

## Patrick C. Comiskey

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1501 Edgewater Avenue  
Mount Dora, FL 32757

443-477-0972  
pccomiskey@gmail.com

December 14, 2024

**Doug Thomas, Executive Vice President**  
Strategic Government Resources

RE: City Manager Palm Coast

Dear Mr. Thomas:

I am excited to submit this letter of interest for the city manager position having spent 30 years building my knowledge of city government operations. I feel my background encompasses the broad and diverse municipal experience for which you are looking. I have successfully managed in tourist, mill, and rural communities and in an array of city departments throughout my career. I hold a solid record of positive, energetic leadership stressing quality customer service in diverse communities, support for the employees with whom I have worked, and productive partnerships with many intergovernmental and community agencies. I have also enjoyed good working relationships with most of the elected officials under whom I've served. I strive to be an effective listener and value input from others and I have always had an open-door policy with council, staff, and the community as I believe accessibility to be vitally important. I have always been very visible in my home community.

A strong attribute of mine is planning, particularly with infrastructure, and my planning and oversight experience is substantial. I also enjoy finding solutions to budgeting challenges. I have successfully prepared and managed many general and enterprise fund budgets, have overseen millions in capital projects, and have acquired many grants. I also possess an in-depth understanding and experience with an array of electric, maintenance, water, wastewater, marina, and storm water management issues. Additionally, I have extensive experience with successful beautification and park projects. Furthermore, I have undertaken measurable improvements to responsible service delivery through successful negotiations resulting in sensible agreements with county government and other area agencies.

In Mount Dora, after my first year, I had a good review from the city officials and they gave me a \$17,000 raise. I was brought in as a change agent and unfortunately a new mayor and the bureaucracy pushed back; eventually, leading to my position becoming untenable. I have provided a list of many of the city's accomplishments and fiscal savings under my leadership. I have also included recommendation letters from Mount Dora's new Mayor (Homich) and the Chamber of Commerce President/Executive Director.

My wife and I are looking to make a long-term commitment to a place in which we can become actively involved. We think Palm Coast is an appealing place to do so. We are also excited about the prospect of staying in Florida as my wife is a Florida native and I am a graduate of the University of Florida.

I look forward to discussing this position and special opportunity with you in more detail at your convenience and I thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,  
Patrick Comiskey

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## Experience

### **City Manager, Mount Dora, FL**

**2021 - 2024**

Population approx. 18,000; regular employees approx. 250, total approx. 325; annual budget about \$130 million

- Oversaw city operations
- Responsible for general, sewer, water, storm water, electric, sanitation, fire service, capital, CRA, and other funds
- Managed police, fire, public works, sanitation, sewer, water, electric, storm water, parks, recreation, economic development, HR, planning, zoning, and large tourism operations
- Reported to the mayor and six city council members

**Opportunities:** Proposed an alternative plan for the construction of two new fire stations and a new public works complex that would eliminate the construction of one building utilizing current structures and saving \$16 - 20 million; Council accepted my plan to eliminate the city police dispatch center in favor of the county 911 center saving over \$400,000 annually; eliminated and consolidated unneeded positions resulting in a net reduction of six positions for a savings of approximately \$400,000; directed key staff to seek piggyback contracts or take informal proposals to avoid automatic use of CMAR resulting in savings of \$330,000 on two different projects from what the CMAR proposed; collaborated with the city engineer and budget director to reserve over a quarter of a million dollars over two years to mill and pave the gateway street into town (project planned for fall of 2024); increased sewer fee to generate an excess of \$1 million in annual revenue for planned ongoing effort to reline or replace aging sewer lines; partnered with Rural Water to bring in consultants to assist the city in identifying an ongoing odor issue and implement action plan to combat it; convinced city council to upgrade sewer plant one in annual stages instead of borrowing \$30 million to perform redesign of downtown plant; guided key staff member to conduct a physical audit of the city's vehicle and equipment fleet and identified 13 vehicles on the city insurance list that the city no longer owned; partnered with state house member to secure \$707,671 in state allocations for city capital projects; tapped personal contacts in Tallahassee to secure \$4-6 million in federal funds for constructing a community building (not yet awarded); united with the Mount Dora Chamber of Commerce to increase welcome center hours of operation to include weekends and many holidays; reserved \$2 million over two years to secure property for expanding needed parking in the downtown; strategized with IT director to secure a software program with devices for tracking downtown available parking spots and for facilitating paid parking.

### **City Manager, City of Cambridge, MD**

**2018 - 2021**

Population approx. 12,326; regular employees approx. 112; annual budget about \$20 million

- Oversaw city operations and served as the city spokesperson
- Responsible for general, sewer, marina, and sanitation functions
- Prepared and responsible for city budgets
- City has an engineer, an architect, a planner, a contracted accounting firm, and an economic developer in addition to a police chief, fire chief and other department leadership positions
- Reported to the mayor and five city commissioners
- Served as supervisor of city elections

**Opportunities:** Everyday responsibilities involve working to meet the goals of a diverse council and needs of a very diverse community; worked with department heads and city staff to compile a detailed line-item budget booklet of the city's operations and prepared budget reduction recommendations; in partnership with state representatives, FOP leaders, and firefighter leaders, we proposed at the state house a police service fee in an effort to keep up with neighboring police salaries and benefits and a separate fire apparatus replacement fee to address the need to replace fire trucks (not just increasing property taxes); worked with Oasis marina management company establishing them in their first two years of managing the city's marina and worked with the company on restructuring their agreement in the face of COVID-19 revenue reductions; served as the city representative board member of a new volunteer committee, Cambridge Waterfront Development, Inc. (CWDI), on a large waterfront development effort involving the county and the state; teamed up with planning staff, county staff, Habitat for Humanity, and consultants on a neighborhood rehabilitation effort involving federal funds and initiated state and federal grant applications for a neighborhood park; collaborated with the Chamber of Commerce, Main Street, the county tourism office, and the county economic development office to promote the city and encourage various downtown revitalization projects; initiated a plan to apply for federal funds to eliminate environmental issues in the vacant, historic city hall that will ultimately lead to renovating and reusing the two-story building with its iconic clocktower; left millions in budget surplus upon my departure.

