn't have a problem with making changes to Hadeed's contract outside of his performance review earlier this year. Even Abbott, who said he and **Coffey** have had disagreements over the past several months about some issues, said he felt **Coffey** has earned the right to a fair severance package with the professionalism he's shown so far.

Commissioners also received a glowing e-mail Sept. 2 about **Coffey** from resident Cindy Walker. Walker, who's been critical of Flagler County officials in the past, said she has found **Coffey** to be prepared, professional and on top of the issues that affect county residents. She called his budget the best she'd seen in years, applauded his work with area cities, and said he has shown he has what it takes to "steer this county in the right direction." "If I have anything to do with it, (**Coffey**) will be here for quite some time," Hanns said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Craig Coffey**

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Daytona Beach News-Journal (FL)

June 4, 2008

Despite layoffs, county must buy new vehicles**Coffey: Aging equipment can't be ignored**

Author: HEATHER SCOFIELD

PALM COAST - Commissioners may have temporarily bandaged a gaping wound, but that can't continue. The commission's move to stop all replacement of vehicles and computer equipment last September might have saved a few programs and jobs from being cut in the short term, County Administrator **Craig Coffey** said. "But it's not sustainable long term," he said.

The loss of more than \$10 million to the general fund in two years was going to impact employees and taxpayers sooner or later. The losses are the result of state-mandated tax and budget cuts, falling home values and increasing fuel costs. "Everyone knows that gas increases affect families," **Coffey** said, "just imagine the cost associated with the fleet of buses, mowers and maintenance trucks (the county must keep fueled)."

And the situation doesn't look like it will be changing anytime soon, he said. "We're (adjusting) to a new equilibrium," **Coffey** said. And since equipment replacement needs have been ignored for a year, they have to be dealt with now, he said. "If you don't address (a problem), it gets worse," **Coffey** said, and at some point they'll be forced to deal with it, maybe last minute, one way or another.

He'd rather plan for it, he said. The last thing anyone wants is to have someone in need of medical care stuck in a broken-down ambulance, **Coffey** said. The county currently has four rescue vehicles with more than 100,000 miles on the odometer and one approaching 200,000 miles, **Petito** said. And according to **Coffey**, there are other types of county vehicles with more than 200,000 miles on them as well, he said. "We have to replace them," **Coffey** said.

All told there's approximately \$750,000 in rolling stock costs the county will face in the 2008-09 fiscal year, according to spokesman Carl **Laundrie**. And that figure doesn't include "big ticket rides" the county may need to replace like the helicopter, a fire engine or a bulldozer. Computer costs next year could run in the ballpark of \$150,000, **Laundrie** said. But both figures could change as commissioners get closer to adopting a budget, **Laundrie** added.

Layoffs, service reductions and increased or added fees are just a few of "a thousand little changes" that will be needed to make the numbers work next year, **Coffey** said. It was "tragic" to have to lay off county staff recently, he said. "But it would be more tragic to let down the (citizens of Flagler County) when they need us most," **Coffey** said. And there's at least one upside to getting a few new vehicles this year, **Coffey** said. The new rides will have better fuel economy than the old ones. So taxpayers could shell out slightly less cash to keep them full of gas.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Craig Coffey
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Daytona Beach News-Journal (FL)
April 22, 2008

Flagler will trim up to 40 jobs
Commission OKs severance packages
Author: HEATHER SCOFIELD

BUNNELL - Thirty to 40 Flagler County employees will be laid off in mid-May, the county administrator announced at a County Commission meeting Monday night. Commissioners approved the terms of severance packages that will be offered to them. More layoffs may come later in the year, according to **Craig Coffey**, county administrator. "This initial round is going out, but as we get closer and closer to the budget, we may have to make additional cuts," **Coffey** said after the meeting Monday night. Nine positions are currently frozen and will not likely be filled, **Coffey** said at the meeting. Including those, 30 to 40 positions will be cut next month. Employees affected will be told their fate in the days just before the May 19 commission meeting, he said. Some may already have some understanding of their future, **Coffey** acknowledged at the meeting. "It was never our intent for anything to leak out," **Coffey** told commissioners, but in the course of regular government business through the preparation of documents like meeting agendas and such, a few have ascertained the likelihood their positions will be eliminated. And those in supervisory roles at the county were instructed by **Coffey** not to lie if asked, he said. No formal list exists to date, **Coffey** said, and commissioners must give formal approval for layoffs of this nature under current policy. He asked them to vote the package "up or down" as a whole without adjusting the specifics when it comes before them. But several commissioners offered words of encouragement and support of **Coffey's** decisions in the matter Monday. And they requested staff bring a proposal to them at the next commission meeting that, if approved, would allow **Coffey** the authority to take action on the layoffs without their formal consent.

Each commissioner expressed feelings of disdain at the meeting in having to lay off employees. And doing so during an economic climate that will make it difficult, if not impossible, for many to find replacement jobs made the situation even worse, they said. "This particular item is a low point in my career," said 16-year veteran on the commission George Hanns. After some discussion about whether employees would be allowed to work another month after they've been notified before severance pay would kick in, commissioners gave a unanimous approval for a severance package. They opted to not keep employees on after their notification. Outgoing employees will get two months severance pay, four months health insurance and full reimbursement of unused paid time off. Those who've been employed by the county longer than three years will receive an additional week of pay and two weeks of health insurance for every three years of service or fraction of that above the initial three years. All will be eligible to apply for unemployment benefits. The county has lined up free classes on resume preparation, interview skills and financial counseling, according to Joe Mayor, the county's human resources director. And Hanns offered at the meeting to write a recommendation letter for any employee who needs one. Mayor said he's also working with area employers to give county employees the "first shot" at open positions.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Craig Coffey
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Daytona Beach News-Journal (FL)
January 9, 2008

Coffey questions courthouse budget
Author: LAUREN SONIS

BUNNELL - Flagler County officials want to know where millions of dollars went for the new courthouse and may call upon a state auditor to find out. Flagler County Administrator **Craig Coffey** submitted a six-page letter to Clerk of Court Gail Wadsworth during a Friday afternoon meeting, outlining his concerns.

In the memo, **Coffey** said he will ask county commissioners whether the county should ask the state to audit the clerk of court's office. "We're going to attempt to work it out with Gail," Flagler County spokesman Carl Laundrie said, adding that it's up to the commission to decide whether the state is brought in.

The problems could affect more than the clerk's office, **Coffey** said. Less money means other county projects will lose out, he said in a meeting with The News-Journal. "The money should have been there," **Coffey** said.

Wadsworth declined comment Friday on most specific points in the letter, saying she only had a chance to read the memo in spots and that she wanted time to dig into it and meet with her finance employees and the county's finance employees before commenting. "I know that all human beings interpret things differently," she said. Wadsworth did comment on questions surrounding \$7 million possibly being overspent, stating, "I don't think that's true."

While voters in 2004 supported a \$33 million bond issue for a new judicial complex, more money was requested, according to county records. In April, Philip Pulliam, then-director of finance of the clerk's office, asked for more than \$7 million. In that memo, Pulliam wrote that \$40,365,663 was allocated for the courthouse and asked for the balance.

