



The Mercer Group, Inc.

COCOA, FLORIDA

CITY MANAGER

**Jennifer Lovitt Riggs
Cocoa, Florida**

Summary

- **Master of Arts – Law and Diplomacy**
- **Current position: Volunteer City of Cocoa, FL**
- **Cover Letter**
- **Resume**
- **Internet Research**

Various news articles – neutral mention
Linkedin

THE MERCER GROUP, INC.

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June 7, 2020

Donna Higginbotham
Senior VP, Mercer Group Florida

Dear Ms. Higginbotham,

I am delighted to submit my application for Cocoa's City Manager Position. Cocoa is experiencing a renaissance and I want to help it succeed. Cocoa's City Manager is *the* link between the elected leadership of the city and the professional staff who are the engine of execution.

Cocoa needs a City Manager to vigorously, transparently, and fairly implement the intent of our elected Council within legal and financial constraints. The City Manager's ability to lead, inspire, and grow the competencies of a team of city staff will determine whether Council's initiatives take root and flourish. The City Manager's assertiveness, backbone, and steadfastness will impact Council's ability to grapple with and resolve significant issues. As Cocoa embraces change, the City Manager can also serve as a resource to Council by identifying professional and technical innovations that improve and increase our solution sets. I am deeply qualified to do all this and more.

Cocoa needs a City Manager with the energy, persistence, decisiveness, grit, trustworthiness, creative thinking, fiscal responsibility, and diplomatic skills that I bring. There is no roadmap for where Cocoa is going next, but I have trained to thrive and help others succeed where there is no roadmap.

Throughout my career I have developed a versatile skillset that correlates directly with what Cocoa's next City Manager must bring to the table. At every point in my career I have met challenges directly and innovatively, while inspiring trust. This is because I genuinely enjoy coming up a learning curve, struggling with a problem, and building consensus for practical solutions. Likewise, I am fair, logical, transparent, and communicate directly. Just as importantly, I am comfortable both leading and taking direction.

I led teams of international students on multi-day outback treks and search and rescue missions in the mountains of New Mexico, with only terrain maps and a compass. As a consultant, I learned database design on my own and invented a process to increase my team's data capture efficiency and accuracy; my client and competitors adopted it as well. Through assertiveness and diplomacy I led antagonistic CIA and DIA intelligence officers from competition to collaboratively articulating how they could solve emerging intelligence issues with cutting-edge technologies. I briefed these findings to our most senior intelligence leaders, National Intelligence Officers, and the Joint Chiefs. Our

efforts helped win Congressional budget approvals to fund technology shifts that directly prepared U.S. forces for the successful mission against Osama bin Laden in 2011. I won numerous competitive proposals by designing teams, work plans, deliverables, and competitive budgets. While managing 15 direct reports and simultaneous projects, I delivered them on time and on budget, providing high value to the client while making a profit for my company. I was one of the firm's first recipients of the Values in Practice award. I became the "hiring model" for new hires in my team: "We need more Jennys. Find more like her and hire them!"

After moving from D.C. and starting a family, I started a company to invent and create dress shoes that professional women could wear comfortably all day. Corporate structure, strategic hires, global supply chain, freight forwarders, trademarks, intellectual property law, leather finishes, biomechanics of the foot, production, anthropometric data, earned media, e-commerce, sales promotion. . . were just the tip of the iceberg. And my shoes nailed it! I grew based on repeat customers both online and in 35 stores across the county.

Recently in Cocoa, I served as campaign manager for a political campaign that won 65% of the vote against the incumbent -- the first such successful challenge in at least 30 years. When I began, I had no idea how to run a campaign, but I knew I could learn quickly. I ordered a book, studied the issues and Cocoa's situation, researched campaigns I liked, formed a plan, and got cracking. I helped our team find its strengths and rhythms in working together. Our campaign was singled out in Florida Today: "Winners, Competent Campaign. . . an energetic and beautifully crafted campaign that should be studied by those seeking local office."

I now serve as the Chair of Cocoa's Sustainability Advisory Committee. I inherited this position from two prior chairs, and took it on at a time when the City had become reluctant to move forward. I rebuilt the morale of the committee, recruited new members, kept our focus, researched proper application of Sunshine Laws, persistently required collaboration from city staff, and built momentum. Today we have a plan to address Cocoa's unique, diverse challenges and a committee geared to drive forward.