**Educational Sabbatical****2016 – 2018**

Furthered my education by completing a Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Administration (concentration in accounting) to compliment my BA and MPA; towards the end of this period, met with several cities to find a new employment opportunity.

**City Manager, City of Thomaston, GA****2002 – 2016**

Population approx. 9,500; commercial hub for several counties, regular employees approx. 80, originally approx. 135; annual budget about \$25 million

- Oversaw all city operations and served as the city spokesperson
- Responsible for general, police, fire, public works, water, sewer, electric, and sanitation functions
- Prepared and responsible for all city budgets
- Performed all hiring and firing
- Coordinated most major purchases
- Collaborated with multiple engineering firms and multiple attorneys over the years

**Opportunities:** Under the leadership of the mayor and city council, our team replaced out more than \$30 million of capital assets and infrastructure including the replacement of approximately one third of the city's estimated 79 miles of water lines, approximately 12% of the city's estimated 68 miles of sanitary sewer lines, approximately 37% of the city's estimated 57 miles of streets, and many miles of sidewalk replacement; doubled the size of Thomaston's largest reservoir adding 1/4 billion gallons of water storage; developed a popular 40-acre passive park with walking trails, water features, picnic and playground areas; reacquired two parks from the county (through service delivery agreement) rebuilding playgrounds, basketball and tennis courts; developed Lake Thomaston, the city's 70-acre reservoir with its 1.6-mile lakeside trail, for use as a new city park and as a tourism draw, with new restroom/pavilion and boathouse/amphitheater facilities; prepared and managed 14 balanced budgets, leaving approximately \$16 million in surplus upon my departure.

**City Manager, City of Wellsburg, WV**

**1998 – 2002**

Population approx. 3,300; regular employees approx. 35; annual budget about \$2.4 million

- Served as chief administrator and chief financial officer
- Responsible for general, water, and sewer functions
- Reported to city council (8 members) and mayor
- Reported to water/sewer board (6 members) and mayor
- Assisted all city boards and committees in bringing ideas to fruition

**Opportunities:** Under the leadership of the mayor and city council undertook factory tax audits (hired out of town CPA) and brought in \$92,000 in back taxes; initiated commercial garbage bill audits brought in \$17,000 in additional annual revenue; strategized with elected officials, city staff, and citizens on resolving dilapidated housing issues; prepared ADA plan for city hall; managed storm water separation projects; and oversaw approximately \$475,000 in capital improvement projects.

**Director of Purchasing and Personnel,  
Director of Personnel**

**City of Clarksburg, WV 1993–97  
1997-98**

Population approx. 18,000; regular employees approx. 220; budget about \$11 million

**Purchasing:** Organized, created, and reviewed contracts and agreements with vendors

**Some Successes:** Reduced a number of invoices through consolidated orders and payments; increased use of formal purchase orders; achieved expenditure savings in excess of \$50,000 in last fiscal year; created service contracts and implemented bidding on several items where it had not been done previously; created a draft for a purchasing policies and procedures manual.

**Personnel:** Created an employee handbook and many personnel forms and policies; designed employee appraisal forms and process; wrote numerous job descriptions; drafted organization charts for all city departments; served as secretary to management team during union contract negotiations; established an employee newsletter; coordinated department safety committees; organized a wellness program.

**Some Successes:** Developed and implemented policies for reducing sick leave usage; policies helped reduce sick leave usage by more than 35%.

**District Executive, Boy Scouts of America, Clarksburg/Parkersburg, WV**

**1989–91**

- Organized and guided the Boy Scout program in a four-county area of West Virginia; coordinated approximately 36 volunteers.

## **Education**

***Master's Degree in Public Administration***, West Virginia University, Department of Public Administration, 1993

- Graduate work performed for the Small Community Rural Wastewater Demonstration Project
- Employed as a part-time worker/intern for the City of Clarksburg
- Pi Alpha Alpha National Honor Society for MPA students

***Bachelor of Arts in Sociology***, University of Florida, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, 1988

- Florida Blue Key (one of approximately 120 students tapped annually)
- President Pro Tempore of the Student Senate (elected by 80-member body)

***Bachelor of Science in Business Administration (concentration in accounting)***, Middle Georgia State University, College of Business, 2017

- President's List Scholar

***Certified Purchasing Manager (CPM)***, Institute for Supply Management (ISM), 1997

- Completed the requirements for the Certified Purchasing Manager Certificate (CPM)
- Passed all four comprehensive examinations

## **Associations**

- International City Managers Association (ICMA)
- Institute of Supply Management (ISM)
- Former Harrison County United Way Allocations Committee Chair
- Former Flint River Council Commissioner
- Former Pine Mountain District Membership Chair and Finance Chair
- Former Wellsburg and Thomaston Kiwanis
- Former Knights of Columbus Financial Secretary, Council in Wellsburg
- Ancient Order of Hibernians
- Eagle Scout

**Mount Dora City Manager Patrick Comiskey  
Savings, Grants, and Cost Avoidance  
Summary 2021 - 2024**

✓ Advised City to limit construction to just one, new fire station -\$16 minimum but as much as \$20 million total avoidance	\$16 million
✓ Worked with personal contacts in Tallahassee to secure support for a community center in NE community (if/when a grant is awarded)	\$4-6 million
✓ Eliminated police dispatching services in favor of using 911 (annual savings of \$400,000)	\$400,000
✓ Elimination of administration police captain post (annual savings of \$85,000)	\$85,000
✓ State Allocation for Donnelly Street Milling/Paving	\$500,000
✓ Savings by not using CMAR for Liberty Ave. Storm Water project (one-time savings of \$300,000 or up)	\$300,000
✓ Directing staff to file Pine Street sewer line invoices to FEMA	\$877,666
✓ State Allocation for Hilltop Storm water project	\$207,671
✓ Eliminated Leisure Services Director position & Assistant (annual savings of \$175,000 in salary alone)	\$175,000
✓ Elimination HR manager, asst city clerk post, crime analyst (annual savings of \$180,000 in salary alone)	\$180,000
✓ Consolidated PIO & Economic Development Director positions (annual savings of \$60,000 in salary alone)	\$60,000
✓ Reduction in legal fees FY 21-22	\$25-35,000