Pulliam sent the memo to then-County Administrator Doug Wright. Wright's signature is at the bottom of the memo. And for the county, that expenditure poses a problem since approval from the county commissioners would be required for a \$7 million expense. The county administrator must get approval from the commission before spending more than \$25,000, Laundrie said. Pulliam has since been promoted to deputy clerk of court. He is battling cancer and no longer works from the office.

Neither Wright nor Pulliam returned phone calls Friday seeking comment for this story. **Coffey**, who has been on the job for about a month, said officials want a detailed explanation for this money spent - but all they received is the memo from Pulliam. The clerk's office acts as a "watchdog" over the county. The money that paid for the new courthouse is separate from the clerk's operating budget that covers things like wages. The bond that paid for the courthouse is

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Craig Coffey

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

part of a larger county construction fund. **Coffey** asked why the clerk's office rejected some invoices for county projects without giving a "sufficient" explanation.

Normally, if something's rejected, an employee shows there's a problem with the invoice or there's not enough money to pay the bill, Laundrie wrote in an e-mail.

The issue surfaced in e-mails in May and June. County employee Tammy Bong asked the clerk's Finance Director Jennifer Barker to explain why some county bills were not paid when there should have been money in an account to cover costs. Barker did not return a phone call Friday afternoon from The News-Journal.

In an e-mail, Barker wrote that Bong is not considering the costs of the new courthouse and attached the Pulliam memo about the \$7 million. She stated that Bong had earlier been given copies of bills that could not be paid because there wasn't enough money. Barker wrote that Bong was supposed to let the clerk's office know how to pay these bills, but Bong never responded.

Bong asked for a meeting to clarify what money should go to the courthouse. Barker wrote that her boss, Pulliam, doesn't see a need for a meeting. Laundrie said there were several other incidences where the county got no response at all to financial questions, including a written December request from county Finance Director Thomas Klinker.

Wadsworth said Friday that since the day she took office - she was elected in 2000 - her goal has been to encourage Flagler County government to work together as a team. She said all county officials had to do was pick up a phone and ask her to explain the concerns being raised. She said she's only received one memo, and she responded to it within about 30 minutes. Laundrie said Wadsworth was copied on numerous e-mails and was called by phone. Memos to the clerk's finance director, that are in the public record, were copied to Wadsworth.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Craig Coffey
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Daytona Beach News-Journal (FL)
December 29, 2007

New county administrator speaks out
From issues to family, Coffey reveals plans for 2008
Author: HEATHER SCOFIELD

With Flagler County facing big issues such as supplying drinking water to its residents and dealing with impending budget cuts, new County Administrator **Craig Coffey**, 41, has a great deal of work ahead of him in 2008.

Coffey, who started on Dec. 4, recently sat down for a candid conversation. Here are some of his thoughts.

Q: What challenges do you foresee you'll face in your new position?

I'll be working with the commissioners to try and develop where we're going, initially. And there's some challenges right out of the chute, for instance Bull Creek Fish Camp, some water issues.

The budget's going to be a huge thing. We'll have to start that process earlier and it's going to be a huge financial challenge.

Q: What opportunities do you see on the horizon for Flagler County?

There's all kinds of opportunities. Right now we have a period where growth is a little slower and we have an opportunity to plan and determine our own future - where we want to go and where we've been. It's wide open right now.

Q: What is your forecast of future consolidation of services in the county?

Flagler County will see some consolidation of services in the future. This is day five (on the job) and I don't know all of the issues involved, but I have heard of some opportunities and see some already, potentially.

Q: How do you plan to deal with possible cuts in January?

In a whole variety of ways. Consolidation of services may be a part of that. We're going to review from the bottom up, everything we do, and hopefully operate more efficiently - operate more like a business.

Q: Are you up-to-date on the potable water issues Flagler County will face in the future?

I'm just getting into the background of it and have attended some meetings. I know future supply, we're going to have to get creative in how we meet that demand.

In DeSoto County, we were involved in a four-county regional water authority. We were doing full basin studies, long-range planning, had just approved \$130 million in plant expansion and an offline reservoir. That got us through the next 15-20 years.

Did everything work perfect? No. Did we get to where we needed to? Yes.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Craig Coffey

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

These are issues Flagler County still has to face to move forward to solve the water problems. All the parties around the table from Flagler cities and neighboring counties are going to have to work together.

I've been through that process and I'll know some of the positives and pitfalls and will be able to incorporate that knowledge to make it work better for Flagler's future.

Q: What is your experience in dealing with community emergencies, like the wildfires that evacuated the entire county in 1998?

I've had experience in the aftermath of a devastating hurricane, Charlie, in DeSoto County. We had to rebuild all of the county facilities.

My background in the military and working as part of the military police has given me additional insight into emergency operations.

Q: How do you plan to deal with conflicts or disagreement among commissioners?

I'm going to try and do my best to build upon the things we have in common and workshop through the things we can't agree on. Hopefully we'll bring about a resolution to problems one way or another.

Q: How did it feel to come into your new job on a split vote?

I don't think that's a-typical. I didn't view it as a split vote. I think it's just part of the process. The reality is I'm here now and we're going to work together as a team and we'll make it work. We all have the same interest in mind - the citizens of Flagler County.

Q: How have your relationships with commissioners been so far, especially with those who voted against hiring you as Flagler County Administrator?

They've been great. Tomorrow I meet with Commissioner (Milissa) Holland and I've already been to several meetings with Commissioner O'Connell. He assured me that despite the vote, it's irrelevant and he's happy with the way things worked out based upon our meetings.

Q: Have you ever dealt with complaints of discrimination in the workplace?

I think when you're in my position, you will deal with that wherever you go. Yes. I have. You just got to not let it fester, don't ignore it and address it.

Q: What is your job description? Who do you really work for?

Obviously I work for the folks that sign my paycheck - the five commissioners. And they directly report to the citizens of Flagler County. I work for them and it's my job to figure out what they want to accomplish and to make that happen.

If they tell me where to go, I figure out how to get there in the best and most efficient way. I have to direct staff and be the captain of the ship that gets us there.

Q: Why did you, the highest paid Flagler County employee, request dependant healthcare premiums be paid by the county in your job contract?

I requested it because it was part of my contracts in my previous positions. I assumed this was an even more progressive county and it would be part of the package again.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Craig Coffey

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

There are other parts of my contract that are not common for the regular county employee as well. For instance, a car allowance and my severance package is different.

There are differences when you're trying to recruit a CEO. If you want to attract somebody, you might go over and above for the position of CEO.

Q: Why are you worth \$140,000?

That's a good question. If you want someone that's creative and has expertise and knowledge, you pay for that talent. You see that in the major leagues and in other industries.

You pay when it takes you where you want to go. And I think I have some talent and skills to bring to Flagler County to do a great job.

Q: What are the biggest skills you bring to the county?

I have a planning background. I have run nine different utilities; had experience with cemeteries, parks, public works, fire and rescue, police, just about every arena that Flagler County is facing issues in today.

