

**Russ D. Blackburn**



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August 15, 2016

Mr. Colin Baenziger  
2055 South Atlantic Avenue  
Suite 504  
Daytona Beach Shores, FL 32118

Dear Colin:

I am pleased to submit my qualifications for the Port St. Lucie City Manager position. You will see from my resume that I have served in executive level positions in some of the nation's most dynamic cities and counties. In addition to excellent skills in strategic planning, communication, and financial management, I have demonstrated success in leading average organizations to become high performing, premier local governments.

My leadership experiences in the City of Gainesville and the rapidly growing communities of Loudoun County, Virginia; Lee and Martin County, Florida; have helped me to develop a skill level for managing change which few local government managers possess. I have a proven track record of helping elected officials to strategically identify goals and objectives and of leading staff to achieve the governing body's objectives.

As I reflect on the experiences I have had in local government and my understanding of the needs of the City I am a natural fit for the position. I was successful in providing outstanding public services and building an enduring organization in Martin County. In Gainesville I partnered with the University of Florida and the private sector to diversify the economy and develop a technology cluster which now plays a major role in the community's economy. One of my strongest skill sets is economic development. In Charleston, SC, I led the historic City's downtown and neighborhood revitalization program and in a dual role served as Executive Director of the Gainesville Community Redevelopment Agency. I have extensive experience helping the private sector to develop significant communities and buildings while enhancing the quality of life for the existing City and County residents.

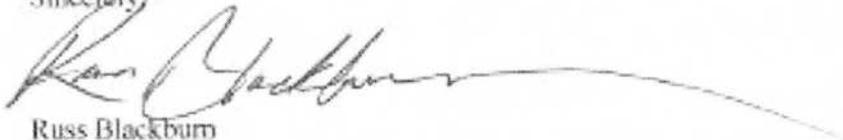
Port St. Lucie's natural beauty and strategic location on the Treasure Coast have helped the community to become one of Florida's premier cities in a remarkably short time period. I want to be part of helping the City to reach its limitless potential and to provide the leadership and structure for the organization to be considered as the most customer friendly mid-sized city in the nation.

Three transformative initiatives which I facilitated in Gainesville have the potential to transfer to Port St. Lucie; a comprehensive customer service focus, creation of a continuous staff improvement program and an innovative police/citizen engagement program. A cross departmental team was engaged to identify the key components of outstanding customer service and to implement and ingrain a culture of service. The team focused on the 4C's; competent, commitment, conscientious and communication as the unifying foundation for outstanding customer service. These values were communicated relentlessly; surveyed and employee performance was evaluated based upon these values. Employees need continuous education and skill enhancement to perform at the highest level. To provide the framework and curriculum for continuous learning the Gainesville Corporate University was established. This program reduced duplication and costs while institutionalizing learning opportunities for employees. Most of the course offerings rely on peer facilitation and provide learning modules from early career employees to seasoned managers. A program element focuses on current supervisor training needs and a nationally acclaimed Emerging Leaders program offers a combination of training and experiential learning to prepare employees to be supervisors. The Police Advisory Council provided advice to me and the Chief, convenes meetings in the community, provides feedback on the unintended consequences of policy and serves as a community liaison in times of crisis.

To decide if I am the individual to implement policy directives and lead the organization on behalf of the City Council, the Mayor and Council should understand the personal characteristics which I would bring to the organization. First and foremost, I reach decisions based on a consistent set of values and principles. Honesty, fairness, hard work, caring, innovation, integrity and follow-through, create a foundation which fosters trust and sets the example for a high performing team.

I hope that my resume and character description generate sufficient interest for the Mayor and Council's further consideration of my qualifications for the City Manager position.

Sincerely,



Russ Blackburn

**Russ Blackburn**

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**QUALIFICATIONS**

Executive level leadership and management experience in premier cities and counties; areas of strength include organization development, citizen engagement, growth management, finance, redevelopment and public/ private partnerships. Possess the skills, positive attitude and ability to move complex organizations to a culture of high performance.