- ✓ Library Simpson House Renovation work without CMAR \$30,000
- ✓ Negotiation with CMAR on pay beyond PO on WWTP 1 (below what the mayor agreed to pay the vendor) \$26,400
- ✓ Directed staff to perform a physical audit on all vehicles/equipment (discovered 13 vehicles on the insurance we no longer had) \$26,000
- ✓ Police supplies proposed for purchase, directed chief to Lowes \$15,000
- ✓ Additional interest to be received on one year CD \$12,000
- ✓ Directive to request 5% reduction in Street sweeper price \$9,000

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**Estimate/Summary Minimum with Grant \$22,928,737**

Without Community Center Grant (minimum summary) \$18,928,737

**Mount Dora City Manager Patrick Comiskey**  
**Projects and Actions**  
**Summary 2021 - 2024**

- ✓ Working with Rural Water and outside contractors to dramatically reduce, contain and monitor the hydrogen sulfide odors at the city sewer plant on Rt 441.
- ✓ Worked with city engineer to set up a \$3 million dollar project to mill and pave Donnelly Street from 5<sup>th</sup> to Limit. Worked with Rep Keith Truenow to get a \$500,000 allocation from the state.
- ✓ Setting the stage for replacing or relining sewer lines in the city with an annual commitment of \$1.5 to \$2 million annually with \$500,000 in annual assistance from the state. Promote a constant effort to identify ways to consolidate sewer lift station locations.
- ✓ Working with the Chamber of Commerce to get the “Welcome Center” open on the weekends and many holidays.
- ✓ Set aside \$2 million (after two years) for property purchase for parking solution.
- ✓ Working with County government to set up a plan for a three-year pilot project to establish bus shuttle service for weekends with the federal government paying for 50% of the program (starting in the late summer of 2025).
- ✓ Identifying multiple lots for possible purchase for adding parking spaces; had an agent approach the property owners for purchase prices.
- ✓ Worked with DOT officials in DeLand and Tallahassee to get a temporary traffic light installed at the entrance way to the Lakes of Mount Dora.
- ✓ Worked with Apopka officials to develop agreement to transfer city reclaimed water customers in Orange County from Mount Dora to Apopka.
- ✓ Recommended city-pull back from \$30 million dollar loan plan for WWTP 1 and instead prioritize smaller projects at the plant each year.
- ✓ Put together a plan for constructing a community center on Lincoln Street and received buy-in from state community development officials.
- ✓ Establishing a full-time urban forester position, prepared hire letter to finalist to be hired in January 2024.



- ✓ Initiated ongoing, annual fire hydrant testing by the fire fighters so they would know how to operate them in an actual fire event and the hydrants would be in working order.
- ✓ Initiated ongoing, annual pre-fire inspections of all commercial building by fire fighters so they would be familiar with the insides of the buildings should a genuine fire break out.
- ✓ Picked up the languishing pickleball court project and carried it to the finish line.
- ✓ Directed staff to install fire alarm systems in one water plant and two sewer plant facilities that did not have them.
- ✓ Directed a staff member to audit city vehicle inventory and discover 13 vehicles on the city vehicle insurance even though we did not have them anymore.
- ✓ Pulled back approximately \$350,000 in proposed purchases in 2022-2023 FY, deactivated many procurement cards limiting number for each department, and required departments to receive approval from the finance director or city manager in order to make purchase over a set number for the last two months of the year in an effort to offset underbudgeting of health insurance costs.
- ✓ Moving staff out of the Simpson house permanently so it could be renovated.
- ✓ Established a social media coordinator position and began a city social media presence and improved posting of information ahead of time.
- ✓ Increased transparency at city hall posting council meeting agendas earlier than in the past.
- ✓ Directed staff to contract with a collection agency to submit written off collectibles to further collection potential

James L. Homich, Esq.  
MAYOR OF THE CITY OF MOUNT DORA

621 E. FIFTH AVENUE  
MOUNT DORA, FLORIDA 32757  
352.383.3031 fac.8833  
jhomich@earthlink.net

November 27, 2024

Town Council  
Town of Juno Beach  
340 Ocean Drive  
Juno Beach, Florida 33408

Dear Council Members,

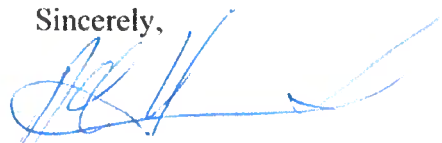
I am the newly elected Mayor of the City of Mount Dora after having served as a member of our Planning and Zoning Commission for several years. I was also a Council Member for eight years in the past. I worked with and observed Patrick Comiskey during his entire tenure with the City of Mount Dora. During the almost thirty years I've been active in City Government, Mr. Comiskey was our best City Manager. If he were still on the job, it would make my job as Mayor much easier.

It is unfortunate that my predecessor interfered with our Council-Manager form of government and obstructed decisions that were entirely within the purview of the City Manager such as staffing. Staff members who were being held accountable and not promoted based upon job performance and qualifications orchestrated a campaign with the former Mayor to remove Mr. Comiskey without just cause. That campaign included hiring an "investigator" who did not find any validity to the actual complaints against Mr. Comiskey but conjured up innuendo to derail his tenure. The resulting "Greene Report" is pure rubbish but was a foregone conclusion as that was Ms. Greene's purpose when she was hired by the former Mayor and City Attorney who have both subsequently resigned.

As a result of this mayoral interference, we lost a valuable leader and Mr. Comiskey's professionalism was wrongly tarnished. These unfortunate events led to a Charter Amendment overwhelmingly supported by our citizens (78%) that more clearly prohibited such interference by council members.

Mr. Comiskey was fiscally conservative and implemented many cost saving programs while improving the professionalism of our staff. After we lost Mr. Comiskey, our taxes and utilities rates increased. Mr. Comiskey was active in our community and received a lot of support from our residents and business owners. If you want a City Manager who works for your residents and businesses and improves your operations, I highly recommend Mr. Comiskey for that job.