I haven't built a jail, but I attended a seminar in Colorado this year. I'm hopefully going to be able to tell commissioners whether they should or shouldn't be in certain businesses.

Q: What's the highest number of employees you've ever managed before?

DeSoto County had 225 employees at one time while I was there.

Q: What interested you about Flagler County?

Flagler County has a lot of great assets. There's been tremendous growth, but there's a lot of beautiful environmental attributes here.

There are also progressive people here and commissioners seem to be heavily involved in groups. There was just a lot of things. I couldn't name just one or two.

Q: What do you see for Bull Creek Fish Camp's future?

I think that has yet to be determined. We're going to present some ideas to commissioners in the future.

It could involve kayaks, restaurants, canoes, campgrounds, but all that's to be analyzed. We're in the study mode.

Q: Will Bull Creek Fish Camp be a big tourist destination for Flagler County in the future?

It is a tourist destination now. I think that when the county brings something to the table, we'll make it an even greater tourist destination.

Q: What are your plans to attract more industry to Flagler County?

No plans chiseled in stone. I've been involved in economics in my last three positions. I need to learn what's being done here and provide help where I can.

Q: Do you think the new control tower coming in at the local airport will provide an economic boost to the area?

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Craig Coffey

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

I don't think it will bring tremendous economic benefit, but obviously it will enhance the airport and may open up some new doors that aren't open now.

Q: Is fostering relationships with officials in the Flagler cities important to you?

It's been discussed with me by multiple commissioners and if it's important to them, it's important to me. It's definitely a big priority anyway.

The reality is in today's government you work together. It's just part of smart government. It doesn't make sense to duplicate services unless there's a reason to.

We're already meeting on several big issues like water, public transportation and pre-permitting of industrial sites.

Q: Are you worried about how the long hours in your position might affect your family?

It comes with the territory. After 15 years, my wife has gotten used to it.

But when I get home, it's hard to think about county business as much as I'd like. My (three) kids don't care about commissioners or problems at work. They just care if they can get me into a headlock for a noogie.

Q: How did you get into this business?

It's been a progression. I worked my way up over the years. I'm coming up on 20 years in government service.

It started with planning and community interests then evolved into public works and utilities.

One thing led to another and I decided that the most positive impact I could have is to be in this position, working directly for the commission. I then build a team of staff that's progressive and I think I won't have to build as hard here.

Q: You had some first impressions of commissioners during the interview process. Specifically, you called Milissa Holland a "high maintenance" commissioner. Have those impressions stuck with you or have they changed?

That may have hurt me with her, and maybe the vote, but it wasn't meant as anything negative.

Commissioners get involved (in the process) at different levels-as little or as much as they want to be involved.

I just heard she gets involved in a lot of issues. She cares. I thought that was a positive thing.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Craig Coffey**

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Daytona Beach News-Journal (FL)
November 7, 2007

Coffey named county administrator

Author: HEATHER SCOFIELD

BUNNELL - Flagler County commissioners selected **Craig Coffey** as their top choice for county administrator Monday. Candidate Michael Wright will be offered the position in the event a contract agreement can't be reached with **Coffey**, commissioners decided. Over the weekend, the candidates toured Flagler County, met department heads, participated in individual interviews with county commissioners, met the public at a reception and participated in public interviews. Commissioner Milissa Holland invited The News-Journal to join her in the one-on-one interviews conducted Saturday. She asked finalists **Coffey**, Wright and John MacLean the same 18 questions.

Holland's interview questions ranged from the prospect's experience to conflict resolution. She also spent time questioning the men about issues she felt are at the forefront in Flagler County. "This is one of the most important positions in the county," Holland said. "I think we need someone knowledgeable in the issues."

But Holland said she didn't think **Coffey** was the best person for the job. Neither did Commissioner Jim O'Connell. They asked fellow Commissioners Bob Abbott, Jim Darby and George Hanns to reconsider their choice for administrator after the three selected **Coffey**, but to no avail. Hanns, Darby and Abbott said they believe **Coffey** will conduct daily business with a gentler hand than Holland and O'Connell's choice, Wright.

But O'Connell argued that Wright might "settle in" and stay in the Flagler area longer than **Coffey**. **Coffey** is younger and still rearing three elementary-school-age children. And Holland posed that Wright's ties to Tallahassee could help the county. But Abbott said **Coffey** would be less likely to "burn out" than Wright and reminded commissioners they've "burned out other people in this position." When interviewed by Holland on Saturday, **Coffey** told her he understood there could be conflicts with such differences among the commissioners. "There's going to be different ways I deal with different commissioners," **Coffey** said. "It's a balancing act - a tightrope." But **Coffey** said he believes it's the public he works for, not the commissioners. "And I don't come in with my own agenda of what I think Flagler should be or do," **Coffey** said.

Former County Administrator Doug Wright left the job July 20. He was hired for \$119,000 a year in February 2006 and was making \$122,570 when he resigned. He was paid \$78,000 a year in his previous position as the county's emergency services manager, a post for which he had been hired in July 2002.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Craig Coffey
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Desoto Sun

August 30, 2007

Coffey bows out gracefully

The always-professional county administrator says goodbye to DeSoto.

Author: JON F. SICA

ARCADIA -- **Craig Coffey** ended his time as DeSoto County administrator on his own terms Tuesday. **Coffey** submitted an open-ended letter of resignation to the DeSoto County Commission at the tail end of Tuesday night's three-hour meeting; leaving some county employees dismayed and Jerry Hill "embarrassed to be a commissioner."

Prominently citing "strained" relationships with some county commissioners in his letter of resignation, **Coffey** maintained his resignation is in the best interests of the county. "This will allow the board to get an administrator more in line with the direction it wants to go," **Coffey** said Tuesday. "I'm willing to work with the board and leave on professional terms." **Coffey** said he met with each commissioner individually, and with his family and county staff, before deciding to resign. **Coffey** told commissioners he could leave one of two ways and it was up to them to decide.

One: **Coffey** said he would be happy to stay on until Oct. 12 and help the county transition from one leader to the next.

Or two: If the commission so wished, **Coffey's** reign could end right there on the spot -- leaving the county leaderless.

Commissioner Jerry Hill motioned for option one, but it didn't carry. Commissioner Elton Langford's subsequent motion for option two of **Coffey's** exit plan -- which made **Coffey's** resignation effective immediately -- was carried 3-2, with commissioners Hill and Felton Garner dissenting.

County Public Works Director Bart Arrington was later appointed interim county administrator. One of Arrington's first acts was to schedule a public workshop for 2 p.m. Friday; county department heads will brief commissioners on the state of the county and try to form a game plan for its future direction.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Craig Coffey
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Charlotte Sun (Port Charlotte, FL)
July 14, 2007

DeSoto population to double over next 25 years

Author: JOHN LAWHORNE

The DeSoto County Commission held the first of two public workshops to review the county's proposed amended comprehensive plan.

