

City Manager's Self Assessment
September 2006 - December 2007

I. **Relationship with the City Commission**

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

In 2007, staff initiated a comprehensive on-line Capital Project Report. The CIP Report can be accessed through a prominent button on the City's home page and details the status of all major capital projects. Staff is currently upgrading the CIP Report to provide a summary report based upon a suggestion provided during the City Commission's December 2007 Strategic Planning Session.

Throughout the past year, staff has responded to the added challenge of ensuring that the City Commission was informed as the legislature considered numerous options to reduce local government revenues and reform the advalorem taxing system. At my direction, the Legislative and Grants Administrator provided regular updates on proposals under consideration by the legislature.

In December of 2005, the Commission identified goals and objectives for a two-year period. Under my direction, staff has aggressively implemented the goals and objectives of the Commission. A quarterly report describing progress in achieving the objectives has been provided to the Commission, and the FY 07/08 budget process was constructed around the priorities established in the adopted Strategic Plan. The November 2007 two-year summary

report on progress to accomplish the City Commission's goals and objectives shows that most objectives have been accomplished, or are substantially underway.

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

II. Relations with the Community

As your City Manager, I strive to be accessible to the organization and to the community. During the past year, I have attended and participated in community meetings, spoke before service organizations and neighborhood associations, and have personally met with a number of key business representatives within our community. Under my direction, staff attends and provides information to groups such as the Black on Black Crime Task Force, and an extensive list of service organizations and community groups. Within the past year, I have made presentations to the Black on Black Crime Task Force, Women for Wise Growth, the Campus/Community Relations Breakfast, the City Commission Property Tax Workshops, and the City Beautification Board. Through these and other visits and presentations, I am an advocate of the Commission's adopted policy.

A long term issue impacting Gainesville has been student intrusion into traditional single family neighborhoods. Through the combined efforts of Code Enforcement staff, the Police Department, the City Attorney's Office, and citizen advocates, the Commission has adopted policy direction to enhance our neighborhood preservation activities. The FY 07/08 budget included funding for additional code enforcement officers, and to further automate the process. Code enforcement actions have significantly increased after receiving additional resources. In 2007, the Code Enforcement Department opened 9,681 cases, restructured the Department work week to encompass evenings and Saturday hours, and implemented the Landlord Point System.

The City Commission's Capital Plan includes construction of an expanded fleet garage at the 39th Avenue Compound. The proposed expansion of the garage has fostered an extended

discussion of the impact of the Compound on the Stephen Foster Neighborhood. Throughout this discussion, City staff has remained professional and has gained a better understanding of the issues concerning the residents in the Stephen Foster Neighborhood. City staff and neighbors continue to work to identify solutions that will be cost effective to all citizens and will have the least long term impact on the Stephen Foster Neighborhood.

The City's television station, Cox Cable Channel 12, continues to improve. The Communication and Marketing Department's public announcement, Clean and Green's "Cut to the Curb" finished within the top three for the City-County Communications and Marketing Association's annual recognition awards.

To be successful at public outreach, the City must employ a number of tools to assist in getting out our message. The City Manager's Bi-weekly Report, Municipal Minutes, Letters to the Editor, the Annual Citizen's Report, and the Citizens' Academy are all vehicles that are used by the Commission and staff to help citizens understand the issues and services provided by City government. The Florida Public Relations Association awarded the 2006 Citizen's Report the Statewide Award of Distinction for Annual Reports. I am particularly pleased with the success of the most recent Citizens' Academy which provided 45 citizens with a behind the scenes look at their City government.

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

III. Fiscal Management

The City continues to maintain an excellent bond rating, and indicators such as millage, debt per capita, and employees per capita are stable or improving.

Through our centralized Administrative Services Department, the City monitors fiscal health, purchasing actions, human resources, risk reduction, and budgeting. For the eleventh year in a row, the City's FY 07 Budget and Comprehensive Annual Financial Report have received the Governmental Finance Officer's Association Distinguished Budget and Financial Reporting Awards. Only 2% of municipalities nationwide receive these recognitions.

Prior to preparation of the biannual budget, I requested guidance from the City Commission regarding anticipated expenditure levels. Achieving the Commission's objective of a no tax rate increase for fiscal year 07-08 required discipline and sacrifice. Within the FY 07-08 biannual budget, the Commission was able to achieve a millage rate reduction.

Preparation of the amended fiscal year 2008 budget proved to be one of the most challenging budgets in recent memory. Adoption by the Florida legislature of property tax reform statutes mandated that the City roll back the anticipated millage to 3% less than the adopted fiscal year 05 millage. The mandated roll back reflected a 13% reduction in the approved FY 08 anticipated revenue. Providing a recommended budget to the City Commission within these parameters required a comprehensive review of city revenues and expenditures. The budget recommended to the City Commission did not require the Commission to override the mandated millage caps and maintained all core services. Important elements of balancing the FY 08 budget included identifying organizational efficiencies which reduced expenditures by \$925,000, adopting new revenue sources such as the catch up provision of the Communication Services Tax and reducing expenditures. I am proud of the work of the City department directors and staff which identified strategies to reduce expenditures and enhance revenues while preserving core services.