In closing, I bring national-level government and business experience that translates, good judgment, positive energy, fiscal responsibility, negotiation and diplomatic skills, an analytic and innovative problem-solving focus, an approachable leadership style, persistence, assertiveness, grit, and abiding regard for democracy in a Council Manager context. I have already invested in Cocoa's future. I have demonstrated an ability to help Council get things done, even with no official power. Though I may be a surprising candidate, I think I am Cocoa's best and brightest way forward.

I look forward to meeting you and engaging more in this process.

Kind Regards,

Jennifer Lovitt Riggs

Jennifer Lovitt Riggs

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Why I want to be Cocoa's City Manager: Our village is on the cusp of a renaissance! I want to ensure the ideas and initiatives of our elected Council fall on fertile soil and are well-executed by an energetic, highly competent staff. We are a small city with almost everything we need to succeed; we need staff leadership who will help make it so. With generational roots in Brevard County and Orlando, my family chose Cocoa as our home. I want it to flourish and enhance what made it attractive in the first place.

Why I am the best person for this job: I bring a balanced perspective and approachable leadership style along with high energy, vision, versatility, persistence, proven ability to execute, and practical strategic thinking to create a roadmap where it might not have previously existed. Throughout my career I have managed teams with solutions-focused problem solving. Whether supporting national level agencies, starting up a small business, leading and serving on community boards, or homeschooling my kids, I lead teams to succeed on time, on budget, and with joy and camaraderie.

- National Government Experience
- Small Business Entrepreneur
- Versatile, Adaptive Critical Thinking
- Management Consulting
- Community Leadership
- Approachable, Uplifting Leadership

Work and Volunteer Experience

Campaign Manager, Lorraine Koss Cocoa City Council D4, 2018, volunteer

Designed and managed non-partisan campaign that won first successful challenge to an incumbent in 30 years. Campaign singled out in *Florida Today*: "Winners. Competent Campaign. In Cocoa, Lorraine Koss' 65-percent victory in her bid for the city council followed an energetic and beautifully crafted campaign that should be studied by those seeking local office."

- Researched campaign strategies, tactics, campaign rules, and essential milestones.
- Developed platform, designed signs, logos, color themes, and sign placement map.
- Led fundraising strategy and wrote fundraising letters; surpassed goal by 2x, all with small donations.
- Refined GIS-based approach to support canvassing of entire district; executed early and completely.
- Designed and produced mailings to inform and win voters.
- Identified team member strengths and fostered positive dynamics to ensure team was fully engaged, positive, and efficient.

Chair, City of Cocoa Sustainability Advisory Committee, 2017-present, volunteer

- Maintained morale of committee members; recruited new members; established long-term agenda.
- Researched sunshine law relevant to committee operations and working groups to increase available meeting times and accelerate progress.
- Facilitated incorporation of members' sustainability concerns; designed and executed objective processes to fairly and efficiently prioritize initial organizing goals and later final task recommendations.
- Drafted introduction of Sustainability Action Plan to provide context of sustainability in general, and Cocoa's historic resilience and diversity as a source of strength moving forward.

Nota Bene Shoes for Women, 2003-2009

Founded company to design, develop and market comfort shoes that don't look like comfort shoes, targeting professional women.

- Designed forms and patterns using current anthropometric data, rigorous fit testing, and wear-testing.
- Negotiated contract manufacturing with factories in the US, Spain, and Mexico; developed domestic supply chain to support US manufacturing using US-made shoe components.
- Achieved distribution in 35 stores and online; won the Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval.

Booz Allen Hamilton, McLean VA, 1996-2002

Firm invented management consulting in 1914, to provide businesses outside perspective and expertise to businesses and governments. Distinguished by thought leadership and invention: Naval readiness in 1942; invented PERT charts; justified funding for Werner von Braun in 1958 which led directly to NASA; invented Monday Night Football and the Super Bowl. Maintains deep roots in national security.

Future Intelligence Needs Analysis: Wrote scenarios to generate National-Agency modeling and simulation runs used to measure performance of potential remote reconnaissance technology. Coordinated associated intelligence information needs with 13 Agencies and warfighters.

