

Deborah V. Bowie

352-575-8456 | <https://www.linkedin.com/in/deborahvbowie/>

December 19, 2018

Honorable Mayor, City of Gainesville &
Honorable Members of the Gainesville City Commission
City of Gainesville, 200 East University Avenue, 32601

Dear Honorable Mayor, City of Gainesville &
Honorable Members of the Gainesville City Commission:

It is my honor to submit this letter of interest toward consideration for the position of Interim City Manager for the City of Gainesville.

As you may know, I joined the City's team in late April, early May 2018 (part-time) as I transitioned from my role as the immediate past-President and Chief Executive Officer of the United Way of North Central Florida, where I served in that role for nearly four years. Prior, I was a Vice President at the Gainesville Area Chamber of Commerce and had dual responsibility as the Director of *Leadership Gainesville*, the oldest community leadership development program in the state. I have had the unique experience now of working with business, public and non-profit sector leaders in this community. I value these relationships and the perspective these roles have allowed me to develop, and strongly feel they are invaluable assets to a City trying to reinvent itself as a Citizen-Centered New American metropolis.

Since joining the City Manager's staff, I have assumed duties in the recruitment of key employees, including Strategic Initiatives, Human Resources, Communications, and stabilizing our administrative staff. Additional duties include working directly with the Gainesville Police Department and providing direct management of and leadership toward the transitioning of a decentralized communications team to a co-located workforce in a new space. Currently, I am recruiting an Intergovernmental Affairs specialist to serve as the permanent staff resource and liaison to the City's state and federal lobbying teams, but until such time, I serve as the liaison to both. As is often the case with a Chief of Staff, my role can sometimes be ambiguous and undefined, as it is my duty to provide leadership and oversight where I am needed most amongst the City's executive leadership team.

This is my third assignment in municipal government, having served previously as a Senior Public Information Officer for the Birmingham (AL) City Council – the largest municipal legislative body in the state of Alabama – and later, as the Chief of Staff to the Mayor of Birmingham, Alabama's largest city (pop. 228K with a metro area exceeding 1M). In both roles, I provided leadership to the city's top elected officials albeit for very distinct purposes. As a PIO for the City Council, for example, I established an online communications presence with inaugural access to city records, authored legislative priorities and position papers and managed all media for nine legislative offices. Later, in my role as Chief of Staff, I managed bi-weekly department head meetings of 26 city departments, oversaw direct management of the Office of Public Information, and worked with the mayor's executive team to shepherd \$1 billion dollars in economic growth in the city via projects that included the construction of a \$55M athletic sports complex, a \$6M expansion of the Birmingham Zoo, the construction and completion of the city's Civil

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Rights Heritage Trail, and the completion of Railroad Reservation Park, the second-largest urban green space in America. These projects have served as an anchor to Birmingham's urban renewal. I share these experiences because I believe they demonstrate my understanding of what it takes to help lead cities to a new chapter.

While I believe I possess the leadership capabilities, managerial experience, and general government knowledge to successfully fulfill the duties associated with this position, I want to emphasize that I arrived at the decision to seek the interim role after thoughtful and serious consideration of what I could offer the city at this critical time of transition. I am seeking the *interim* role as I believe the city and more importantly, staff need stable and experienced leadership. I sought not only the counsel of people I know and trust in Gainesville, those with whom I've worked with in my previous roles in the community, but also the meaningful input and support from my colleagues. I believe you are in receipt of a letter over the signatures of Assistant City Managers Dan Hoffman and Fred Murry, who have the deepest desire to serve the employees and citizens of Gainesville with one unified voice that we, as a team, can help to stabilize staff, strengthen relationships internally and externally and help to steady the course as the city transitions to its next permanent leader and chief administrative officer.

It is for the reasons detailed above that I submit this letter for your consideration. I am happy to avail myself for any follow-up questions you may have. Thank you for the opportunity to be considered.

