



# City of Gainesville

Office of the City Manager

## City Manager Memorandum No. 220030

To: The Honorable Mayor and City Commission

From: Cynthia W. Cuny, Interim City Manager

Date: May 4, 2022

Re: **6-Month Progress Update**

Since my first day as Interim City Manager for the City of Gainesville on November 15, 2021, I have focused on establishing a path forward that centers on delivering our services and building community more effectively and efficiently. In partnership with our dedicated community builders, we have made progress on many fronts in just six months, as detailed in this memorandum.

### I. ONE CITY

The following structural changes have occurred to support shared services and improve internal service delivery across Charters:

#### City-wide Leadership Team Collaboration:

- Established a weekly standing meeting with the GRU General Manager in order to increase communication, encourage relationship building, align decision-making and streamline service delivery city-wide.
- Gathered, for the first time in the development of the City's current strategic plan, all six charter officers to productively collaborate and discuss a path forward to collectively present to the City Commission.
- Invited by the Office of Equity & Inclusion to partner in a pilot program to operationalize equity using "results-based accountability" to determine programs and policies that advance equity, the General Government Budget Office will work with the Office of Equity & Inclusion and the Division of Cultural Affairs in the Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs to implement a pilot program starting with the FY 2023 budget.

#### Communications Collaboration:

- Aligned internal citywide communications by consolidating "InsideGNV" and "GRU Daily" to create "Daily Brief" which is released on a daily basis with information and announcements affecting all community builders across the City.

Government Affairs and Community Relations Consolidation:

- Combined two separate offices within General Government and GRU to establish the Office of Government Affairs and Community Relations, reporting to the City Manager with dotted line responsibility to the GRU General Manager, to emphasize city-wide community impact.
- The Office of Government Affairs and Community Relations is the link between our City government and Gainesville neighbors. GACR also serves as a consultant to each City department for their governmental affairs and community relations needs, with a particular focus on community engagement and outreach. GACR builds and maintains relationships with community shareholders by employing equitable and inclusive community engagement.

Human Resources Department Shared Services:

- Adjusted the reporting structure of the Department of Human Resources to report to the City Manager with a dotted line responsibility to the GRU General Manager to emphasize citywide internal service delivery.

Information Technology/Open Collaboration:

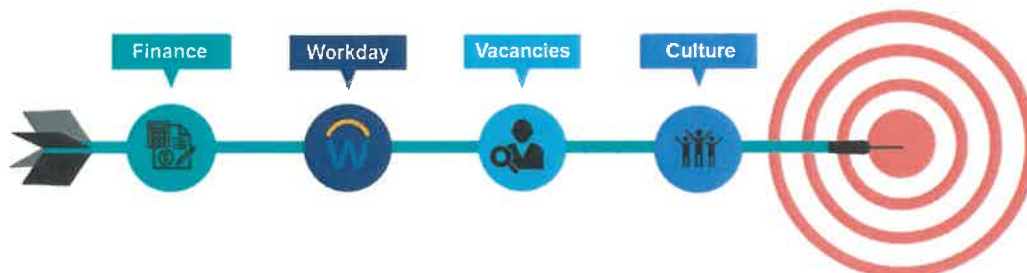
- Established lines of communication between GRU IT and General Government departments to gather information, share expertise and where appropriate, support technology needs.

In partnership with Mr. Cunningham, Interim GRU General Manager, we continue to evaluate opportunities to streamline areas of shared services to promote efficiency throughout the organization.

## II. STABILIZING CORE OPERATIONS AND INTERNAL PROCESSES

An efficient government administration requires a management structure that provides cohesiveness in communication and responsiveness. The organizational changes announced on January 10, 2021 have yielded consistent communication regarding operational priorities throughout the organization and increased collaboration across City departments.

Soon after joining the City and reviewing operational and financial audits from the State of Florida, external and internal entities, it was made clear that a top priority be established to focus on core foundational components of City operations and develop/implement a work plan to improve and strengthen the City's operational core. Four critically important areas were identified, remain a top priority and require ongoing review and evaluation: financial services operations, technology (Workday)/ infrastructure, vacancies city-wide, and the City's organizational culture.



