



The Mercer Group, Inc.

COCOA, FLORIDA

CITY MANAGER

**James Gleason
Winter Garden, Florida**

Summary

- **ICMA - CM**
- **Master of Arts – Public Administration**
- **Current position: City Manager/Director of Economic Development
Mascotte, Florida**
- **Salary: Parkland salary \$130,000.00**
- **Cover Letter**
- **Resume**
- **Internet Research**

Various news articles – neutral mention
Linkedin

THE MERCER GROUP, INC.

Dona Higginbotham
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June 11, 2020

Mercer Group Florida
Donna Higginbotham
Senior Vice President
DHHiggin@att.net

Dear Ms. Higginbotham:

This letter and resume are an expression of my interest in seeking the City Manager position with the City of Cocoa, Florida. I received my Credentialed Manager status from ICMA in March of 2006 and have been re-credentialed through March of 2020. I have a master's degree in Public Administration and 23 years of local government service as recognized by ICMA as well as over 22+ years of private sector business management experience. I feel my qualifications would make a fine match for the City of Cocoa.

I have extensive experience in managing governmental functions, including planning, zoning, economic development, public works, fire, police, finance, building and code enforcement. I plan and administer commission policies and budgets and ensure all programs are operated in compliance with federal, state and local laws. I am a visionary leader with an exceptional ability to relate well to all stakeholders inside and outside of the organization. My experience includes being the chief executive officer of cities ranging in population from 5,500 to 30,000. I have managed budgets from \$5 million to \$400 million and supervised employee groups from 50 to 300.

During the housing and economic downturn required managers to adapt and learn a different set of management skills to provide quality public services. I learned to adapt and adjust to the challenges and while our economy has returned to a positive position we must still manage with an eye towards the next economic challenge. There needs to be a positive partnership between appointed and elected officials, the public and the business community, as we face new challenges. In addition, it is important to establish working relationships with all levels of government, state, county and sister cities, through collaboration and partnerships we can accomplish more for the public we serve. Now as we face an uncertain economic future it will again require city management and the manager to adapt and prepare for doing city business and services in a new way to serve the citizens of the community. Those organizations that forge new partnerships will succeed and those who cannot change or adapt will fail.

My goal in any organization is to build a high-performance, citizen-friendly government with a focus on customer service, efficiency and financial transparency. I am a strong and decisive leader but also believe a micro-manager can stifle and negatively impact the work environment and hinder reaching goals. Given my proven success in translating long-range organizational objectives into effective program development and management strategies that accomplish these objectives, I believe that my expertise would be an asset to the City of Cocoa, Florida. I would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you to discuss how my skill set and background might fit with your organization.

Sincerely,



James P. Gleason

James Patrick Gleason
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Organizational Development and Efficiency
Operations and Project Management
Labor Relations and Negotiations
Customer Service, Public-Private Partnerships
Intergovernmental Partnerships

Strategic Planning and Operations
Financial Accountability and Budgeting
Stakeholder Involvement in Government
Transparent Government and Media Relations

GOVERNMENT EXPERIENCE

City Manager/Director of Economic Development/CRA-Mascotte FL 2011-Present:

Mascotte is a city in Lake County, Florida, as of 2018, the population recorded by the BEBR Report from the University of Florida is 5,829. The city has an operating budget of \$7,776,400 million and a total of 31 employees. In addition to general administration the city has police, fire, parks, water and storm water, streetlight and solid waste utilities. Sanitation is contracted but oversight is done by city staff. The city has a CRA to encourage economic development.

Achievements: Accomplished with the support and assistance of a great staff and leadership of Council:

- Increased General Fund Reserve by 41% (\$607,000) for year end 2011-2012.
- Reduced 2012-2013 Budget by 6% from 2011-2012 and increased reserves.
- Sold lease on Cell Tower for \$175, 000 and 15 years of additional annual payments.
- Recommended the city council to place (7) acres of city purchased land on the market for development so it could return to the private sector and expand the city's commercial tax base. Sold just less than two acres for \$325,000 to Family Dollar which has broken ground on a new facility valued at \$1 million dollars and they have listed the remainder of the property for sale.
- CDBG Commercial Grant for \$700,000 to build the first sewer line in the city.
- Acquired 100% of utility easements required for CDBG project
- Intergovernmental Agreements with Leesburg and Groveland to provide wastewater treatment in the city.
- Reduced budget without impacting public safety in 2011, 2012 and 2013.
- Merged duties from some vacancies to other departments to streamline the organization.
- Worked with finance director to propose a plan to ensure the city could meet debt payments and maintain required minimum reserves and follow all loan documents.
- Worked with Lake County Board of County Commissioners to create an Enterprise Zone.
- 2012-\$1,950,000 in new revenue, grants and investment brought into the city.
- 2013-Balanced Budget without using city reserves-Tax Rate to 9.6147
- 2013 Increased unrestricted cash reserves to \$769,183 from \$607,000 in 2012.
- 2013-Employees received a 3% COLA (first increase in 5 years) and an increase in retirement contribution from 5% back to 10% October 1, 2013.
- 2014-Balanced Budget without using city reserves-Reduced Tax rate to 9.3000
- 2014-Increased unrestricted cash reserves to \$1,008,962 from \$769,183 in 2013
- 2014-Employees received 3% COLA October 1, 2014.
- 2014- August Approved 18 month moratorium on impact fees to stimulate residential construction
- 2014-2015-Developed City's First 5 Year Capital Improvement Fund (CIP)
- 2015-Draft Budgeted Completed July-2015.
- 2015-Adopted Roll Back Tax Rate Not to Exceed 8.8138
- 2015-Employees received a 3% Merit Increase
- 2015-Projected to increase Reserve Fund Balance to \$1,250,000
- Total debt (general fund and enterprise funds) February 2011 was \$5,945,381, September 2016 balance is \$1,380,227
- Council Approved Debt Reduction Plan to be Debt Free by May 2017 saving the city an estimated \$507,000 in future interest payments
- 2016-Adopted Roll Back Tax Rate Not to Exceed 8.3289 Third Tax Reduction in my fifth budget with the city
- Employees received 4% COLA October 1, 2016
- 2017-2018 tax rate 7.9316 second full rollback in a row and 4th straight tax rate reduction
- City is debt free and has \$1,300,000 in Unencumbered Reserve Funds.
- Saved \$500,000 in future interest by paying the debt off early.
- 2018-2017 tax rate 7.6291, third full rollback and 5th straight tax reduction
- 2019-2020-tax rate 7.5500 fourth rollback plus tax cut lower than the rollback, 6th straight tax reduction
- March 16, 2020 negotiated merger of City Fire Department with Lake County Fire and Rescue Saving the city tax and fire assessment payers money. The merger accomplished going from an ISO of #10 (April 2019) to and ISO of #4.

City Manager-Chamblee GA 2008-2010:

Chamblee has a population of 19,500 and is in the northeast metro region of Atlanta in DeKalb County. The city has an annual operating budget of \$15 million plus and has 100+ employees. The City of Chamblee is 6 square miles.

Achievements:

- After just a few months on the job discovered the city had very serious financial problems. The two years prior to my employment the city expenses had exceeded revenues by \$2.8 million dollars. In the prior nine years expenditures exceed revenue by 4.6 million. This had reduced the city surplus to less than \$200,000 when city policy required a 20% surplus which would have been \$2 plus million. This presented an immediate cash flow problem. The city fiscal year is January to December and property taxes are not billed until September and collected in October and December. In one month, we secured a Tax Anticipation Note (the city's first) for \$1 million which provided cash flow security until the 2009 property taxes were due. We reduced spending by 5%, froze hiring for open positions, reviewed all fees, and adjusted where appropriate. We avoided furloughs and layoffs. We finished 2009 with revenues exceeding expenses by \$700,000, paid the TAN in full by December 31 and started the 2010 year with an estimated surplus of \$1,200,000.
- The 2010 budget increased the surplus by another \$500,000 in addition we created a dedicated capital equipment replacement fund of \$400,000. While there were no raises for 2009, 2010 and 2011, we did not layoff or furlough any employees.
- Successfully planned for annexation of over 6,000 residents and business and 3.5 square miles effective January 1, 2011. Staff prepared from June of 2010 through December 2010 once the legislation authorizing the annexation vote was approved by the state legislature. The city had six weeks after the citizen's vote approved the annexation November 2, 2010 to implement the annexation as of January 1, 2011.
- Negotiated successful Service Delivery Strategy with DeKalb County in Parks & Recreation and Police Services savings Chamblee taxpayers .56 mils on their 2011 county tax bill reducing duplication of services and double taxation.
- Posted all city budgets, quarterly budget reports and audits on web page to increase transparency for the public.
- Initiated the city's recognition by ICMA as a Council-Manager form of government.