DESOTO COUNTY -- DeSoto County Administrator **Craig Coffey** told the county commission this week that DeSoto County's population could double in size over the next 25 years. The proposed amended comprehensive growth plan is designed to get the county prepared for that growth, he said. The commission met Wednesday in a workshop session to review the county's progress with its proposed new comprehensive plan.

County development staff has made a 2005 population estimate for DeSoto County of 32,606. The population projection conducted by the county's consultants calls for a county population of 78,732 by the year 2030. This indicates a population increase of 46,126 over 25 years. "That's a lot of growth," **Coffey** noted. "It's more than doubling our size over 25 years." He said that the figures were not out of line for Florida. "We are projecting we will need 36,000 new units -- and those are housing units -- by 2030."

"I know we have to get ready for growth," Commissioner Ronald Neads said, "but why are we making such extravagant projections when we know we're pretty much in a lull in the real estate housing market in the state of Florida? It seems like we're making a long-range projection, when we need a short-range plan. Why don't we focus on short and long range plans and still come into compliance with the DCA's recommendations?" "We have to demonstrate that we can meet growth needs as projected," **Coffey** said. "Can we meet all the needs for 46,000 today? No. But we must demonstrate that we can over time."

DeSoto County Administrator **Craig Coffey**, County Planning Manager Jason Green and County Commissioner Elton Langford met in June with DCA officials in Tallahassee to present a new population analysis that significantly cut the county's proposed population density in the proposed plan by about 70 percent, which the DCA feels is more realistic.

The DCA has informed DeSoto County that it feels it is "premature" to place additional development on the west side of the Peace River, and that DeSoto County should now focus on planning for and encouraging development in areas of the county which are its traditional centers of urban development, such as Arcadia, or where there are existing or planned infrastructure and development pressures, such as U.S. 17 between Arcadia and Punta Gorda.

Commissioner Langford said Wednesday he felt that once the county agreed with the DCA that development west of the Peace River was premature and agreed to focus on the U.S. 17 corridor, the DCA would be prepared to declare the county's amended comprehensive plan in compliance.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Craig Coffey

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Coffey went over the state's latest objections, recommendations and comments report and indicated that the county has largely complied with the report's recommendations. He reviewed the changes in the county's future land-use map made over the past seven years. The color-coded map depicts the uses the present commission sees for the future of the county.

The 1985 Legislature passed Florida's Growth Management Act, which requires all of Florida's 67 counties and 410 municipalities to adopt and update local government comprehensive plans that guide future growth and development. When a local government amends its plan, the proposed plan is submitted to the department for a compliance review. The DCA determines whether or not it is in compliance with the state comprehensive plan. If the department finds the plan or amendment not in compliance, the local government must take remedial actions to bring the plan or amendment into compliance. The commission has scheduled a second workshop for Wednesday at 1 p.m. and will focus on the conservation elements of the proposed comprehensive plan.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Craig Coffey
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

North Port Sun (FL)
July 8, 2007

County Administrator Craig Coffey is doing good job

Author: Julienne Lampal

At a recent DeSoto County Commission meeting, an organizational chart of county positions was presented. At the very top of the chart were the citizens of the county. For those who may not realize it, the citizens are at the top of command and the rest follows in place for the other classifications. This means the commissioners are second in command to you and me as public representatives as far as any actions, decisions, etc. the county makes. This is something for all of us to ponder, and to realize that we do have the upper hand especially in the health, safety, and welfare of county citizens.

This is coming more so to light as the critical developments regarding County Administrator **Craig Coffey** continue almost on a day to day basis. **Craig Coffey**, by today's standards can be considered the Chief Executive Officer for DeSoto County. He is the one that makes the county tick. The assembly of the commissioners give him the right to act for the citizens of the county and in a most productive way to enhance the county in every respect.

His experience and education give him the integrity to be at the front on our behalf to have the best of interests. Recently, I noticed how the Administrator during his portion of updating county activities faced the commissioners eye to eye to provide the genuine aspect of having good rapport and the willingness to make sure there were no slights to anyone. This is an example of good communication and a genuine willingness to face all equally.

Since Mr. **Coffey** has become targeted, it is difficult for almost anyone to sit beside the commissioners let alone face them as the attempts are made to oust him. An ousting, as such, would drastically change the direction of DeSoto County to one of going backwards instead of forward. These are challenging times in general for folks everywhere, not just DeSoto County.

Budget cuts are in the air. Job cuts can happen. Cut backs in construction mean less money for county and more. It is up to the Administrator to carry the county through this time frame of good verses bad. It is not the best of time to create a change, but to seek stability and work together rather than to divide. An example is how long it took to select **Coffey**. It took over a year. Since **Coffey's** employment, one hardly ever saw him off on earned private time. His drive has been concentrating on county affairs.

Attempts have been made to divert his concentration to outside special interests and not necessarily in the best interest of all county residents. This is difficult especially when some of the people have been involved with generous contributions of property to the county. Other community people want what is best for their select area rather than consider the county functions as a whole rather than a series of parts.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Craig Coffey

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

However, it now appears that commissioners stand divided on their support of **Coffey**. One particular commissioner now has less time in office than **Coffey** has in the way of experience, and remains to be judged by the entire county as well as being in the basic learning process himself. Another commissioner has seemed unhappy from the very beginning and no matter what the Administrator does it is not going the right way. Hopefully, in the long haul he should be able to comprehend that the county can gain more from positive support of **Coffey's** actions than not.

The time is now for all of the citizens to realize who is really in charge. Attend the county commission meetings to see that for the salary Mr. **Coffey** receives, we are more than getting our money's worth.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Craig Coffey**

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

DeSoto Sun (Arcadia, FL)
June 23, 2007

Something to think about: A strategy for strife

Author: Larry Armbrust

On Tuesday, June 12, I walked into our weekly Rotary luncheon and sat beside **Craig Coffey**, our DeSoto County administrator. When I asked, in greeting him, "How are things going for you today, **Craig**?" his immediate reply was, "I guess you haven't ready today's paper yet, have you? I thought for a little while yesterday I was going to lose my job!" Having gotten to know **Craig** through Rotary Club, and regularly seeing favorable news stories about the job he has done in our county, I was shocked. My first order of business upon arriving home that afternoon was to grab the paper to find and read Jon Sica's story headlined, "**Coffey** gets roasted." In short, the article told how a motion had been made at the June 11 DeSoto County commissioners' meeting that called for **Craig's** immediate termination. Although the motion greatly surprised just about everyone at the meeting, it received a second. As the motion was discussed, the maker of the motion blamed **Coffey** for most of the county's problems. Yet, as a plethora of individuals spoke up to defend our county administrator's job performance, the original motion was withdrawn.