The City Commission is provided quarterly reports on the financial status of the organization, including a detail of expenditures for each element of general government.

A crucial aspect of financial management of the organization is review of expenditure trends and implementation of strategies to reduce or control costs. The Risk Management Department has aggressively worked to reduce workers compensation costs and to bring

injured employees safely back to work in a timely manner. Workers Compensation expenditures have been reduced by 9% with a decrease in the time off of the job of 28%. These reductions have occurred through cooperative efforts between the City's wellness staff and Workers Compensation professionals.

From a long-term perspective, the availability of high quality jobs that pay more than the area average wage is crucial to the City's financial well being. During the last year, the City Commission adopted the Innovation Zone as a policy within the Comprehensive Plan and appointed an Innovation Campus Task Force. The City played an instrumental role in recruiting Day Jet and Eclipse Aviation to Gainesville, and assisted the Council for Economic Outreach to help a software gaming company to locate in the Commerce Building in the central business district.

All of the City's financial indicators confirm that the City of Gainesville general government is financially sound. The City Commission and staff face a changed future with property revenues capped and demands for increased services. I will continue to search for opportunities to increase efficiencies and to align expenditures with revenues.

IV. Organization Management

Transformation of the general government service providers into a high performing organization serves as an overarching administrative goal. During the past 16 months significant progress has been made aligning the organization structure and people to create a responsive, customer focused organization. Reorganization of the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs Department, and General Services Departments in 2006 paid dividends during preparation of the FY 08 budget. Directors of these two departments were able to use efficiencies resulting from the organization changes to reduce positions and costs without directly impacting individuals.

In 2007, the Community Development Department was restructured to better focus leadership and to ensure that our land planning and neighborhood improvement efforts are successful. The Department of Planning and Development Services provides a smaller more manageable grouping of interdependent departments. The new department focuses on quality land planning, implementation of planning decisions by responsive building permit review, and recognizes the linkage of economic development success with land planning and timely permit approvals.

Neighborhood improvement departments and functions were elevated to the City Manager's office with direct supervision of the code enforcement, neighborhood planning, housing, CRA, CDBG, and General Services functions by an Assistant City Manager. A functional group comprised of all of the former Community Development Department programs meets regularly to ensure communication and collaboration on important objectives.

Through a cooperative effort with the General Manager of Utilities, the organization development functions of GRU and general government human resources was combined within a consolidated Human Resources Department. Oversight of the combined department is provided by a team consisting of the City Manager, General Manager of Utilities, the Administrative Services Director and the GRU Finance Director. The combined department is having success integrating my transformation goals within general government and has unified human resources policies.

Strategic Planning is a pervasive theme throughout the City of Gainesville organization. Just as the City Commission adopted a two-year Strategic Plan, each City department conducts a Strategic Planning Session that involves key staff members who assist the departments as they transition the Commission's goals and objectives to departmental goals. The list of projects and objectives initiated and/or accomplished in the past 16 months is extensive. A few of the more significant accomplishments include:

- ❖ *Fully funding the Traffic Management System* - \$18,000,000 project, funding for this critical project will be derived from the 2005 bond issue, Alachua County, the Campus Development Agreement, and FDOT.
- ❖ *Purchase of land for Fire and Rescue Station 8* - Design of the station has begun and an engine for the station has been funded. Monies for employees of the station are planned in the FY 09 long term budget.
- ❖ *Implementing Gainesville Corporate University* - A cross departmental team of employees has worked for the past 12 months to develop integrated training programs that will provide continuous learning opportunities and foster a culture of high performance.
- ❖ *Aggressively worked to annex contiguous properties* - 4,145 acres of land have been annexed, or are in the process of annexation. The annexation of these properties creates the potential for enhanced economic health. Significant annexations include the Landmar parcel, Butler Plaza, Gain Industrial, Bear Archery, and the Town Homes at Westwood.
- ❖ *Web based interactive service availability* - Staff is implementing a plan to enhance citizen's ability to conduct business on the City's internet site. The first success occurred in September of 2006 with the initiation of an on-line parking ticket payment process. In FY 07, businesses are now able to renew occupational licenses on-line, and I envision the automation of the development review process and implementation of an on-line customer complaint tracking system in FY 08.
- ❖ *Violent Crime Task Force* - Institutionalized a rapid response task force within the Police Department with the mission of utilizing cross departmental resources to prevent crime, where possible, and to apprehend criminals as rapidly as possible through internal and external collaboration.
- ❖ *Homeless Services* - Developed and implemented a process to assist the City Commission to select a location for the one stop homeless services center. Implemented the *Give A Better Way Campaign*. Worked cooperatively with the City Attorney to revise the panhandling ordinance, and developed a legal and humane process to clear a large City owned parcel of unauthorized campers.
- ❖ *Raising Canes* - Through a cooperative effort with the Alachua County School Board, staff developed a program to provide general government assistance to improve the physical environment and student test scores of Gainesville High. At the request of the Principal,

City efforts have focused on providing mentors and proctors for student testing. A team of City employees also developed a landscaping plan for the school.