City Manager-City and County Advisor to US Government for ICMA in Kirkuk, Iraq 2007-2008:

Worked under a contract with ICMA as a Local City-County Manager Advisor with the State Department and USAID the federal agency implementing and monitoring a contract titled "Local Governance Project II" in Iraq. I was promoted to supervisor of ICMA and RTI ex-patriots in Kirkuk as well as the Iraqi staff of 25. Kirkuk is a city located 120 miles north of Baghdad with an estimated population of 1.6 million residents.

Achievements:

- City-County Manager Advisor to the State Department, USAID and the local Iraqi officials on the principles for establishment, administration, and operation of decentralized local government in Kirkuk Iraq.
- Provided oversight and training to Iraqis in the following areas of local governance: public participation, budget preparation and implementation, project development and implementation and strategic development.
- Served as the lead advisor for ICMA, RTI in addition as the liaison to the State Department and USAID at the Provincial Reconstruction Team based in Kirkuk Iraq.
- Estimated Provincial Budget of \$400 million for 4 Districts (counties) and 12 Sub-Districts (12 cities) that was used for public works projects of which 75% went to roads and bridges.
- Improved intergovernmental relations between provincial, district and sub-district elected councils that involved Sunni, Shiite and Kurdish representatives in one of the most ethnically volatile regions of Iraq.

City Manager, City of Woodstock GA 2004 - 2007:

Woodstock is a city located north of Atlanta in Cherokee County. The city has a total area of 8.8 miles with an estimated population of 25,000 residents. The total budget for the city was \$15 million with 200 employees.

Achievements:

- Completed 2.5-million-gallon expansion of the wastewater treatment plant. Worked with CH2MHILL and the Mayor and Council to get the project back online, within budget and at full capacity. (\$18 million-dollar project)
- Restored morale and built a high-performance management team by restructuring and developing existing staff. Eliminated bureaucracy to ensure the organization became more responsive to all stakeholders. Initiated a new Development Review Committee to streamline development issues and create a one-stop process for landowners and developers for proposed projects.
- Completed Interchange Justification Report in partnership with Federal Highway Administration and Georgia Department of Transportation, Private Business and Local Landowners for a new interchange for I-575 in Woodstock (\$43 million)
- Initiated city participation in the ICMA Metro-Atlanta Performance Measurement Consortium.
- Complete makeover of city web page (www.woodstockga.gov)
- Initiated E-Better Place and We Care Hotline - online and 24-hour customer telephone access to report problems or concerns as well as requests for information.

- Revamped budget and financial systems shifted organizational focus from "budgeting to cut corners" to investing in the future and thereby minimizing long-run costs.
- Successful citywide referendum and negotiation with Cherokee County and Cherokee School Board for implementation of TAD (tax allocation district) for redevelopment of downtown Woodstock. (\$18million)
- Implemented a comprehensive storm water utility system.
- Restored financial integrity to the water and sewer enterprise fund with the implementation of new rate structure designed to keep pace with cost increases and inflation. New contract with Cherokee County Water and Sewer Authority to ensure water purchases and future wastewater treatment capacity. Initiated discussion and negotiations concerning consolidation with the Cherokee County Water & Sewer Authority.
- Provided budget to the City Council with a tax cut for 2005 and held the tax rate for 2006.
- Initiated the city's first Five Year Strategic Plan with annual goals and objectives.

City Manager, City of Ocoee FL 2001– 2004:

The City of Ocoee is in the west part of Orange County close to Winter Garden and Orlando, Florida. The total budget was \$35 million with a population was 30,654. I served as a City Commissioner in the City of Ocoee 1993 – 1997.

Achievements:

- Restored morale and built a high-performance management team by restructuring and developing existing staff. Eliminated a layer of bureaucracy to become more responsive to resident's needs.
- Instituted an annual customer satisfaction survey to measure the effectiveness of city services. Integrated this survey into the budget and the performance monitoring process.
- Cut operating budget by 6% while maintaining the existing level of service. Revamped budget and financial systems. [Shifted organizational focus from "budgeting to cut corners" to investing in the future and thereby minimizing long-run costs.]
- Restored financial integrity to the water and sewer utility fund by implementing a new rate structure to encourage conservation and restore a \$2 million depleted reserve fund.
- Refinanced bonds with lower rates to obtain savings of approximately \$400,000 annually.
- Refinanced the Water-Wastewater Utility Bond to obtain \$7.5 million of new additional funding.
- Provided budgets to the City Commission with tax cuts 2001 and 2002 and held the line in 2003.

Barry University Adjunct Professor, Public Administration 2002-2004:

Barry University located in Miami; Florida offers Adult Continuing Education opportunities at various campuses around the state. The program is designed for working adults to complete their Bachelor and master's degrees.

