

Lawrence F. Coppola

• larycoppola@wetapple.com

November 17, 2020

Ms. Liz Mathis, Human Resources Director
City of Flagler Beach
105 S 2nd Street
P.O. Box 70
Flagler Beach, FL 32136

Dear Ms. Mathis,

Please accept this letter expressing my interest in the position of City Manager for the City of Flagler Beach. My experience includes serving as Chief Administrative Official and Mayor of the City of Port Orchard, Washington (Population 14,800, Strong Mayor form of Government), and for the past five and a half years as the Executive Director of a mid-sized regional Port.

In Washington's Strong Mayor form of government, the Mayor serves as the City Manager, with direct accountability to the Council for every facet of the City's day-to-day business, personnel and financial operations, executing the policies, direction, and decisions made by the Council. So while I've never officially held the title of "City Manager," I've certainly done the work, successfully leading the City through the worst economic conditions since the Great Depression. In my current position, I have the very same responsibilities and report to an elected Port Commission.

Having enjoyed a very successful private sector career, I approach City administration as running a multi-million dollar municipal corporation where the Mayor is the CEO, the Council the Board of Directors, the City Manager the COO, and the taxpayers the stockholders. As a fiscal conservative, I'm a firm advocate of the budget being directly tied to a long-term strategic plan with stated, measurable, and realistically achievable goals.

My management style is open-door and friendly, yet staff will fully understand what is expected of them. Working in the private sector for most of my life, I believe government should be run like a service business because that's what it is. Staff is told that up front — that every resident is a "customer" and deserves to be treated like one. They aren't an interruption of the work, they're the reason for it.

My strong belief in "Servant Leadership" means leading by example. My experience in both government and the private sector has proven to me that doing so with honesty, integrity, transparency — and good humor — always delivers the best results.

The elected officials I've served with would most likely say I'm competent, with a positive, yet pragmatic, methodical, common sense approach, coupled with strong listening and decision-making skills, and an entrepreneurial, problem-solving, mindset. Staff would probably say I'm fair, open-minded, supportive, and they appreciate my availability, clarity, high standards, team approach, willingness to recognize accomplishments, and bestow public credit for them.

I believe they would both say I'm an out of the box thinker with an ability to recognize opportunities hidden in adversity, and that I'm a goal-oriented, get-it-done kind of guy. A couple of examples would be managing to build and pay for a complete new dock, and create a state-of-the-art marina at the Port after its 20-year old dock sunk in a storm — and do it in 9 months, permits and all. Also, creating new revenues streams at both marinas and boat launches utilizing digital pay stations. The pay stations eclipsed the Port's previous revenue by well over 1000 percent in the first year, and have grown every year since then.

In Port Orchard, I'm proud of the fact I was able to get the city back on a solid financial footing during the great recession, and built a strong management team that became the envy of neighboring cities. I'm proud of the fact we cut violent crime by 45 percent, and crime overall by 60 percent in my first year according to

Washington State Patrol figures. I'm also proud of creating working relationships with other elected officials that proved beneficial to the city.

Aside from my own successful business, which I've owned since 1988, my government service has seemingly been a case of stepping into difficult financial situations, and overcoming challenges I wasn't made aware of initially. However, I consider myself a "fixer," and for me, teaming up with the people already in place, assessing their strengths, tapping their knowledge and experience, learning from them, and overcoming those challenges as a team, is fulfilling. There are always things to learn, and I enjoy mentoring and empowering people so they will hold themselves up to ever-higher standards of excellence.

As a former elected official with no desire to ever hold political office again, the Mayor and Council will have an administrator dedicated to Flagler Beach's future success, and someone who has "walked a mile in their shoes" politically. This embodies a rare understanding of the challenges they continually face from constituents, stakeholders, other electeds, and outside influences. It also means understanding the importance of creating positive working relationships in Tallahassee with legislators and State agencies — along with the local and regional media. As someone who has spent a major part of my working life in the news media, it also means understanding the importance of maintaining a continually active online presence that promotes City objectives. The bottom line is that I'll bring a unique combination of successful private sector and government business management experience to the City.

You may wonder why someone from the Pacific Northwest is applying for this position. My wife and I are both native Floridians — she from a pioneer family in Jupiter and myself from Fort Lauderdale. We simply want to return "home" to Florida where the rest of our families reside.

I look forward to becoming an integral part of helping lead Flagler Beach to the next level of excellence. I sincerely hope you will consider the skills, experience, enthusiasm and expertise I'll bring to the City worthy of granting me an interview for the position.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L. F. Coppola', written in a cursive style.

Lawrence F. Coppola

Long-term successful leadership experience in City Government, Port and Public Works Utility operations, as well as successful private sector business. A pro-active problem solver with a proven track record of skill and expertise in the areas of:

- Day-To-Day Business Operations and Management
- Financial Analysis and Budget Development
- Long-Term Strategic Planning and Operations Analysis
- Change Management, Staff Development and Mentoring
- Manage For Today, Invest In The Future Philosophy
- Pragmatic, Unbiased, Big Picture, Forward Thinker

Achievement-oriented, pragmatic, "hands-on" executive skilled in carrying out the policies and direction of elected and/or appointed officials unbiasedly and with integrity. Innovative, tech-savvy, counter intuitive thinker with proven organizational and analytical expertise. Recognized for change management and political damage control skills.