The past 16 months have been significant in the achievement and completion of a number of major capital improvements, projects include; completion of S.W. 2nd Ave, Depot Park bike trails, rebuild of the underpass at 8th Ave, installation of drainage pipes at Lincoln Estates, the Police Administration Annex, swimming pool improvements at MLK and Westside Park, installed playground equipment at Westside, Possum Creek, and Northside parks. The RTS Transfer Station was completed and is fully operational. In addition to these physical improvements, the fire station alerting system became operational in 2007.

V. Personnel Management

My vision for the workforce is of an organization that is professional, results-oriented, and focuses on providing a high return on investment to our taxpayers. A 2007 highlight in achieving this vision was the collaborative creation of a combined Human Resources Department. The Human Resources Director and her staff have begun to integrate my transformational goals into human resource policies, training courses through the new Gainesville Corporate University, and into every day decisions and departmental guidance.

Within the past 16 months a number of new, innovative, service-oriented employees have become part of the Gainesville organization. Restructuring of the Community Development Department provided the opportunity to promote Erik Bredfeldt as Planning and Development Services Director, and new Assistant City Managers Fred Murry and Paul Folkers were given significant responsibilities. Anthony Lyons has been a great addition to the Community Redevelopment Agency, and Sandra Barnard is providing the human resources leadership necessary to move our organization forward.

Achieving the City Commission's goals and objectives requires highly motivated employees. I emphasize the importance of getting the right person in the right position, two-way

communication, ethics, accountability, and teamwork. The City of Gainesville Organization continues to place a high priority on recruiting and retaining a diverse workforce and selecting the most qualified individuals to be part of our organization. In the fall of 2007, general government conducted its' first employee *Culture Survey* to solicit feedback from employees on our work environment and communication effectiveness.

To be accessible to our employees, each month I meet with employees within one of our major departments. These departmental meetings provide an opportunity for me to share information regarding City Commission priorities, to emphasize elements of the organization's vision, and to engage employees to share their concerns.

VI. Personal Qualities

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

VII. Relations to other Governments

Throughout much of the past two years, I led the staff team negotiating with the County to adopt a Transition of Services Agreement. A significant achievement of the past year was the adoption of the Transition Service Agreement (TSA) by the City and County Commissions. I am hopeful these policies will ultimately provide the basis for the successful expansion of the City boundaries and for expansion of our tax base. Soon after adoption of the TSA, staff began negotiating to identify orderly annexation of areas in the City's Urban Reserve.

To foster improved relationships with the County and other Alachua County cities, I meet monthly with the managers of the jurisdictions. Ongoing communication between City and

County staffs helped to foster development of a staff recommendation on allocation of gas tax revenues that resulted in the policy adoption of a gas tax interlocal agreement and adoption by the County of additional gas tax revenues.

Community Redevelopment Agency Executive Director

As Executive Director of the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA), I am pleased with the progress made on revitalizing the core of Gainesville. Four major projects are under construction, Jefferson at 2nd; University House; the Palms; and the Waldo Road Wal-Mart. The City Attorney and CRA staff worked long hours to finalize an agreement with the Hampton Inn that will result in a construction start date by the end of February 2008. Each of these projects will positively impact the redevelopment areas.

CRA staff and the City Attorney continue to work on the Southeast Gainesville Renaissance Initiative (SEGRI). The City of Gainesville closed on Kennedy Homes during 2007, and the project was quickly demolished. Wilson Miller and Associates completed a redevelopment plan for the SEGRI area and is assisting staff to identify developers to implement the plan.

The most troubling event of the past 16 months was a decision by the Florida Supreme Court, which may prohibit multi-year commitment of tax increment funds. Staff will continue to monitor the impact of the Strand decision and will modify our redevelopment programs in response to the final decision of the court.

VIII. City Powers and Duties

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

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

As your City Manager, I attest that the City of Gainesville government is well run and in compliance with State Statutes. Statutory reform of the property tax system and the potential passage of the property tax constitutional amendment have created a strain on service delivery. In the summer of 2007, the City was maintaining almost 100 vacant positions in anticipation of balancing the FY 08 budget. The combination of constrained revenue and increased costs and demand for quality services has helped to push the City staff to be more innovative, productive, and in some cases, to make decisions not to initiate some service upgrades. My commitment to the City Commission is to continuously improve my performance and the performance of the organization as we go through this transition in local government funding and service.