Sincerely,



James L. Homich

Reference Letter for Patrick Comiskey

July 22, 2024

To Whom It May Concern:

I worked with Patrick Comiskey during his tenure with the City of Mount Dora. He was an excellent manager to work with. He attended our Chamber of Commerce board meetings and he and his wife Jane attended many of our functions. It was refreshing to have a city Manager who was willing to listen to the concerns of business owners, it was obvious he showed a sincere interest in their success. Although appointments could always be made with Patrick, he often popped into individual businesses to say hi or get caught up on their concerns and activities, yet another rare quality I had not experienced from previous managers.

Mount Dora is a tourist town. We are regularly featured in tourist publications such as Southern Living, Smithsonian, and a host of others. Patrick and I worked together to secure the resources and commitments necessary to open the welcome/visitor center on weekends and major tourism holidays, something that had not been done since 2018. For the first three quarters of fiscal year 2023-2024, we increased our visitor traffic by 93%.

A major undertaking Patrick initiated for the downtown was overhauling of Donnelly Street which is a main artery of travel into the downtown. Donnelly Street has been deteriorating for many years because of heavy traffic use and maintenance neglect. Patrick recognized this and broke the project into two parts and began working on the majority section right away. The first section was estimated to cost \$3 million to undertake and he began allocating resources to the project while the engineers began the design work. He worked with our state delegate to secure a half million dollars toward the project. The project is slated to start later this summer.

Since I arrived in Mount Dora in 1990, one of the biggest issues for the downtown district has been parking. For years, the city has wrestled with parking solutions. Patrick listened to downtown merchants and had the city hire a real estate company to help seek out owners interested in selling potential parcels for this need. He also put money aside after each budget year for parking. The allocation of reserve funds for parking was at \$2 million when he left office.

As in any interview process, the due diligence by the selection committee often entails outside research, I would like to add a brief statement regarding the investigation conducted by Lyndsey Green. In her report, it stated I was directed by Patrick to meet with vendors instead of City employees. This statement was false, I was never contacted by the author of this report to verify my statement. The employee who supposedly made the statement confirmed that was not what he said and referenced that many points in his statement were misrepresented. He went as far as writing to Council and the Mayor confirming this was not accurate, and I followed up with a public statement clarifying the false statement during public comment. I make this point to caution interviewers if you have read this report or found articles discussing this report that you consider that "facts as presented" may not have been fact at all.

In summary, I highly recommend Mr. Comiskey. He was as good a city manager as I could hope to work with. I have not worked with one who was better.

Sincerely,



N. Rachel O'Ryan

Mount Dora Area Chamber of Commerce President and CEO

## **Judge Stephen W. Rideout (Ret.)**

Advisor to  
Governments, Foundations & Non-Profits on Juvenile & Family Court Matters

May 15, 2024

To Whom It May Concern:

I am pleased to recommend Patrick Comiskey to be the city manager of your community. I was a Commissioner in Cambridge, Maryland when we hired Patrick to be our city manager. At that time, our city had many challenges and a limited budget due to a long-time government structure without professional management. Cambridge, after a two- and one-half-year community effort, established a city council-city manager form of government in 2015. Patrick was our second city manager.

I retired from the city council before Patrick moved on to Mount Dora, Florida but was elected mayor here in September 2022. Patrick and his wife, Jane, are and were friends and both were fully engaged in our community during his time in Cambridge. We often discussed the multiple challenges that the city faced and that he faced as city manager in a community that was resistant to change.

Patrick's time here also had to confront the Covid-19 crisis and its unique challenges and the many new ways that had to be created to keep employees safe while seeing that the day-to-day work of running the city continued. Through all of those difficult days, Patrick used his experience and exceptional knowledge of good and fiscally balanced government to keep our city going and was able to adapt to the multiple issues that we faced.

I have learned from my experience as a commissioner and now as mayor that a city manager can face political challenges when there is a change of administration, none of the former elected officials who hired him are in the current administration, and none of the newly elected officials have previously held public office.

Patrick faced that situation here along with a workforce that was not used to the city manager form of government and wanted to go back to the old ways of city government. Patrick was caught in the middle of those challenges and worked with staff and the elected officials to ensure that Cambridge met its obligations both financially and to the community.

I hold Patrick in the highest regard for the hard work that he put into his time here and his mild-mannered way of doing business to help reduce conflict and address employee concerns equitably and honestly.

I believe that you will see from his experiences here and in Mount Dora that he is the kind of city manager that can help your city be well run and responsive to your community needs.

If you would wish to talk with me further regarding Patrick's application, my cell number is 703-655-6149.

Sincerely,



Stephen W. Rideout

Samuel A. Brewton, Jr., M.D.  
100 Joyner Drive  
Thomaston, Georgia 30286  
(706) 647-9874

Diplomate of American  
Board of Urology

May 28, 2016

To Whom it may Concern:  
Subject: Patrick C. Corniskey

I have had the privilege of serving the citizens of Thomaston, Ga. in elected public office for twenty years as City Councilman, Mayor Pro Tem and Mayor. I say this as during this time I have had the opportunity to work with four different city managers at length, and had the opportunity to interview and evaluate numerous candidates before these positions were filled. My most recent experience was to work with Mr. Corniskey who served as CEO and City Manager during my administration as Mayor, prior to my retirement from office.

Based on this prior exposure to the field of managerial talent, it is my opinion that Mr. Corniskey

is as good as, or better, than the best available.

As can be seen by his resume, he is well educated in his field, and has an impressive work history. He is a thoughtful and competent administrator, relates well to his employees and enjoys their confidence and respect. He is able to communicate with elected officials in a comfortable and straight forward manner.

His approach to his profession is quite serious, but is also leavened and strengthened by an appropriate degree of humility and sense of humor, which enables him to acutally enjoy the sometimes more interesting interactions and outcomes which always seem to be a part of the work of government and politics.

I believe Mr. Comiskey's professional goal is to be the best City Manager possible and that he is willing to do the work and make the effort necessary to accomplish this.

It is my pleasure to recommend  
him for such a position without  
qualification.