- A dedicated team player able to work independently and with foresight within the organizational framework.
 - Track Record of working across partisan political lines to deliver successful, win/win results
 - Strong public speaking, group presentation, public meeting and forum facilitation experience.
 - Lobbying skills and the ability to leverage political outreach for positive outcomes
 - Skilled in building and leveraging community partnerships and working with stakeholders.
 - Extensive news media, public relations, message management experience
 - Award-winning written and online communication skills.
 - Excels at finding opportunities hidden in adversity.
 - A passionate believer in "Servant Leadership."

RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

Executive Director — Port of Allyn — March 2015 to Present

The Port of Allyn is a medium-sized, regional Port and the economic development agency for the area. It owns and operates a fast-growing community water utility, two marinas, two launch facilities, two regional waterfront parks and rental properties. Overseeing all construction activities, including two additional parks under development — a large, regional, destination multi-sports complex, and a fully ADA-Accessible environmental showcase being developed jointly with the Pacific Northwest Salmon Center.

Duties and Responsibilities as Executive Director:

Directly accountable to an elected Port Commission. Overseeing all day-to-day business operations of the Port, and profitability of its facilities. Charged with all financial, budgetary, and personnel decision-making, plus long and short-term strategic planning. Created and maintains relationships with all federal, state, military, and local government officials and entities. Serves as General Manager of the Port's community water utility, and Harbormaster of its marinas.

Achievements and Critical Leadership Initiatives

- Upon arrival, found the Port operating in the red, with seriously outdated business practices and technology. Implemented private-sector style and LEAN business practices, immediately slashing costs, while increasing cash flow, employee accountability, productivity, and upgrading customer service at every level.

- Launched mobile and online acceptance of credit and debit cards. The Port had previously only accepted cash. Built several new revenue streams including the installation of automated electronic pay stations at the marinas and launch facilities, saving on labor-intensive cash-processing costs. Significantly amplified launch fee and marina revenue over the cash-only "honor system." Improved revenues by rebuilding the Port's website so reservations could be made and paid for online for the marinas and park facilities.

- Choreographed hardware and software upgrades, including tablets for the Commissioners. Adopted new, State Auditor-compatible financial software, established real-time information sharing, system-wide networking, cloud backups, and enhanced digital security.

- Authored grants securing over \$1 million from the State Capital Budget, and the State Recreation and Conservation Office for property acquisition and major upgrades to the Port's marina and park facilities. Oversaw and coordinated every facet of those projects from conception to completion.

- Wrote the Port's 6-Year Strategic Plan, and three annual updates to its Comprehensive Plan. Implemented the state-mandated 10-year update to its Water System Plan, personally writing all Policies & Procedures.

- Initiated live streaming of Port Commission meetings, posting videos on the Port's web site for 24/7 citizen access.

Chief Administrative Official, Elected Mayor — City of Port Orchard, WA — 2008-2012

Port Orchard is a Strong Mayor Government City with a population of 14,800 covering approximately 19.5 square miles. It is located in Kitsap County, Washington (population 277,000), and is the County Seat.

Duties and Responsibilities as Chief Administrative Official and Mayor:

In Washington's Strong Mayor form of government the Chief Administrative Official functions as the City Manager, directly accountable to the Council for the day-to-day business operations, and all financial, budgetary and personnel decisions.

This included leading 70 FTEs, with all Department Heads including Police and Courts as direct reports. Also represented the City on all public agency boards and commissions, and served as the City's primary news media contact and spokesperson. This included appearances on television and radio, interviews with the online and print media, as well as preparation and distribution of press releases.

- Wrote and implemented the City's \$30.8 million total budget (\$8.7 million General Fund).
- Short and long-term strategic planning. Identification and resolution of long-range issues facing the City.
- "Hands on" point person and business contact for all economic development activities and inquiries.
- Led negotiations with four union bargaining units, as well as both public and private sector entities on a wide variety of issues, including professional service contracts, equipment leases, and major purchases, plus crafting Interlocal Agreements.
- Ensured the City's compliance with all County, State and Federal regulations such as health, environmental, growth management, and EEOC.

Achievements and Critical Leadership Initiatives

- Upon election, found the City using reserves to meet payroll. Instituted private sector and LEAN business practices, changing the City's approach to budgeting, spending, and service delivery. Stabilized long-term finances without layoffs or furloughs, and without cutting or delaying any capital projects — during the major 2007-2011 recession.

Net gain: \$500,000+ in annual cost savings, with the City paying back all inter-fund loans and creating regular monthly reserves in just over a year, plus significantly increasing the focus on, and levels of, customer service.