At the risk of ignoring the age-old adage not to mix religion and politics, I'd like to make a simple observation about the proceedings reported by our DeSoto Sun. While the Bible does not hide the fact that people will have disagreements and differences of opinion, it does give us good advice about how we are to handle those occasions. In Matthew 18:15-17, Jesus teaches that "If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector." Here, Jesus tells us how to respond when we're wronged, or even think we've been wronged by another within circles of family, friendship or business. Jesus said to first go to that individual privately to say how you feel about the things that are interfering with your relationship. If he refuses to hear you, then take two or three others with you in an effort to get to the bottom of the matter. I don't know if the maker of the motion to terminate Mr. **Coffey** went to him privately to talk about how his duties were carried out. Yet my experience in the ministry has taught me the wisdom of the strategy outlined by Jesus in Matthew 18. If the person to whom you go in an effort to make reconciliation doesn't hear you, there is a valid reason for taking two or three others with you as witnesses to your accusation. The hope, as I see it, is that as the two individuals who are at odds voice their differences, the witnesses can judge as to the truth of the charges. Then they may be able to offer a clearer perspective in making a determination as to whether or not the facts are really accurate. Only if your witnesses agree with the opinion of the one originally harmed is the matter then to be taken before the church. I believe Jesus' strategy voiced in Matthew 18 also will work in business and government. Any time we can save hurtful words and broken relationships we all win. I firmly believe that's something to think about! The Rev. Larry Armbrust is the pastor of Trinity United Methodist Church, 304 W. Oak St., Arcadia. To reach him, call 863-494-2543.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Craig Coffey**

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Charlotte Sun (Port Charlotte, FL)
June 18, 2007

Commissioners and Craig Coffey need to agree

OUR POSITION: We think the most recent attempt by the county commission to terminate County Administrator **Craig Coffey's** employment is unfortunate. We encourage the commission and **Coffey** to resolve the issues that almost caused his firing. County Administrator **Craig Coffey** was "roasted" at last weeks county commission meeting. However, it wasn't the "poking fun at him" type of roasting -- in this case, the sparks were flying as Commissioner Ronald Neads called for the termination of **Coffey's** employment. There was a lightning-quick second by Commissioner Elton Langford and before you could say "adios amigo", **Coffey** was on the "firing" line. This marks the second time Neads has advocated **Coffey's** departure. Former Commissioner Terry Welles, just months into **Coffey's** tenure, made a motion for the administrator to be fired. The second to the motion was Neads. The commission voted 3-2 to retain **Coffey**. In this most recent case, fortunately for **Coffey**, two recesses offered time for all to gather their thoughts. That was a good idea -- often decisions are made in the heat of the moment which are regretted later. Neads and **Coffey** took some time to have a quick pow-wow. It may have been the most meaningful meeting of the two in quite some time because when they returned Neads withdrew his motion. We really don't think Neads dislikes **Coffey** -- we think he is convinced that he is doing what is best for the county. Neads mentioned the "poor" ratings that **Coffey** received from three commissioners in his recent performance evaluation. Whether that is sign of things to come, we don't know.

We do know that there was no shortage of those who felt **Coffey** is doing a good job including Commissioners Jerry Hill and Felton Garner. They were joined by County Attorney Howard Holtzendorf, County engineer Bart Arrington, George Hernandez, director of animal services. Citizens also expressed their support lead by county activist Mo Brown. We think rancher Cary Mike Mercer got it right when he suggested that the Board and **Coffey** sit down, in private, and calmly and logically work on solving the issues. Of course, the meetings would have to be in public based on Florida's Sunshine Law. Neads is apparently not a fan of the Sunshine Law saying, "that damn Sunshine Law, a lot of problems could be solved in local government if it wasn't for that law." He may not like the law, but it is the law and he should live by it as a county commissioner.

We believe if the majority of the Board are unhappy with **Coffey's** performance that there should be a period of time allowed for **Coffey** to address their concerns -- that's only fair. Perhaps the county would be well served to have an Employee Attitude Survey conducted to determine how county employees feel about county administration. We do wonder, though, just how many more of these "firing" scenarios **Coffey** has to be subjected to before he decides to move on to other opportunities. In our opinion, he has done a decent job. With the many challenges facing our county, this is no time to be losing an administrator. Big challenges can often create disagreement -- we encourage the Board and **Coffey** to agree to disagree, and solve their issues. We know what we have in **Craig Coffey** -- that would not be the case with a new administrator.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Craig Coffey**

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

DeSoto Sun (Arcadia, FL)
June 12, 2007

Coffey gets roasted**Angry commissioner puts county administrator on the hot seat.**

Author: JON F. SICA

ARCADIA -- DeSoto County Administrator **Craig Coffey** narrowly escaped a vote that could have cost him his job Monday morning. Shocked silence answered DeSoto County Commissioner Ronald Neads' emergency motion for the immediate termination of **Coffey**, who Neads claimed is the source of most county problems. Two recesses were needed to give commissioners time to think; people raced from the board room, spreading news of events playing out downstairs -- county employees could even be seen getting emotional in the halls outside the board room. For about an hour Monday, the county held its breath as its top employee sat silently among his accusers and let his supporters answer the allegations against him. After almost a dozen county leaders stood up for the besieged administrator, an apparently penitent Neads withdrew his motion, following a secret powwow with **Coffey** behind closed doors during a 10-minute recess. The commission was divided as Neads began his power play against **Coffey**. He started by chastising **Coffey** for giving "doom and gloom" news about the county to the press.

In a recent memo, **Coffey** said the legislative property tax rollback could devastate county operations in the not-too-distant future. Neads said he did not think this needed to be public knowledge. Neads voiced more dissatisfaction and referenced the "poor" ratings **Coffey** received from three commissioners during a recent performance evaluation, "It seems like we got a lot of problems, and these problems are created by the administration," Neads said. Neads said his ignorance of county issues and inability to answer the public's questions is due to **Coffey's** failure to keep him constantly informed. "I don't need memos and piles of paper, all I need is a telephone call," Neads said. "I guess I'm throwing rocks at **Craig Coffey** because I'm still not satisfied with his performance." Neads was joined in his anti-**Coffey** motion by Elton Langford, who seconded Neads' motion. However, Neads was alone in voicing accusations. Beyond his second of the motion, Langford stayed silent.

Luckily for **Coffey**, there was no shortage of people ready to lend their voices in his defense. "This is the most stupidest and foolish move ever on a motion before this board," said Mo Brown, a long-time county activist. "Mr. **Coffey** has been dealt a raw hand coming into this county." Brown also said that no board member, past or present, would be remotely qualified to take **Coffey's** place. County Commissioner Jerry Hill said Neads' motion was not fair or just. "I'm very disappointed with this motion ... I am at a loss as to why it's made," said DeSoto County Commissioner Jerry Hill. "I'm very frustrated ... and Mr. **Coffey**, I apologize." Long-time DeSoto County Commissioner Felton Garner was likewise quick to **Coffey's** defense. "I think this board will be making the worst mistake this board has ever made by dismissing Mr. **Coffey** today," Garner said. "I think the ones in favor of this better sit back, think, and get their head(s) on straight."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Craig Coffey

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Refuting Neads' accusations, Garner said **Coffey** does a great job of keeping the board informed with his memo and letters. Garner said the board doesn't have any reason to fire **Coffey**. Neads interjected at this point to say he was only acting in the best interest of DeSoto County. "I could be wrong, but I'll admit it if I am," Neads said.