Samuel K. Brewton, Jr.  
Thomaston, Georgia



THE THOMASTON TIMES-Tuesday, April 26, 2011

Page 5A

# City Manager Patrick Comiskey praised for service to city

By Larry Stanford  
editorial@thomastontimes.com

Nine years ago Patrick Comiskey moved to Thomaston and became its City Manager. At the Thomaston City Council meeting last week, Mayor Hays Arnold noted that anniversary.

"I believe it was April nine years ago that Pat Comiskey came to Thomaston. The contribution that he has made to this community is incalculable," Mayor Arnold said.

"I've had the privilege of working with him the entire time, as have several of you. He has been a God-send for this community.

"Again, some of you were here, and some of you were not here to understand and realize the situation that we faced 10 years ago. Pat has made it possible for us to not only survive, in my opinion, these times, but we have looked at a betterment of our bond rating, we have looked at a betterment in our financial condition in so much as it pertains to our reserve situation, we have witnessed and seen a betterment overall in the city's financial situation.

"There are some things that neither Pat, nor any individual member of this council, nor I can have responsibility over or for - the loss of several thousand jobs in this community being one of those items. But to be able to take a situation that was as dire as it was and turn it into what it was turned into, in the face of all odds being against you, then I want to thank Pat right now."

Comiskey said it will just be the removal of the mature timber in the area, but will not be clear cut like the city did several years ago. He said it will more of a thinning process. Rhodes asked if part of the area behind the Veterans Club is included. Comiskey said the creek behind the club is the property line and selected trees on the city property up to the creek will be removed. With no further questions, the vote was called and was 5-0 in favor.

The Council and audience gave Comiskey a standing ovation. In other business, the Council approved a tree removal bid for 4 1/2 trees in the Silvertown area. Comiskey advised the Council that Southtel was the low bidder with a lump sum proposal of \$20,200, and recommended the city enter an agreement with Southtel.

Council member Patsy Perdue stated she noticed some trees have had their tops removed, but were left standing. She asked if that was standing procedure. Comiskey replied that they will probably come back and finish taking the trees down, but he added that the city has a company that trims trees around electric lines that are also out cutting right now.

Council member Gary Atwater made a motion to accept Southtel's bid. Council member Wallace Rhodes seconded the motion, and it was approved, 5-0. The Council also approved timber bids for parcels at Hannah's Mill Reservoir and Southview Cemetery.

"We had Mr. Fred Whitaker help us to come up with some estimates - tonnage figures and solicit some proposals," said Comiskey. "We have a total of seven proposals, and the high proposal was \$57,616. That is an approximate figure, depending on the tonnage that is actually garnered once all the trees are removed. Mr. Whitaker has identified the trees that are being removed."

(Editor's note: Unlike the first favor.

Council member Rhodes questioned whether the Hannah's Mill Reservoir property includes the tract of land the city purchased from the Hightower estate. Comiskey said there are some trees on that property, and that the trees have been marked for selective harvest. Rhodes also asked if the harvesting at Southview Cemetery will be a clear cutting in some areas, or just removal of certain trees.

Comiskey said it will just be the removal of the mature timber in the area, but will not be clear cut like the city did several years ago. He said it will more of a thinning process. Rhodes asked if part of the area behind the Veterans Club is included. Comiskey said the creek behind the club is the property line and selected trees on the city property up to the creek will be removed. With no further questions, the vote was called and was 5-0 in favor.

## Upson offers incisionless surgery for heartburn

Many people suffer from Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease (GERD) that don't solve the underlying problem. The most common GERD symptoms are heartburn, indigestion, and difficulty swallowing. Upson offers a new, incisionless surgical procedure that can provide long-term relief from GERD symptoms.



# Wellsburg City Manager Receives Pay Increase

By JOHN PHILLIPS  
Staff Writer

Wellsburg City Council, meeting in regular session Wednesday, approved a \$5,000 pay increase for City Manager Patrick Comiskey.

The increase pushes Comiskey's salary to \$41,250. He has been in his position for three years. Voting for the increase were Bob "Weeno" Kins, Wayne Campbell, Diana DeGarmo, Roseanna Filberto, Donna Smith and Bill Garvey.

City Clerk Marlene Shook conducted the meeting in the absence of Mayor Ernie Jack, who was defeated for his seat Tuesday by Steve Mitchell.

The vote for the increase followed an executive session in which council members also decided on a new city clerk, Mary Blum. Blum replaces Marlene Shook, who was elected as the city's collector-treasurer during the April primary. Shook replaces Agnes Harvey, who retired.

Blum, of 1128 Main St., was also a candidate for mayor during the April primary but lost out to Jack and Mitchell.

Blum currently does title work in the Brooke County Courthouse. There was only one other candidate for the position.

Council also discussed a problem with leaks at the swimming pool, which is keeping the four-year-old pool from opening up on time. Comiskey explained that during a test in May, four leaks were discovered and that an effort was made to fix those leaks, only to find there was one more leak. There were hopes at one stage the pool would have opened Tuesday, but that was not the case.

He said it appears the pool will be opened on Sunday at noon, if repairs are made as scheduled.

Council discussed briefly with Comiskey the possibility of doing a cost-efficiency study concerning the pool, which also has a broken heater. It cost the city approximately \$445,000 to install the pool.

Council also approved a bid from Danny Hukill for construction of a shelter at the pool on the site of the

*City Council approved a \$5,000 pay increase for City Manager Patrick Comiskey. The increase pushes his salary to \$41,250. He has been in his position for three years.*

provide a shaded picnic area inside the pool area.

The size of the shelter will be 20 feet by 30 feet and 8 feet high.

Bids were also approved Wednesday for work on three catch basins and storm lines at the intersection of 26th and Charles Streets. Yost Excavating had the low bid of \$16,310. The city will also participate in the project, providing the pipe, three catch basin sand manholes.

The cost for the parts for the city totaled \$4,874.

Council also discussed briefly a handicapped ramp project at the 12th St. wharf. Comiskey explained no funds were allocated from council and that the public was going to raise the money. The effort never took hold. The site has been fixed up as it was in the past.