Sincerely,

Deborah

Deborah V. Bowie
Executive Chief of Staff
City of Gainesville

Cc Memo to file

Encl. CV

DVB/db

Deborah V. Bowie, CCE, IOM

610 SW 77th Terrace Gainesville, FL

352.575.8456

debvbowie@gmail.com

[deborahvbowie](http://deborahvbowie.com)

Municipal Executive Manager

KEY COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGES, CORE SKILLS & CAREER COMPETENCIES

- **DEMONSTRATED RECORD OF LEADERSHIP:** Documented history of progressive executive leadership in organizations ranging from \$1.8 million to \$350 million, regional in scale, impact and mission
- **FUNDRAISING AND STRATEGIC PLANNING:** Experienced SWOT facilitator & DiSC analyzer
- **ORGANIZATIONAL MANAGEMENT:** Astute leader with experience in culture building & change management
- **ADVOCACY & PUBLIC POLICY:** Trusted liaison to public sector elected and appointed leadership
- **EXPERIENCED FACILITATOR:** Credible public speaker and presenter

RELEVANT PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

The City of Gainesville, Office of the City Manager (Gainesville, FL)

Executive Chief of Staff

5/2018-Present

Direct report to City Manager, one of six Charter Officers in the City of Gainesville (MSA pop. 338K), the largest city and county seat of Alachua County, with a \$354M FY budget, 21 city departments and 2,200+ employees. Gainesville serves as the cultural, educational and commercial center for the north central Florida region and provides a full range of municipal services. City also owns a regional transit system, a municipal airport, a 72-par championship golf course and a utility. Duties include direct management of communications, administrative, and intergovernmental relations staff.

The United Way of North Central Florida (Gainesville, FL)

President and Chief Executive Officer

1/2015-5/2018

Chief Professional Officer of a six-county regional charitable giving organization in North Central Florida with an annual FY budget of \$4MM and a 28-member Board of Directors that serves Alachua, Bradford, Dixie, Gilchrist, Levy and Union Counties in North Central Florida (MSA pop. 369,000). Manage staff of 14 FTEs, 4 grant contracted workers, 2 PTEs and 4-5 seasonal staff members whose main goals are to improve community indicators in health, education, and financial stability. The Four Star *Charity Navigator*-accredited agency funds more than 20 local non-profits and 34 programs through a \$1MM+ Community Investment Fund and houses the industry's *only* Small Business Partnership donor leadership program with revenues topping \$200K. Agency's FY16 economic impact to region was \$12MM.

Key efficiencies and improvements:

- Instituted bi-annual staff development workshops and reduced staff turnover from 46% to 12.7%
- Directed and authored winning RFP to host 2015 state industry conference (first ever host city)
- Led transition as regional Lead Agency for Homelessness via Continuum of Care

Gainesville Area Chamber of Commerce (Gainesville, FL)

Vice President of Chamber Development; Director of Leadership Gainesville

4/2013 – 12/31/14

Vice President with direct staff management and dual responsibilities as community leadership development director at Five-Star Accredited 1,400-member Chamber in North Central Florida with annual budget of \$2MM, 18 FTEs and a 40-member Board of Directors. The Chamber represents more than 70,000 employees in region (MSA pop. 258,000). There are three divisions at the Chamber: Workforce Development, Economic Development and the Chamber. Supervised five lines of business: Membership & Sales, Events, Information, Community and Business Development. Key efficiencies and improvements:

- **Re-built, trained and managed sales team of three including on-boarding Sales Director**
 - Led team to sell a record number of new members, outperforming budget by 200%
 - Increased annual member retention from 80% to 82% and first year member accounts from 39% to 69% year-over-year
- **Revamped state's oldest leadership development program, Leadership Gainesville**
- **Spearheaded and authored Chamber's Five Year Accreditation process**
 - Earned Five Star Rating in 2014 with perfect scores in 4 out of 7 categories

Albany Area Chamber of Commerce/CVB (Albany, GA)**Senior Director of Public Policy & Communications, Registered Lobbyist**

6/2011 – 4/2013

Senior executive and Registered Lobbyist with lead responsibility for Communications, Public Relations, Media and Legislative Policy for a Chamber/CVB with 1,000+ members and a 30-member Board of Directors. The chamber (\$1.8MM) had 11 FTEs and 7 P/T staff members. There are two divisions: The Chamber and a Convention and Visitors Bureau. Albany (MSA pop. 165,000) is the healthcare and retail hub of a 14-county SW Ga region and home to the Marine Corps Logistics base (MCLB-Albany). Key efficiencies and improvements:

- **Served as primary legislative contact for Chamber and CVB, helping to secure state economic development funds for the film industry in SW Ga**
- **Restructured annual advocacy trips to state and nation's capital, reducing organization's \$80,000 in fees to outside contractors**
 - Planned and executed annual legislative trips to Atlanta, Washington, D.C., and the Pentagon
 - Streamlined regional legislative agenda to align 14 county "wish list" with local military installation on federal requests for infrastructure funding, expansion of logistics/contracting arm of LOGCOMM and other large-scale community projects