County Attorney Howard Holtzendorf said **Coffey** is the hardest-working, conscientious and able person he has ever seen. "You would be losing a great leader ... and you would be doing a great injustice to the county," Holtzendorf said.

County engineer Bart Arrington left a high-paying career in consulting to come work with **Coffey**. "You will not find a more dedicated, hard-working person than this man," Arrington said. "He creates a very healthy working environment and I don't see any staff dissension." His comments were echoed by George Hernandez, the county director of animal services.

Rancher Cary Mike Mercer took the podium and suggested commissioners solve their problems in private with calm, logical discussion. However, Florida Sunshine laws prevent that. Two or more members of the same board are not allowed to discuss anything coming before that board for action, according to Florida Attorney General Bill McCollum's Web site.

If board members want to meet and discuss county business, the public has the right to be present, minutes have to be taken, and the meeting must be announced well beforehand. Neads responded, "That damn Sunshine law, a lot of problems could be solved in local government if it wasn't for that law."

Local real estate mogul Eugene Turner Jr. took the podium next, not on any side, but just to say the problem between the county and the administrator has always been a lack of trust. After Turner's comments, Neads called a 10-minute recess. He then got up, tapped **Coffey** on the shoulder, and the pair went in the chambers behind the board room alone. The closed-door conversation was apparently fruitful -- Neads withdrew his motion when the meeting reconvened.

Neads said that he is willing to meet **Coffey** halfway on some issues and **Coffey** is willing to meet him halfway too. The meeting adjourned shortly after Neads withdrew his controversial motion. **Coffey** refused to answer any post-meeting questions from the Sun about Neads' actions.

"I guess I'm throwing rocks at **Craig Coffey** because I'm still not satisfied with his performance."

-- DeSoto County Commissioner Ronald Neads

"You would be losing a great leader ... and you would be doing a great injustice to the county."

-- County Attorney Howard Holtzendorf

"I'm very disappointed with this motion ... I am at a loss as to why it's made."

-- DeSoto County Commission Chairman Jerry Hill

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Craig Coffey
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

North Port Sun (FL)
December 2, 2006

Citizens group, Coffey should tone it down

There have been some sparks flying recently between the Concerned Citizens group, organized by Paul Hoover and DeSoto County Administrator **Craig Coffey**.

The citizens group was formed when property taxes for a number of real estate owners throughout the county went up drastically due to a huge increase in the value of property in DeSoto County. The group had a number of town hall meetings asking city, county and School Board officials questions about the large increase and how the money was going to be spent.

The group also was seeking a reduction in the millage rate for ad valorem taxes from the previously determined levels. After additional meetings and a packed County Commission chamber, the county agreed to reduce the millage to 7.0. This came after the city and School Board had reduced their millage rates.

Unhappy with that outcome Hoover, owner of the Arbor Banquet Hall, and his group has continued a quest to obtain additional tax relief. Hoover has been running advertising in the Sun and has also authored a number of columns that have appeared on this page. **Coffey** has likewise written several columns in response to Hoover. First Hoover responds -- then **Coffey** answers. OK, you get the picture, it's been a fairly steady tennis match of dialogue.

Unfortunately what has been a very good exchange of information with citizens questioning government has deteriorated into personalities, digs, slams and at times has bordered on personal attacks.

Enough, already. We think the conversation between concerned citizens and government is healthy, and we are happy to see it. We have even received some letters to the editor on the subject where some people have criticized **Coffey**. We'd like to see Hoover and **Coffey** stick to facts, as they have been doing, but without the slams and jabs at each other. We also think it would be a good idea if they could meet face to face.

Perhaps what some are forgetting is that the county has historically been running at a deficit and has been playing "catch up". We think the dialogue needs to continue, but the county needs some leeway -- there are big challenges ahead and there is limited time to deal with those challenges. We look forward to a calmer exchange of information between the citizens group and the county.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Craig Coffey
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

DeSoto Sun (Arcadia, FL)
October 21, 2006

Coffey's pay increase is well deserved

It was about three months into the tenure of DeSoto County Administrator **Craig Coffey** when at a County Commission meeting Commissioner Terry Welles motioned that the board terminate **Coffey's** employment -- Commissioner Ronald Neads seconded the motion.

For a moment you could have sliced the silence with a knife. Then Commissioners Jerry Hill, Delma Allen and Felton Garner countered by saying they were not interested in terminating **Coffey's** employment and the following vote was 3-2 against ending **Coffey's** duties.

That was then and this is now. At the last county commission meeting **Coffey** received a pay increase that now has his pay level at \$101,233. The vote was 4-1 for the pay increase with Commissioner Welles dissenting. We agree with the vote.

After what some may say was a shaky start, **Coffey** has continued to make a positive impact on our county government and the community in general. Faced with many different challenges he has persevered. This budget year has been especially challenging due to the number of meetings with the concerned citizens group regarding taxes as well as the number of public hearings on the same subject.

The job of a county administrator is not easy and you are never going to make everybody happy. The business of running county government is just that -- a business. It just happens to be a public business involving taxpayer dollars and having to deal with the many challenges and complications involved.

From where we sit **Coffey** seems to be comfortable in his role even with the difficulties recently -- challenges come with the territory. He appears to have good rapport with the department heads that report directly to him. **Coffey** seems to be a good fit for our county and we think the commissioners decision to increase his pay was a smart move. He and the commissioners appear to be more comfortable with each other probably because they have had more time interacting.

With the challenges facing DeSoto County in the future with growth being in the spotlight, we need a solid county administration and county government working with our commissioners as a team. We think that now that is what we have.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Craig Coffey
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

DeSoto Sun (Arcadia, FL)
October 12, 2006

County administrator gets pay hike

Author: JOHN LAWHORNE

Summary: County Administrator gets a raise after more than one year on the job.

DESOTO COUNTY -- "He has proven himself and I think he's worth as much as any other administrator we've had," DeSoto County Commission Chairman Jerry Hill said Tuesday, as the county commission prepared to vote a pay raise for County Administrator **Craig Coffey**. Commissioner Delma Allen had just proposed a 5 percent increase for **Coffey**. "He has a beautiful rapport with the people of our community," Allen said. He added that he would like to motion the board to declare an emergency and then motioned the board give **Coffey** a 5 percent increase in salary. "Whatever Roberts Rules requires," Allen said. Commissioner Felton Garner immediately seconded the motion. **Coffey** was hired by DeSoto County at an annual salary of \$90,000 on July 11, 2005, following an extended term by interim administrator June Fisher. Cost-of-living adjustments in 2005 and 2006 had brought his salary up to \$96,408. Allen noted that the 5 percent hike would be less than \$100,000. "And I'd like to note that our interim administrator (June Fisher) was making \$102,000 when Mr. **Coffey** came," he said. "This is in addition to the cost of living that we already gave?" asked Hill. "Yes," said Allen.