**RELEVANT EXPERIENCE**

**City Manager, City of Gainesville, Florida**

**2005-2015**

Host community to the University of Florida, the City of 126,000 residents serves as the economic and cultural hub of North Central Florida. In addition to the academic and medical employment base the City is home to a cluster of technology and bio-science businesses. Gainesville employs over 2200 individuals with 1300 employees under the supervision of the City Manager. The FY 16 budget for functions under the authority of the City Manager is \$300,000,000 with a general fund budget of \$108,000,000.

**Duties and Responsibilities of the City Manager**

- Chief Administrative Officer of one of the top mid -sized cities in the United States. In 2006, Gainesville was ranked #1 in Cities Ranked and Rated. In subsequent years Gainesville constantly ranks in the top 10 of most community rankings in a variety of measures.
- Report directly to the seven member City Commission.
- Provide leadership to the functions of City Government reporting to the City Manager as outlined in the City Charter including planning and development services, regional transit agency, public works, Police, Fire and Rescue, Parks, Recreation and Culture, neighborhood improvement and supportive administrative services.
- Serve as the Chief Executive Officer of the Community Redevelopment Agency.
- Provide executive leadership and management oversight to the City's \$500,000,000 pension plan.
- Serve as leader, manager for the provision of services provided county wide including arts and culture and traffic signal monitoring and management
- Assisted the City Commission to implement an effective strategic planning process.

**Achievements**

- Provided leadership to achieve national accreditation for the Police, Fire and Rescue, Public Works and Parks, Recreation and Culture Departments.

- Collaborated with the University of Florida and private property owners to devise and adopt in 120 days a new ready to build land use and zoning category for a 40 acre collection of parcels locally known as the Innovation District. Since adoption the Innovation District has seen substantial investment including, a 50,000 sq. ft. business incubator, renovation and occupancy of over 200,000 sq. ft. of property for new business ventures and construction of over 400 rental units. At build-out the I-District will be home to over 4 million sq. ft. of space to accelerate the commercialization of ideas generated by University affiliated faculty and students.
- Facilitated implementation of an organization development system to prepare Gainesville's workforce for the future; Gainesville Corporate University, Leadership Through Innovation and the Emerging leaders programs have been implemented to encourage employee growth and foster supervisory experiences.
- Guided the evolution of the City into the digital age; placing major service transactions on-line, implementing an open data portal, on-line survey tools and on-line departmental performance and benchmarking information.

***County Administrator, County of Martin, Stuart, Florida***

**1997-2005**

Martin County is located on the southeast coast of Florida immediately north of Palm Beach County. With a current population of 149,000, the county is in the rapidly developing outer edge of south Florida. The county provided a municipal level of services with an FY 2005 adjusted budget of approximately \$440,000,000.

**Duties and Responsibilities of County Administrator:**

- Chief administrative officer of an award winning, high performance organization with 870 Board of County Commission (B.O.C.C.) employees and 1700 total employees.
- Report directly to the five member Board of County Commissioners.
- Provide leadership to the employees carrying out B.O.C.C. policies including: growth management, water and sewer, solid waste, engineering, fire and rescue, parks and recreation, transit, airport, water quality and human services.
- Facilitate organizational excellence, intergovernmental cooperation, accountability and community engagement.
- Responsible for assisting the B.O.C.C. to develop a vision and strategic plan.

**Achievements**

- Moved an average organization to a culture of high performance. Citizen surveys verified a 43% increase in citizen satisfaction levels during my tenure.
- Established Martin County as a national leader in communicating with residents and the B O. C.C. Award winning tools such as Martin County Television, County Page, Out Reach Martin, the County web site and Martin Cares (a citizen orientation program) are recognized as benchmarks in local government.
- Restored credibility and accountability to the capital construction program.
- Initiated The Martin Institute for Life Long Learning and Education, a program to continuously enhance employee skills.
- Assisted the B.O.C.C. to acquire 43,000 acres of preservation land.