Council also approved use of the 17th Street Park by several churches in the area for a free concert on June 23 from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. Tagged "Brooke Fest 2001," it will feature several Christian bands.

In other action, council also canvassed and approved the official results of Tuesday's election. Those totals included:

Mayor, Steve Mitchell, 825; Ernie Jack, 432; Chief of Police, Stanley Kins, 730; Richard Ferguson, 535; First Ward, Mike Mitchell, 157; Donna Smith, 95; Second ward, Jack Yost, 291; Third Ward, Randy Fletcher, 345; Fourth Ward, Todd Richie, 211; Robert





# BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA

## ALLOHAK COUNCIL - NO. 618

**MAIN OFFICE:**

1340 JULIANA STREET  
PARKERSBURG, WV 26101-9310

304-422-4507 1-600-654-585A FAX 304-428-8594

**FIELD OFFICE**

227 SOUTH THIRD STREET  
CLARKSBURG, WV 26301  
304-623-3379

Mr. Patrick Comiskey  
P. O. Box 1371  
Morgantown, WV 26507

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is in reference to Mr. Patrick Comiskey, a former employee of the Allohak Council, Boy Scouts of America. Mr. Comiskey worked as a professional Scouter for 3 years in the position of District Executive. I'd like to highly recommend Pat for the position he is applying for with you.

During his tenure with us he showed the highest degree of many talents; reliable, trustworthy, good with people, knowing his job, completion of goals and a team player.

Please consider Pat for your position, I'm sure he will be an asset. Please call me if you would like additional information.

Sincerely

Michael Jones  
Executive Director/Scout Executive  
1-800-654-5272





# ☆ Mount Dora Ballot Question 4 (Vote For 1)



Participating

Show

Precincts 7 / 7

Detailed

Reporting:

View

Choice

Percent Votes

Yes (NON)

77.71%

6,500



No (NON)

22.29%

1,864



8,364

June 20, 2024

Subject: Letter of Reference for Patrick Comiskey

To Whom It May Concern,

I am pleased to wholeheartedly recommend Mr. Patrick Comiskey as the next city manager for your municipality. I have had the pleasure of working under the direction of Patrick as the Information Technology (IT) Director for the City of Mount Dora since November 2021, shortly after he joined as the City Manager, until my departure at the end of July, 2023. Throughout his tenure, I have consistently observed Patrick demonstrate outstanding leadership skills and impeccable integrity, traits which likely resonate with anyone that has worked for him, alongside him or has the pleasure of being a friend of his.

As a respected professional in his field, Patrick brings remarkable knowledge and proficiency of local government complemented by impressive interpersonal skills. During his time in Mount Dora, he employed creative strategies to address challenges and provide solutions to problems in a fiscally responsible manner. Patrick was so skillful that I likened his abilities to that of a grandmaster chess player. Time and again, he showed his ability to forecast all the possible scenarios regarding financial, human resources and political issues while providing effective solutions. No matter how complex or stressful a problem was, Patrick remained calm under pressure and delivered results aligned with strategic objectives. Patrick holds a firm grasp of resource allocation and operational procedures, effectively utilizing available assets to maximize productivity and streamline processes.

Patrick is a leader that promotes accountability and transparency within every department. Unfortunately, requiring accountability results in pushback from those uncomfortable with change. Nevertheless, Patrick remains committed to upholding standards of conduct, and unequivocally rejecting baseless claims aimed at tarnishing his reputation. Having personally witnessed his integrity and guidance, I firmly substantiate that Patrick Comiskey is precisely the caliber of candidate you seek. His vast skillset, exemplary character, and devotion to excellence render him uniquely qualified for the opportunity you offer. Without reservation, I encourage you to welcome Mr. Patrick Comiskey as your next City Manager.

If you require further discussion regarding Patrick, please feel free to contact me on my cell phone at (352) 875-6732.

Sincerely,



Jim Faulkner

Former IT Director, City of Mount Dora

January 8, 2024

RE: Investigation that was conducted by Lyndsey Green on Patrick Comiskey on behalf of the City of Mount Dora.

To Whom It May Concern:

It is my understanding that this investigation was to determine if a whistle blower claim filed against the city by the Interim HR Director held merit. The investigator asked council if should could further investigate incidents that were being brought to her attention. The City Council voted "no" until this investigation was completed. The investigator did not heed the wishes of council but continued going down rabbit holes. Most surprising, was that the investigator opined throughout her report making it appear the answers of those she was investigating were different than what was said or given.

For example, she opined that Patrick did not take my advice when that is not true at all nor is that what I said during my questioning. Lyndsey Green said, "Mr. Comiskey obviously did not give much weight to Ms. Kraynik's opinion because he appointed Ms. Helfant the Interim Human Resources Director over Ms. Kraynik's recommendation (albeit Ms. Helfant was appointed prior to having facilitated the survey)."

The common theme I see through out the report is that the people that were interviewed were all relatively new in their positions. Most of them had been promoted during Patrick's tenure. I do not know who created the witness list and why certain people were included and others were excluded. All Directors were not included in the interviews.

Patrick Comiskey is the CEO of the City. He is privy to much information and relies on his staff to help him gather additional information so he can make the best possible decisions for the City. A Director level individual should give their opinion to Patrick especially if their opinion is different from his. But at the end of the Day, Patrick is the City Manager. His decision stands and should be executed and supported by his staff. Just because a staff member does not understand everything behind the decision (and sometimes are not privy to this information) does not mean that Patrick is wrong. It means that they need to do their jobs and execute his plan. He is responsible for all Hiring and Terminations in the City. This task is usually conducted by his appointee, the HR Director. As the former HR Director, I never would have hired an employee's spouse, much less a Director's spouse, without first informing the City Manager. I also would never have instigated an investigation against anyone in the City without first making the City Manager aware of the situation. HR does not work in a silo. Employees are the City's greatest asset and its greatest liability. It is imperative that the City Manager is apprised of all situations that involve employees. If the interim HR Director was not keeping the City Manager properly informed, then these duties were fairly removed from their charge.

I felt that this report was rife with whining, either misunderstanding or all out lies, and a lot of hearsay. This is coupled with the investigator interjecting her own opinions and asking leading questions. I found numerous untruths in the report and incidents where a situation was taken out of context and made into something it was not.