Commission Chairman Jerry Hill agreed with Allen. "I would like to agree with Mr. Allen that Mr. **Coffey** came on at a much lesser salary than we had been paying (previous administrators). He has certainly proved himself to this community and this board and he's very capable." Hill went on to say that there were "things that have happened that have not happened before in this community, that have been worked on for years -- I'm referring to the merger -- and the comprehensive plan and all the hours and time Mr. **Coffey** has put into that -- and he got all that going. He's just worked on one of the most difficult budgets that has ever been considered by this board and one with more controversy than any budget since I've been a commissioner, and he's done an outstanding job."

"You're exactly right," Hill told Allen. "He has a great rapport with the community. He has proven himself and I think he's worth as much as any other administrator we've had and this still won't put him at as much as we have paid, but it puts him back up to a number that is close to where it should be." When it came to a vote, the commission voted 4-1 to approve the pay hike. Commissioner Terry Welles cast the dissenting vote without comment. According to county human resources director Paul Erickson, the 5 percent pay hike awarded to **Coffey** would bring his salary up to \$101,233. In its fiscal year 2006-07 budget, the county commission awarded a 4 percent across-the-board pay raise for the commission's employees. **Coffey** said, "I would just like to say thank you to the board for the raise." You can e-mail John Lawhorne at jlawhorne@sun-herald.com.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Craig Coffey***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

DeSoto Sun (Arcadia, FL)

January 13, 2006

DeSoto's boom tests Coffey's planning résumé

Author: Brian Gleason

While Babcock Ranch gets a lot of attention, quiet little DeSoto County is poised to double in size in the coming decade. Catching up on the planning required to accommodate such growth is Job One for new County Administrator **Craig Coffey**. "We're right in the middle of redoing our comprehensive plan," said **Coffey**, who is a planner by training. "It's one plan after another." Charlotte County residents are familiar with the modest development taking place in the Lake Suzy area, just over the county line, but **Coffey** said that was just one of three major growth areas that could add more than 30,000 people to the county's current population of 34,892.

Projects in the southeastern part of DeSoto near U.S. 17 and State Road 31 could add between 20,000 and 25,000 people to the county, **Coffey** said. Developments along County Road 769 (Kings Highway) already are popping up, with more expected in coming years. Two projects already approved will add up to 4,000 people to the county. Even Arcadia is poised for growth, with upward of 12,000 new residents expected in and around the city, **Coffey** projected. The boom will require a rewrite not only of the local comprehensive plan, but of state and federal population projections. The state Legislature projected DeSoto County would have only 39,251 people by 2015, a 12.5-percent hike. If **Coffey's** estimate holds true, DeSoto's growth could be six times as strong.

The skyrocketing price of land is one factor in DeSoto's boom. Ranchers and citrus grove owners are finding it hard to resist offers ranging from \$20,000 an acre to \$70,000 an acre, **Coffey** said. The ongoing slump in the Florida citrus business is another part of the equation. Faced with meager profits or even losses from citrus operations, landowners know they can cash in on the land boom. Growth is forcing DeSoto to address issues its western neighbors have struggled with for years -- stormwater management, transportation, parks and preserves and utility expansion. "We've been so small we haven't tackled them yet," **Coffey** said. "They have a lot of expertise over there (in Charlotte County), and we look at them for some advice." The County Commission's thorny debate over expanding a water line to the new Wal-Mart distribution center of U.S. 17 is a harbinger of future decisions.

One decision commissioners don't seem to be wrestling with is an approaching vote to impose DeSoto's first impact fees. Even as Charlotte County is considering a 251 percent increase in residential impact fees, DeSoto is only months away from implementing its impact fees, which could be as high as \$11,000 per unit. DeSoto's fee schedule is based on the size of homes, so many new units will pay less than that, **Coffey** said. DeSoto's impact fee will include funding for schools. While impact fees won't differ much between the two counties, one planning tool Charlotte uses may actually benefit DeSoto: TDU or density transfers. With the option to simply hop across the county line, developers may eschew Charlotte for DeSoto, **Coffey** speculated. "Once they get along our border, it's harder for them to administer that," he said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Craig Coffey
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

DeSoto Sun (Arcadia, FL)
November 10, 2005

Bid to fire county administrator fails

Author: JOHN LAWHORNE

DESOTO COUNTY -- DeSoto County Administrator **Craig Coffey** Tuesday came close to losing his job after not quite four months on the job when two county commissioners voted to dismiss him. The action to fire **Coffey** came toward the end of the board's regular meeting when commissioners get to make comments on any county matter they deem appropriate.

When his turn came to comment, Commissioner Terry Welles asked the board to fire **Coffey**. Welles said his dissatisfaction with **Coffey** was due to many reasons. "I won't go into all of them," Welles said. "I'm dissatisfied with his performance and have been for quite some time. We have discussed it, I have talked with him about it, but it seems he's making no headway and I don't like where we're going and the way we're going there. And with that, I'll make a motion that we dismiss Mr. **Coffey** as DeSoto County administrator."

When no second to the motion was forthcoming, Board Chairman Ronald Neads was quick to react. He exercised his prerogative and passed the gavel to Vice-Chairman Jerry Hill. Neads then seconded Welles' motion. "I've also had conversations with Mr. **Coffey** about his performance as county administrator, to no avail," Neads said. "It seems like a lot of our key personnel are jumping ship. We've had a few instances where our key directors are going elsewhere. In my five years as commissioner, we have not had this problem, so I don't know what to credit it to. I guess I credit it to leadership. I think his (**Coffey**) heart is in the right place, and I think he's in the learning process, and I think some folks that are departing our county that are key players in the team concept maybe aren't giving him enough time. I don't know."

Commissioner Delma Allen wanted clarification from Welles. "Mr. **Coffey** is new and I don't know where it's coming from that he's not performing," Allen said. He said he thought **Coffey** was doing a good job. "I don't see where we can release him in this short a time and not give him a fair shake. You say he is not performing," Allen asked Welles and Neads. "What is it that he's not performed?"

Welles said he did not want to get into details. He said his decision was not personal. "Personally, I like the man," he said. "I don't like the way he operates, the way he works. In my eyes, he has failed to work with our heads of departments. He has micromanaged every department, made some decisions that were not prudent, were not even his to make, such as offering people jobs and offering them salaries that were not approved by this board. You just don't do that, you've got to follow the guidelines."

Welles said **Coffey** knew what the guidelines were but continued to go against them. He added that he did not regard **Coffey** as a team player. Commissioner Hill said he couldn't see the county terminating an administrator who had only been on the job four months. He noted that Deputy

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Craig Coffey

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Administrator June Fisher served as acting County Administrator for 10 months after Chisholm resigned.

"But she did not want the job, she did not elect to apply for it, and we hired Mr. **Coffey**. Mr. **Coffey** got here and he was ambitious, anxious, hyper, sometimes didn't keep both feet on the ground he was running so fast, and trying to accomplish too much. He made some mistakes. I think he was trying to do exactly what this commission told him we wanted to do. Do I think he's perfect? No, I don't. Has he made me happy every day? No, he hasn't. Do I think he'll make me happy from now till the day I die? No. But I think the man is a good man, I think his heart's in the right place. I think he wants the job. I think he intends to a good job for his family and DeSoto County."