Financial Services Operations:

Enlisted support services from Carr, Riggs, and Ingram LLC and the GRU Budget, Finance and Accounting Team to assist with stabilization of the General Government Financial Services Department's Accounting Division which fell under critical review by both the State Auditor General and Internal Audit offices.

Through the date of this memorandum, the following items have been completed, or are in progress:

- General Pension, Retiree Health, and CRA draft financial statements – complete
- Federal and State forfeiture reports – complete
- Bank reconciliations through September 30, 2021 are 90% complete and the bank reconciliation process starting March 1, 2022 has been improved and is continually being evaluated for further efficiency – in progress
- The positions of Finance Director and Controller have been filled, both licensed CPAs.

The next phase of projects includes: mapping the chart of accounts crosswalk for the external auditors, validating conversion data in the general ledger, and validating reports from Workday.

Workday Stabilization:

Integrated staff expertise from General Government and GRU IT and created a working group and steering committee to address ongoing Workday configuration and readiness for General Government operations.

Vacant Positions:

- The Human Resources Department had as much as 11 vacancies since my tenure with the City began. Through the date of this memorandum, 2 positions have been filled and 9 are being recruited or reviewed.
- The Department of Financial Services had a significant number of vacancies in the Accounting Division and recruitment for all those positions is underway. The City's new Controller and Finance Director will begin their tenures with the City on May 17, 2022 and June 13, 2022, respectively. In addition, an Accountant II hire is almost complete.
- The Chief Operating Officer position recruitment is underway.
- After discussions with the GRU General Manager, the Chief Climate Change Officer job description has been finalized, and a recruitment plan is underway.
- Critical vacancies in other departments have been identified and active recruitment plans are underway.

Organizational Culture:

Organizational culture is being addressed in a variety of ways based on recommendations made as a result of the culture audit. We have recently certified five employees as conflict resolution trainers and are offering another round of certification in mid-summer. Still on the horizon is implementing executive coaching and enhanced leadership development training. In addition, we are exploring possibilities for creating a process and environment where employees are encouraged to offer feedback and ideas on improving our workplace.

Policies and Procedures:

In order to provide for an efficient working environment, the City must have clear, up-to-date policies and procedures that are consistent with best practices in local government. The most recent culture audit showed that community builders are frustrated with many aspects of how the City develops and communicates its policies.

On December 7, 2021, I established a Policy Review Committee that is tasked with: establishing a base inventory of all City policies and identifying gaps to ensure the City is following best practices, making recommendations for policies that need to be updated and added, and establishing a process for policy management.

The Policy Review Committee has updated the City's G-1 "Policy and Procedure Promulgation" policy to govern the City universally, and refined governing terms in order to align application of a standard city-wide policy management structure. Next steps include review of these documents and creation of a centralized location for accessing policy information.

### **III. COMMUNITY RELATIONS**

One City One Community Relations Plan:

Developed the One City One Community Relations Plan (included as Attachment A) that outlines the City's approach to community outreach, engagement, partnerships, investments and advocacy. The Community Relations Plan will be a reliable, dedicated resource to our community; lead action that addresses and alleviates issues in our community; and empower our neighbors to be actively involved in civic matters. Examples of the implementation of these core services are illustrated in the following programs.

Community F.I.R.S.T.:

Kicked off a community focused program that prioritizes a Facilitative, Innovative, Restorative, Supportive, and Timely approach to neighborhood needs in the City. Community F.I.R.S.T. is an innovative effort to move City Hall to the doorsteps of all the communities and neighbors to together work hand in hand to improve the quality of life and promote a stronger and more vibrant Gainesville.

- Porters: launched on February 21, 2022, as pilot in the Porters Neighborhood at Shady Grove Primitive Baptist Church. Notable accomplishments include: providing the neighborhood with a voice in and around City Hall; began rebuilding trust by breaking down barriers in communication with the neighborhood, developing strong relationships with community leaders and learning about the Porters neighborhood history, and addressing issues such as street/parking signs, streetlight and road repairs, and increasing programming at the community center. This program is being managed by of the Gainesville Fire Rescue Department.
- Sugar Hill: the program kicked off in April 2022 and is being managed by Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs. Planning and coordinating initial contact with the neighborhood leadership is underway.
- Springtree/Hazel Heights: will be kicked off in June 2022 and will be led by the Gainesville Police Department.