- Led three major annexations — two commercial corridors and an upscale residential area.
Net Gain: Over \$3 million in new annual revenues — after the cost of service delivery. These added over \$750 million in assessed value to the City's tax base, along with 36 new businesses including Walmart, Fred Meyer (Kroger), Safeway, Office Depot, Staples, a championship-level golf course, and 31 other locally-owned firms.
- Restructured the City's permitting process making it the fastest and most certain in Western Puget Sound.
Net Gain: Significantly increased revenue from additional activity due to faster permitting and absolute certainty.
- Restored trust and morale among the staff. Built a high performing management team, and implemented cross-training of all employees with an eye towards succession planning.
Net Gain: Much more productive staff, reduced employee absenteeism and turnover, slicing HR costs.
- Focused the police on shorter response times.
Net Gain: Achieved our goal of two minutes or less anywhere inside the City Limits within 6 months.
- Slashed overall crime by 60 percent, and violent crime by 45 percent (*WSP Figures), within 24 months.
Net Gain: A much safer City, making it easier to successfully attract economic development.
- Introduced online crime mapping and reporting, posting the names and residence locations of registered sex offenders on the City's Website. *Net Gain: Fewer registered sex offenders chose to reside in the City.*
- Qualified the City as an Association of Washington Cities (AWC) "Well City."
Net Gain: Two percent savings on City employee healthcare costs. Reduced absenteeism.
- Instituted an annual Customer Satisfaction Survey to measure the effectiveness of City services.
Net Gain: Integrated survey results into the budget and performance monitoring process. More efficient use of tax dollars.
- Shifted organizational focus from "budgeting cheap" to "Investing in our Future." *Net Gain: Reduced long-term costs.*
- Piloted a Citywide "Green Initiative:" *Net Gain: \$40,000 cost savings, reduced carbon footprint.*

Founder, and Chairman Emeritus, Wet Apple Media, Port Orchard, WA — 1987 to Present

Responsible for all business and strategic planning functions of my company. It became this area's largest independent media company, publishing the regional business newspaper and web site for more than 26 years, as well as several magazines. Served as Editor and Publisher of the newspaper until accepting an unsolicited purchase offer from the E.W. Scripps Company — a nationwide news organization — in 2014. Under my wife's management and leadership the company continues to thrive, publishing a highly popular regional lifestyle magazine, a consumer-oriented design magazine, and several web sites.

Education

- Dana College — Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration
- Association of Washington Cities — Certified, and Advanced Certified, Municipal Leader Designations
- Graduate, Association of Washington Cities — Financial Planning For Cities
- Graduate, Kitsap County Department of Emergency Management — Disaster Event Spokesman Training
- Graduate, Washington Public Ports Association — Executive Director Training
- Graduate of National Association of Home Builders — Executive Officer Training
- Graduate, Puget Sound Regional Council — State Growth Management Act local planning training
- Graduate, Anthony Robbins' Mastery University
- Graduate, Anthony Robbins' Leadership Academy

Leadership Experience

- Government Affairs, Marina, and Economic Development Committees — Washington Public Ports Association
- Board Chair/Executive Committee Member/Board Member — Kitsap Economic Development Alliance
- Executive Committee Member — Kitsap Regional Coordinating Council (Countywide Planning Organization)
- Puget Sound Regional Council — Represented all Kitsap County Cities at the 4-County Regional Planning Organization
- Rotary International Centennial Year Club President/Board Member/Member — Port Orchard Rotary
- Steering Committee Member — Kitsap Vision 2040 Planning Process
- Member — Pacific Coast Congress of Harbormasters and Port Executives
- Member, Evergreen Rural Water Association
- Board Chair/Finance Committee Chair — HousingKitsap (Local Housing Authority)
- Board Vice Chair/Finance and Personnel Committee Chair — Kitsap Transit (Local Transit Agency)
- Board Chair and Vice Chair (two terms each) — Kitsap County Planning Commission
- Board Member/Personnel Committee Chair — Kitsap County Health Department
- State Director/Legislative Policy Committee Member — Building Industry Association of Washington
- Board Member/Government Affairs Committee Member — Kitsap Building Association
- Treasurer/Past Vice Chair/Board Member — Washington Affordable Housing Council
- President/Treasurer (two terms each) — Northwest Automotive Press Association
- Board of Governors, Columbia Tower Club — Club Corp International/Seattle
- Umpire, Washington State, District 2, Little League Baseball — Certified at Majors, Junior, Senior and All-Star Levels
- Umpire, Washington Officials Association — Certified for High School, Select League, and all Tournament Baseball

Public Recognition

- Kitsap Building Association — City Official of the Year
- SBA Journalism Leadership Award — Winner for Washington State and for SBA Region X
- SBA Journalism Leadership Award — Top 5 National Finalist
- Washington Association of Realtors — Media of the Year
- National Association of Home Builders — Life Spike
- Kitsap County Association of Realtors — Citizen of the Year (twice), and Affiliate of the Year (twice)
- Kitsap Building Association — Affiliate of the Year (twice)
- Building Industry Association of Washington — Associate Member Appreciation Award