I also feel that the employees were afraid of retaliation from the Mayor. Mount Dora as a City does not have a diversified job market. It is a tourist town and most of the jobs are either in hospitality or in the Medical Field. (Due to the number of retirees that move there.) Employees need their jobs. Mayor Chrissy Stile made it clear that she wanted Patrick fired. I believe this stems from his decision to hire a seasoned and experienced fire Chief instead of promoting an inexperienced Fire Chief who also happens to be the Mayors friend who she frequently goes out with socially. The employees had to choose a side so they chose a side that they thought would benefit them the most and protect them from the Mayors retaliation. If the Mayor was successful in firing Patrick, then any employee that sided with him would be next in line for termination. I have heard that she made that very clear in statements to employees.

It is also interesting to note that the investigator primarily spoke to employees who had negative things to say about Patrick. Most of the people she spoke with had received promotions from Patrick into their positions and had held them for less than 2 years. She did not include interviews from employees that were positive about Patrick. As the former HR Director of Mount Dora, I have only positive things to say about City Manager Patrick Comiskey. However, when she spoke to me, she only asked me about 2 incidents that Patrick brought up in his interview and nothing more. (And then she added her own opinion to change what I said into something completely different. See page 50 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph.)

I do not know who Lyndsey reported to during this investigative process. I believe that she was given a charge to remove Patrick from his office. I do not feel that this was a fact-finding investigation but instead was a witch hunt to build a case against the City Manager.

Patrick has been very fair in promoting both men and women into higher positions. In the two years that I worked with him, I never heard him raise his voice or utter a curse word. He is the epitome of professionalism and is very experienced and intelligent. (I also never witnessed him falling asleep in a meeting and we were in plenty together.) Just because some Directors want to work in Silos and not keep their City Manager properly informed does not make him a bad manager. It actually makes them bad directors and mid managers. I am ashamed of many of my former fellow co-workers.

This is a travesty beyond belief. However, Patrick can overcome this and continue being the professional City Manager he has always been. Patrick should not be removed from his position. Patrick is the only person I know that can re-build the City and the employee relationships from the inside.

If you would like further information or discussion, please reach out to me at any time.

Sincerely,



Sharon Kraynik

Former HR Director for the City of Mount Dora



TO: Patrick Comiskey

FROM: Cathy Lunday

*clunday* 1-16-24

DATE: 1-16-24

RE: Review of DSK Law Report of 1-3-2024

This was a disheartening report to read. It is even more demoralizing to attempt to correct Lindsay Greene's incomplete reporting here. Nothing good has come from this process, which has careened out of control and into absurdity. The collegiality that should be evident between department heads has vanished. How did we end up here, when all that was approved was a finding on the whistleblower complaint and conflict resolution training for all management staff?

#### Summation

It's worth noting that a couple of the prime complainants of the city manager are fairly young and inexperienced in their new leadership roles. Upon arriving in Mount Dora, the City Manager had numerous positions to fill, with very ambitious young folks wanting to be promoted. It isn't surprising that performance deficits and their inexperience over time have caused the City Manager to attempt to provide guidance and expectations. Any future city managers hired by the city of Mount Dora will experience these same misgivings and seek to remedy these same performance deficits. Is the City of Mount Dora to undergo a permanent cycle of disruption and cries of retaliation from these individuals, no matter who is the City Manager?

Although Lindsay Greene declined to interview me, my own experience as Library Director reporting to the City Manager has been refreshingly positive and professional. From his first week on the job, the City Manager displayed a keen interest in my operating ratios and determination to run a very lean but full-service public library. He was interested in my annual comparisons of our library's ratios to Lake County peers and no doubt drew confidence in my abilities based upon my willingness to evaluate my library operation candidly. His care and concern for me and my beleaguered staff during the First Amendment auditor incident was extraordinarily kind and compassionate. His understanding of our significant staff shortages last summer and willingness to expedite library new hires in order to prevent library closures was responsive and appreciated. It has been very frustrating to observe some of my newly promoted peers as they struggle with performance expectations, for which they blame the City Manager. It has been very demoralizing to recently see several of my young peers show insubordination and derision to him as well, both in person and in emails in which I've been included.

What has compounded this situation to such an untenable level is the utterly willful interference by the Mayor. She has aggressively courted employees' attention for her own political gain, has befriended and socialized with employees and has poisoned their working relationship with the City Manager. She proudly texts lower level employees from the dais to obtain immediate answers. She turned what should have been a unifying, happy event for employees - our Annual Employee Appreciation Luncheon - into a test of loyalty to her, with her "wear blue to support

the firing of the City Manager" ploy. The former PIO was so enamored with the Mayor that he stated his, "sole job was to have the Mayor re-elected." No competent city manager will be able to sustain this unethical pattern nor is it in the city's best interest to allow such fraternization with elected officials. The Mayor's instrumental role with all of the chief complainants is curiously ignored by Lindsay Greene. Lindsay Greene's exclusion of several supporters of the City Manager, who have witnessed this influence and would have given compelling testimony about it, is clear proof of her intentional bias. Going forward, what is desperately needed is a six-month moratorium on any direct communication or socializing by employees with the Mayor, to allow the city's chain of command and personal accountability to emerge from this chaos.

Lindsay Greene's writing style is reminiscent of yellow journalism, in that much of it is hearsay and not fact-based. Lindsay Greene's tactic of describing human foibles, such as fatigue during long meetings, is a clever way to diminish and belittle but it is not indicative of a professional fact-finding effort. There is a noted level of animosity in Lindsay Greene's choice of vocabulary that is indicative of partiality. There appears to have been little effort by Lindsay Greene to uncover motivations for employee complaints of the City Manager. Her carelessness in name spelling is an indication of her disregard for careful investigatory work. From the clumsy and heavy-handed bias evident throughout Lindsay Greene's writing, it is obvious that Lindsay Greene was instructed to reach a conclusion and not conduct any fact-finding. Lindsay Greene's report is a transcription, not an investigation.