Imagery Requirements Reviews: Led reviews of current and emerging intelligence problems in nearly 30 projects to assess and anticipate intelligence gaps or excess in order to refine allocations of intelligence assets and inform budgets for future acquisitions. Designed and refined working group strategies, re-designed data interface and data capture processes. Presented and vetted analysis and recommendations to senior leadership of intelligence organizations, National Intelligence Officers, and Joint Chiefs.

Process Mapping: Led national-level agency push to refine intelligence processes by improving efficiencies and accuracy, using proprietary process mapping software during working groups.

Values in Practice Award: first recipient of firm's highest honor for client work and corporate team-work. Hired "outside" normal model for National Security Team; became team model for new hiring practices.

Other Community Leadership, volunteer and paid

- Cocoa Citizen's Academy (2019-2020)
- Marine Resources Council Progressive Dinner Fundraiser, organizer and host (2020)
- St. Mark's Episcopal Church Vestry (2020-present)
- St. Mark's Episcopal Academy, School Board (2020-present)
- St. Mark's Usher, Daughters of the King, Sunday Breakfast Committee (2019-present)
- UF/IFAS Master Gardener Certification and Volunteer (2019-present)
- One Purpose Productions Community Theater (2015-2019)
- Homeschool Mother of Two and Classical Conversations Tutor (2014-2018, paid)
- Vestry Member and Personnel Committee Chair, Christ Church Episcopal (2012-2014)
- Sunday School Teacher/Committee, Lay Eucharistic Minister, and Flower Guild, Christ Church Episcopal (2008-2012)
- Weed Out Chair, Whitefish Bay Garden Club (2011-2013)
- Ways and Means Committee Chair, Richards Elementary PTO (2011-2013)
- Folger Shakespeare Library and Theater (1997-1999)

Property Management, 2009-present, investments and volunteer

- Transformed urban property from a concrete slab surrounded by invasive plants to a native species garden designed to attract pollinators, migrating birds, and children.
- Installed Monarch Butterfly garden at church. Researched history of native species prayer garden, cataloged current species, and calculated economic value.
- Managed inspection, structural repairs, and zero-scape multi-season woodland landscape design of cabin atop White Oak Mountain, NC, that had been neglected/abandoned for 8 years.
- Restored Indian River Lagoon waterfront: researched local groundwater and stormwater issues; removed invasive species and muck; re-structured coquina seawall to dissipate wave energy; stabilized slope to prevent erosion and fast run-off into lagoon; stabilized eroded ground around three 100-year old live oaks; re-pitched street-side terrain to slow stormwater run-off.

Graduate Fellow, Central Intelligence Agency, 1993-1995, paid

Recruited to Directorate of Intelligence, Near East South Asia, based on thesis work and ongoing studies.

Intern, U.S. Senator Max Baucus, summer 1991, volunteer

Researched current issues. Prepared for ASEAN delegation.

Education

The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts/Harvard University, Master of Arts in Law and Diplomacy (MALD), 1995

Conflict Resolution and Negotiation, TA at Harvard Program on Negotiation for Jeffrey Rubin. Focus on International Trade and Near-East/South-Asia Studies. Editor, *The Fletcher Forum*, Issues and Policy Section. Led a *cappella* group Fletcher Notes. Graduate Fellow, CIA/DI/Near East Southeast Asia.

Wellesley College, Wellesley MA, Bachelor of Arts (BA), 1993

Maxima cum laude. Phi Beta Kappa. Political Science and Economics; thesis in International Terrorism. Varsity Crew Team. Wellesley Senate, McAfee House; Nominating Committee. Transfer Student Committee Chair.

United World College, Montezuma NM, International Baccalaureate (IB), 1990

Selected to attend an all IB program with students from 80 countries in a class of 100. Two-year program focused on fostering international understanding in context of rigorous academics, physical challenge, and community service. Search and Rescue Instructor. Navigation instructor. House Representative and Fire Marshall, Curtis House. Community Choir. Continued oboe studies.

Edgewater High School, Orlando FL, 1989

Completed graduation requirements a year early; senior year at UWC. JV Crew, State 8 Champions. National 4s. Head Chorister, St. Michael's Choir. Florida Future Problem Solving State and Nationals.