- Additional neighborhoods that will be rolled out later in the year include University Park (including Florida Park), Pine Ridge, Greater Duval, and 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue/Pleasant Street.

City Services Fair:

The City Services Fair is developed to showcase the services provided by our City departments at both GRU and GG similar to the City's job fairs. During FY 2022, two events are scheduled for June and September, on a Saturday from 9 AM – 12 PM. City departments will host tables dressed with literature and information about city programs/neighbor services and city-wide job opportunities. Staff will answer questions from our neighbors as they cycle through the fair. The initial event will be held at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Multipurpose Center.

#### **IV. AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT (ARPA) PROGRAM MANAGEMENT**

The ARPA Program was transferred to the City Manager on December 6, 2021. Since then, the following actions have occurred:

- Solicited and on-boarded two consultants for program implementation: Community Foundation of North Central Florida and Government Services Group, LLC (GSG).
- Significant progress in the following projects:
  - Aid-to Nonprofit Organizations – currently processing release of \$6,981,322 of ARPA funding to 36 nonprofit organizations. Awardees are scheduled to meet with City staff and GSG to discuss compliance, monitoring, and reporting requirements, subrecipient grant agreements, and release of funds.
  - Eastside Urgent Care Center – currently executing triparty agreement and subrecipient grant agreement with UF Health Shands for \$2.25 million for construction costs.
  - Energy Rehabilitation – expanded the scope of the **LEEP<sup>plus</sup>** program managed by GRU to disburse \$1.9 million for repairing, stabilizing and weatherizing homes (both rental and owner occupied) to reduce the energy burden experienced by neighbors, improve energy efficiency, and overall improve the safety of neighbors' homes. The expanded program went live on May 2, 2022.
  - Utility Debt Forgiveness – paid \$24,158 to 32 households to address installment payment plans related to COVID hardships.

#### **V. AREAS OF SPECIAL FOCUS**

Affordable Housing Framework:

Developed the *2022 Affordable Housing Framework for Discussion* (included as Attachment B) that provides an overview of affordable housing challenges including national and local housing trends, housing plans, strategies and opportunities to move forward the collective discussion on how the City, in collaboration with neighbors and other stakeholders, approach affordable housing solutions.

On-boarded the City's Senior Housing Strategist on May 2, 2022 whose top priorities are to address the City's housing challenges in a collaborative effort by working with internal and external partners to increase the number of affordable housing units in the City.

Affordable Housing Workshops are underway and include focus topics on: Affordable Housing 101, Affordable Housing Preservation, Community Land Trust, First Time Homebuyer Program Housing Vouchers, Infill Housing, Rental Housing Programs, and Inclusionary/Exclusionary Zoning.

Unsolicited Proposal Pilot Program:

Developed an Unsolicited Proposal Policy that will be piloted for six months and encourages nonprofits to submit unsolicited proposals in three focus areas: affordable housing, economic development, and the Gainesville Community Reinvestment Area.

## **VI. ONGOING FOCUS AREAS**

The first six months of any new job is driven by an eagerness to learn about the organization and develop relationships. I remain steadfast in my dedication to curating a team that leverages talents and skillsets, aligning day-to-day operations to support a community first approach, and continue advancing towards a collaborative government responsive to the directives of the City Commission and needs of our neighbors and partners.

Ongoing areas of focus include:

1. Continue leadership, management and oversight of General Government operations.
2. Continue focus on strengthening identified operations and strengthening core functions: financial services operations, Workday operational issues, vacancies city-wide, and the City's organizational culture.
3. Develop and present a fiscally sound Fiscal Year 2023 General Government Financial and Operating Plan.
4. Continue review of capital improvement and infrastructure needs, including the Wild Spaces Public Places Program and upcoming Infrastructure Sales Tax Referendum.
5. Hiring and onboarding a Chief Operating Officer and Chief Climate Officer.
6. Continue review, development and implementation of the Downtown Strategic Plan, Affordable Housing Plan and GCRA program plans.
7. Follow through and implementation of City Commission directives as approved.

Attachments:

- A. One City One Community Relations Plan
- B. One City One Community Relations Presentation
- C. 2022 Affordable Housing Framework for Discussion

cc: Charter Officers  
Leadership Team