DVB Consultancy (Birmingham, AL)**Business Development Contractor**

2/2010 – 6/2012

Office of the Mayor, City Hall (Birmingham, AL)**Mayor's Chief of Staff**

11/2007 – 1/2010

"No. 2" in city government with direct report to the Mayor, supervising 43 members of mayor's staff, eight executive team members and 26 city department heads across a total workforce of 4,600 city employees. The city of Birmingham with a \$350 MM FY budget, (city pop. 212,000) is the regional hub of employment in North Central Alabama with industry sectors in healthcare, banking and finance, higher education, R&D, and retail. Major employers include state's largest employer, the University of Alabama at Birmingham, HQ of Regions Bank and Alabama Power. Key efficiencies and improvements:

- **Led a team of senior staffers to initiate, investigate, negotiate and advise mayor on economic development projects totaling \$1 billion in public-private sector investment, including:**
 - \$6MM expansion at Birmingham Zoo – *Trails of Africa* featuring Bull elephants (2008)
 - Construction of interpretive Birmingham Civil Rights Heritage Trail (2009)
 - \$55MM publicly-funded sports complex, named "Best Athletic Complex in US" (2009)
 - \$400MM 760,000-sq-ft expansion of Children's Hospital (2009)
- **Built from the ground up a comprehensive overhaul of official city communications including:**
 - Implementing the webcasting of city meetings (2008)
 - Overhauling city's official URL and conforming user accounts across workforce

Birmingham Regional Chamber of Commerce (Birmingham, AL)**Vice President of Community Development**

12/2003 – 11/2007

Vice President with responsibilities in Public & Media Relations, Communications, Workforce Development and Advocacy in 2,300-member Chamber with a \$3.5 million dollar operating budget. Supervised staff of five. The Chamber (now, the Birmingham Business Alliance) served a seven-county region of 1 million+. Key productivity improvements:

- **Designed from inception-to-launch a cutting-edge PR initiative to garner national media recognition for regional stakeholder businesses**
 - Created "Virtual Newsroom" to develop and earn regional and national publicity for member businesses
- **Led editorial visits with Director of Communications to major media outlets**
 - Developed, planned and sold to investors a series of media visits with editorial boards of the *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, *The Washington Post*, *USA Today*, and *CNN-Atlanta*, increasing media coverage by 400%
- **Implemented region's first annual grassroots campaign to engage neighborhood leaders in business development**
 - Planned and executed annual grassroots program featuring city's historic 99 neighborhoods, their officers and business leaders in legislative briefings with state delegation and local business leaders

EARLY CAREER PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

<u>Sr. Public Information Officer</u>	Office of the City Council, Birmingham, AL	2002-2003
<u>Account Executive</u>	WTTO-WB21, Birmingham, AL	2000-2002
<u>Franchise Producer</u>	WLS-ABC7, Chicago, IL & CBS-42, Birmingham, AL	1997-2000
<u>Broadcast Reporter</u>	WBRC-FOX6 & ABC3340, Birmingham, AL	1994-1996
<u>Staff Writer</u>	The Birmingham Post-Herald, Birmingham, AL	1992-1994

LICENSURE/INDUSTRY CERTIFICATIONS

Certified Chamber Executive (CCE)	Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives, 2012
Institute for Organizational Management	IOM Management Certificate, US Chamber of Commerce, 2007

EDUCATION, TRAINING & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Awarded Certificate of Completion, "Creating Collaborative Solutions" program
HARVARD UNIVERSITY KENNEDY SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT, CAMBRIDGE, MA, OCT 2012

Regional Economic & Leadership Development Certificate, 2012
GEORGIA ACADEMY OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, SW GEORGIA REGION, 2012

Inaugural Fellow in Regional Sustainable Development
FORD FOUNDATION, 2008

Bachelor of Art's Degree (BA) in Communications, *Magna cum Laude*
XAVIER UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA, NEW ORLEANS, LA, 1992

SELECT INDUSTRY RECOGNITION

- *Impact Award Winner, Business in Greater Gainesville (magazine), 2014*
- *Chamber of the Year Finalist, ACCE, 2013 operating year*
- *"Gold Award for Communications Excellence," "Best in Show," ACCE, 2012*
- *National Chamber Convention Emcee, 28th Annual ACCE Convention, Louisville, KY, 2012*
- *Finalist & Honorable Mention, Institute for a Competitive Workforce, city of Birmingham, 2008*

SELECT VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT

Rotary Club of Gainesville, Member