Duties and Responsibilities

- Certified to teach POS 303: Public Policy and Administration
- Certified to teach PUB 402: Values and Ethics in Public Administration
- Certified to teach PUB 403: Public Budgeting and Finance.

Achievements:

Consistently rated as one of the best and most informative instructors, brings real world experience to the classroom

Florida Healthcare State Tax District: HealthCentral: Vice President of Governmental and Community Relations 1997-2001:

The West Orange Healthcare District was established by the Florida legislature in 1947 with the purpose of providing healthcare services to residents of West Orange County. The district provides hospital, paramedic, nursing home, rehabilitation center and walk in medical clinic to all residents of West Orange County.

Duties and Responsibilities

- Responsible for all inter-governmental relations with federal, state, county and city elected and appointed officials.
- Managed 50 employees and a budget of \$15 million.
- Served as the District's primary spokesperson to consumer groups, industry associations and the media. Also, prepared press releases for distribution to the local media.
- Responsible for all marketing and community outreach programs in addition to the district's Volunteer Program with over 250 active volunteers, saving the district \$500,000 in labor hours a year.

Achievements:

- Taught the departments under my supervision to operate like a business. Introduced sound management practices and a strategic plan for long-range involvement.
- Developed and implemented an innovative customer satisfaction program – improved internal and external customer service satisfaction by 50%.
- Reduced outstanding delinquent receivables by 50%.
- Over a three-year period, turned both the Walk-In Clinic and Ambulance/Paramedic Service into profitable entities. Improved the West Orange Healthcare District's image and awareness in this fast-growing West Orange community with community health and wellness outreach programs.
- Took on responsibility of employee satisfaction and implemented several programs that had a significant measurable improvement in work environment and employee morale.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Education

- Master of Arts-Public Administration-Webster University – 1997
- Bachelor of Professional Studies (Liberal Arts)-Barry University – 1995
- Associates in Science in Business – Management and Marketing-Valencia Community College – 1985
- National League of Cities Leadership Training Institute-Silver
- Leadership Florida- Florida League of Cities Leadership Program
- Leadership Orlando-Class of 42
- Leadership West Orange County
- World Class Academy – World Class Schools
- Florida Institute of Government-1994- Basic and Advanced Course

Community Involvement

- International City-County Manager Association (ICMA) Credentialed Manager, 2006-Present
- Florida City County Manager Association Current Member-District VIII Director as of June 2020
- Florida League of Cities
- National League of Cities
- Political Leadership Institute-2015
- Lake-Sumter MPO
- South Lake Chamber of Commerce
- West Orange County Chamber of Commerce-Past Board member
- State of Florida-Division for Children and Families (DCF)-District 7 Advisory Board
- Orange County Senior Resource Alliance Advisory Board Member
- State of Florida-Division for Children and Families (DCF)-District 7 Advisory Board
- Ocoee City Commissioner-1993-1997
- Youth Coach-Soccer and Basketball Ocoee Recreation Department
- Georgia City County Managers Association Past Member
- Georgia Municipal Association
- Chamblee Business Associations
- Cherokee County Chamber of Commerce
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Private Sector Business Experience-1976-1997

Kelly Services/Orange County Public Schools: 2011 to August 2013:

I served as a "Certified" Orange County Public School Substitute Teacher. The City of Mascotte has a Ten-Hour Day-Four Day work week, Monday through Thursday. I substituted for Orange County Public Schools at the High School level on Fridays. Kelly Services is the contract provider for OCPS, but it is Orange County Schools that decide and choose the substitutes. (State of Florida-Alternative Teaching Certificate)

Compression Therapy, Inc.-Owner-President 1991-1997:

Compression Therapy was a privately held Durable Medical Equipment company specializing in the treatment of Lymphedema and Venous Disease. The company provided pneumatic compression pumps and surgical support products by medical prescription to patients.

Camp International, Inc. Jackson MI 1984-1991:

"Durable Medical Equipment" sales representative in the State of Florida. 1985 was Awarded Sales Rep of the Year. 1986 was promoted to South East Area District Sales Manager covering an area from Washington, DC to Texas and Florida. 1987 was awarded Area District Sales Manager of the Year. 1988 Promoted to National Sales Account Manager and Corporate Trainer and relocated to National office in Jackson, MI.

Fischer Scientific Corporation, Orlando, FL 1976-1984:

Employed as warehouse assistant, receiving, shipping, and inventory control. Promoted to customer service representative, and then advanced to supervisor of the accounts receivables department. Final position promoted to assistant to the Sales Managers for both Industrial and Clinical sales.