## Section 5

- Negotiated a public/private partnership for solid waste disposal.
- Recommended fiscal policies which required a 10% general fund reserve, a 10 year capital plan and a 3 year technology investment plan. These systems improvements contributed to the County's bond rating being upgraded to A+.
- Awarded the 2003 ICMA award for Intergovernmental Cooperation

### *Deputy County Administrator, County of Loudoun, Leesburg, Virginia. 1989-1997*

Located in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area, Loudoun County (current population 350,000) has historically been one of the most progressive local government service providers in the nation. It is governed by a nine member Board of Supervisors and provides a full range of local government services including funding the County school system. The FY 1997 budget was in excess of \$600 million dollars.

#### *Duties and Responsibilities*

- Served as a key member of a senior leadership team which emphasized total quality.
- Supervised the financial, human services and public safety departmental grouping which totaled over 500 employees.
- Project manager for major capital projects.
- Served as staff liaison to three of the Board of Supervisors standing committees.

#### *Achievements*

- Devised and implemented a financing and construction methodology plan for 300,000 square feet of government office space. The approach included a public/private partnership using lease/purchase and design/build.
- Led a team which consolidated the general county government and school system health insurance plans resulting in first year cost savings of \$1million dollars.
- Co-developed with representatives, of the Chamber of Commerce and Virginia Tech University, a leadership development program for the County of Loudoun.
- First in Virginia to use tax increment financing to provide public sewer to 250 residences.
- Served as chairman of the Pneumans End Regional Jail Authority.

### *Assistant County Administrator, County of Lee, Fort Myers, Florida 1987-1989*

Lee County (current population: 649, 000) is located on Florida's southwest coast and has been for decades one of the fastest growing counties in the nation. It provides water and sewer, transit, tourism development, land use and construction and repair of roads and bridges. Tourism destinations include historic Fort Myers, Sanibel and Captiva Islands.

#### *Duties and Responsibilities*

- Provided leadership to the growth and development oriented departments.
- Supervised over 600 employees in the Departments of Transportation and Engineering, Facilities Management, Real Estate and Community Development.
- Served as liaison with the building industry and citizens groups on development issues.

**Achievements**

- Reengineered and implemented a one stop development review process.
- Instituted neighborhood design charrettes for major transportation projects.
- In partnership with the construction industry instituted a reduction in building permit and inspection processing time, increasing permit fees and staffing.
- Proposed, and implemented a program which orients community leaders to Lee County services. Lee Grows initiated in 1988 continues to this day.

***Assistant County Administrator, County of Greenville, Greenville, S.C. 1984-1987***

Located in South Carolina's up country, Greenville County is home to 386,000 residents. As the state's most populous county, it boasts a thriving economy and is the North American Headquarters of Michelin and BMW.

**Duties and Responsibilities**

- Developed strategies to improve the effectiveness of County services.
- Project manager for development of a 324,000 square feet one stop government office.
- Provided supervision for the Detention Center, Law Enforcement Support, Employment and Training, Public Buildings, Vehicle Service Center, and Solid Waste Departments.

**Achievements**

- Converted a 324,000 square feet. Retail mall into a county multi-purpose center housing 18 public service agencies.
- Partnered with employees and a consultant to improve productivity, review charges and bench mark service delivery methods in the vehicle service center.
- Reduced the need for additional personnel by entering into a memo of understanding with the South Carolina Employment Office to recruit entry and mid-level workers.

**OTHER RELEVANT EMPLOYMENT**

Community Development Administrator-City of Charleston, S.C 1982-1984  
Director of Planning and Grants Administration, City of Beaufort, S.C. 1977-1981  
Program Analyst, Lower Savannah Council of Governments, Aiken, S.C. 1976-1977

**EDUCATION**

Master of Public Administration, Georgia Southern University  
Bachelor of Arts, Political Science, Valdosta State University

**PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS**

- International City/County Management Association – Credentialed Manager
- Florida City/County Management Association – President-2013/14,
- United Way of North Central Florida-Board Member 2006-2012, 2009 Campaign Chairperson
- Florida Center for Local Government Excellence, located at Florida State University- Board Member 2010-2013
- Florida League of Cities-Board Member, 2014-2015; 2014 and 2015 Home Rule Hero
- Rotary International