Hill said he was not of the persuasion that the county should change administrators. "My mind tells me that Mr. **Coffey** has done a good job, my heart tells me that the right thing to do is stay with him." "I support Mr. **Coffey** all the way," said Commissioner Felton Garner. "He hasn't been on the job long enough to do the wrong I've heard you all speak about. He has tried to do us a good job and is doing us a good job. There are problems in the departments that need to be worked out. And I support him all the way. I'm not going to vote to get rid of him today. I'm going to stick with him."

Allen also supported **Coffey**. "I certainly appreciate what Mr. **Coffey** is doing for this county," he said. "He's out in the community working with people and he's been accepted in the community. And I think we've got a good man." The board then voted 3-2, with Hill, Allen and Garner voting against dismissing **Coffey**. "It was a difficult thing to go through today," **Coffey** said, later. "But it comes with the territory. In the big scope of life, this is just a knock on the head. I hope I can do better in the future for DeSoto County and its citizens."

Formerly city administrator of Hawarden, Iowa, **Coffey** was hired last June and began his tenure as administrator in July. He has a two-year contract with the county. It took the board 10 months to replace former administrator Jim Chisholm.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Craig Coffey**

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Charlotte Sun (Port Charlotte, FL)
July 16, 2005

Busy week for new DeSoto County administrator

Author: JOHN LAWHORNE

DESOTO COUNTY -- It has been a busy week for DeSoto County's new County Administrator **Craig Coffey**. With a county commission meeting, a FEMA public report event, a standing-room-only public hearing on a major county issue, a legislative town hall, and a contentious planning and zoning board meeting, plus a visit to a Peace River/Manasota Regional Water Authority meeting, he found himself right in the middle of all the major problem areas of DeSoto County.

Fortunately, **Coffey** had DeSoto County Interim County Administrator June Fisher to help smooth the transition between the former Chisholm administration and **Coffey's** new leadership. **Coffey** earned a Bachelor of Science in Land Use Analysis (Planning) Eastern Michigan University, in Ypsilanti, Michigan. He went on to earn a master's degree in public administration from the University of Central Florida in Orlando. **Coffey**, who is 39, and his wife Ginger have three children: Kenneth, 8; Carson, 4; and Connor, almost two years old, and they have moved into a house in Sunnybreeze in south county.

The **Coffeys** are not newcomers to Florida. "We've lived in Florida before," says **Craig**. Between 1988 and 1993, **Coffey** worked as a city planner for the City of Melbourne on the Florida east coast. "For Ginger, it's coming home. She grew up in Lithia, just south of Plant City."

From 1984 to 2003, **Coffey** served his country as a Captain in the Military Police, U. S. Army Reserves in the Tampa area. He served in a variety of positions including company commander, platoon leader, and battalion administrator. He served over eight months of active duty with the 82nd Airborne Division in Saudi Arabia and Iraq for Operation Desert Shield.

From 1993 to 1999, he was the director of planning and public works for the City of Mayfield, Kentucky where he had oversight and management duties of all city offices outside the police, fire, and city clerk offices. **Coffey** came to the DeSoto County position after having spent a little over five years as city administrator of Hawarden, Iowa, a small town with a population of about 2,600, in Sioux County, about 35 miles north of Sioux City.

Asked to compare the DeSoto County position to his job in Iowa, **Coffey** replied, "I think the scale is number one. Everything is on a much larger scale than in Hawarden." As Hawarden's administrator he supervised 30 people; as DeSoto County administrator, he will be in charge of 150 county workers. In Hawarden, he had to deal with a \$12 million budget. In DeSoto County, he will be working with an \$80 million budget. "My approach to management has to be different," he says.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Craig Coffey

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

His first week on the job brought home to **Coffey** the fact that DeSoto County is contending with some large-scale issues that will involve him. "The landfill is a major issue. We have water and sewer issues. We're going to have major housing issues." The final days of **Coffey's** predecessor, Jim Chisholm, found the board of commissioners frequently at odds with each other over a number of issues that seemed to stem from Chisholm's very active and often independent management style.

Coffey says he had been made aware of that contentious relationship and he has other plans. "My role is going to be a moderator's role. You can be out there, but you have to bring the board along with you." As for staff, "I want to empower those who can take the ball and run," he says. "Those who need oversight, I'll work with a little more." As for his first week on the job, "I'm going through a steep learning curve." And the in the weeks ahead? "I'll be trying to figure out what everybody does," he smiled.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Craig Coffey**

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Charlotte Sun (Port Charlotte, FL)
June 8, 2005

Craig Coffey new DeSoto County administrator

Author: JOHN LAWHORNE

DESOTO COUNTY -- DeSoto County commissioners has hired a new county administrator. By a final unanimous vote, the board made an offer of employment to **Craig Coffey**, currently the city administrator of Hawarden, Iowa. **Coffey** will take the position of full-time administrator, a position that has been vacant for 10 months following the resignation of former county administrator Jim Chisholm. The board had appointed County Development Director June Fisher, who was Chisholm's deputy administrator, to serve as interim county administrator until a new administrator could be hired. The board had narrowed the field of applicants from six to three Monday after a day of interviews. On Tuesday morning, the three remaining applicants engaged in a one-on-one interview with each of the commissioners. A special meeting of the board convened at 2 p.m. and the board discussed its final choice. Two votes were taken before Commissioner Terry Welles moved the board offer the position to **Coffey** by unanimous vote, which the board did. Edwin Smith, city manager of Chiefland, Fla., was the board's unanimous second choice in the event **Coffey** and the board could not agree on the conditions of employment. **Coffey** agreed to take the position at an annual salary of \$90,000. The board agreed to pay an as yet undetermined sum as moving expenses for **Coffey**. **Coffey** will take up his duties as DeSoto County administrator on July 11. "I owe a duty to the community that I'm coming from," **Coffey** told the board. "We have several projects in the works and I want to make sure I don't leave anybody stranded there and help them make the transition." The board indicated to **Coffey** that if he needed more time, he could have it. Under the employment contract, the county will pay the full cost of providing health and dental care for **Coffey** and his legal dependents. In the event **Coffey's** services under the agreement are terminated by the county during the time he is willing and able to perform the duties of county administrator, the county agreed to pay him a lump sum cash payment equivalent to three months salary as of the day of termination and all accumulated annual leave and one half of accumulated sick leave. **Coffey** earned a bachelor's degree in land use analysis and planning from Eastern Michigan University and a master's degree in public administration from the University of Central Florida (1992). Prior to becoming city administrator in Hawarden, **Coffey** served from 1993 to 1999 as director of planning and public works for the town of Mayfield, Ky. and from 1988 to 1993 as a city planner for Melbourne, Fla. "I look forward to a strong and prosperous future with the county," **Coffey** told the board. "I think there are a lot of positive things happening here in DeSoto County and I think it's going to be a win-win situation. I look forward to serving all of you and working with each and every one of you."

Research Compiled by: Cara Slade
Colin Baenziger & Associates