### Comments

Page Paragraph

1 4 Incomplete

Just prior to her departure, Sharon Kraynik informed me that Kim Helfant wasn't ready for the director position. She also stated that Kim Helfant herself knew she wasn't ready and that the city would hire an experienced HR Director. Sharon Kraynik later told me that she wasn't quite sure how Kim Helfant ended up with the title "Manager", as she was not performing work at that level but more at a coordinator level. Nowhere in Lindsay Greene's report does she mention that prior to being appointed Interim HR Director, Kim Helfant had never supervised, hired, fired or been responsible for a unit of employees and lacked even the most basic supervisory experience. In addition, my staff and I had witnessed Kim Helfant have unprofessional responses, such as sharpness of tone, aggressive declarative statements and emotional outbursts, which are utterly unsuitable for an HR management position.

2 3 Incomplete, Misleading

8 7 Incomplete, Misleading

18 6 Incomplete, Misleading

Throughout Lindsay Greene's report 's references to the First Amendment auditor incident in December 2022, there appears to be no comprehension on her part as to the monetary motives for this group's harassment of city employees. Lindsay Greene's choice of descriptive language is

designed to evoke sympathy for the auditors, instead of accurately portraying their antagonistic role. Later on in the report (page 8), Lindsay Greene mentions Merry Lavern's attitude toward these callers. Throughout the entire months of December 2022 and January 2023, Merry Lavern's attitude and emotional support to library staff was exemplary. This incident was caused by the failure of Troy Shonk and Vershurn Ford, who experienced the auditors' first visit to a city building 30 days earlier, in November 2022, to warn most importantly the Interim Police Chief and all other peers, in order to provide training for the attack. This negligence caused significant distress to both library management staff and all library front-line staff, some of whom had panic attacks in the days immediately following the incident due to the hate speech, threats of violence and death threats made by the auditors. Throughout the duration of the auditors' attack on the city, Merry Lovern showed most welcome solidarity with library staff enduring the onslaught and is to be commended for her willingness to handle their hate-filled calls.

5      8      Incorrect

9      6      Misleading

The library experienced significant turnover in the summer of 2023 due to an employee's chemotherapy treatments and a spate of resignations of front-line staff. Summer is the busiest time of year at the library, with up to a 20% increase in circulation. Early on I warned the City Manager that if library positions weren't quickly filled, we would need to take the unprecedented step of closing the library on Fridays and Sundays, as 400 employee hours per week are needed to safely operate the facility and we were approaching only 250 hours total. The tight labor market and a manipulative employee who coerced a very young co-worker to resign with her contributed to this problem, which hadn't ever been this significant in the library's past ten years. Mr. Comiskey responded with quick turn-around of library hiring paperwork, although as the summer wore on it appeared that HR turn-around became slower and slower. If other department heads were facing an unprecedented crisis such as this, they should have conveyed their situation to the City Manager with the same request. Lindsay Greene could have learned the facts behind this incorrect perception had she bothered to interview me.

6      2      Incomplete

7      3      Incomplete, Misleading

12     4      Incomplete, Misleading

I had several discussions with HR's Kenny Hargraves regarding a former library employee and they are documented in written notes. This employee generated complaints from her peers and supervisor, who felt she had a disruptive influence on front-line staff and seemed to be manipulating a young staff member, whose frequent call-outs were the subject of progressive discipline by Jill Santos. Multiple phone calls were held with HR staff about this employee, whose resignation was regarded positively by her peers and library management staff.

8      2      Incomplete

The continued degradation of Mount Dora's public parks is not mentioned as a factor in Troy Shank's complaints of Patrick Comiskey. It is a widely held perception among both residents who frequent these parks as well as the non-Parks city staff who support city structures that Parks leadership struggles to set productivity and quality goals for staff. City parks have declined in the past five years to the point that Palm Island Boardwalk this past summer was considered an abandoned city amenity, without proper maintenance for several years. Parks supervisory staff has demanded to both Library and Public Works staff that bathroom floors be replaced, at significant cost to the city, when in fact they simply aren't being cleaned properly by Parks' Facility Care staff. Over the past few years, a substantial layer of middle management supervisors has evolved instead of flattening the department and increasing front-line workers. Like all directors, Troy Shank should have expected to receive scrutiny by the City Manager of his operations and worked diligently to improve our amenities instead of claiming he is above all criticism and fears retaliation.

10 4 Incomplete

Library management staff observed both Kim Helfant's and Kenny Hargrove's inability to reach a conclusion or recommend a course of action regarding an HR issue without consulting with each other. This is understandable due to Kim Helfant's utter lack of experience, coupled with Kenny Hargrove's background in recreation, but what was always lacking was Kim Helfant's acknowledgment of her lack of experience. Had Lindsay Greene been interested in the actual capabilities of Kim Helfant, she might have learned of her extreme inexperience, which would have explained her reluctance to stand on her own in important meetings or consequential discussions.

10 5 Incomplete, Misleading

Shortly after my in-person interview with Kim Helfant and Kenny Hargraves, which was held at a neighboring town's Starbucks, during which a high-ranking Fire Department manager walked in as a customer, prompting Kim Helfant to instruct both Kenny Hargraves and me to stop talking, making this "anonymous" interview an utter joke, Kim Helfant called me to inform me that there was now an "investigation" of Merry Lovern and she needed to ask me a few questions about her. I responded positively, with no negative comments whatsoever. I told her that I didn't know Merry Lovern well, but that she had always treated me professionally. I told her that Merry Lovern had given me excellent advice about a political issue with a group in town, for which I was very grateful. These positive comments were not included in Kim Helfant's report to City Council.

11 2 Incomplete, Misleading

Upon learning George Marek was headed to an HR Director interview committee meeting at the library, Kim Helfant called the front-line library number and demanded to know whether I was in a meeting. Staff was unsure, but Kim Helfant insisted and the staff member had to leave her post and determine where I was. The library staff member was troubled by this exchange. I had just experienced a second emotional breakdown and outburst by Kim Helfant over the phone regarding an unrelated issue, and determined that it wasn't safe for my staff or for me - fearing a

false allegation from Kim Helfant- to continue to serve on this committee, so I resigned from it to the City Manager via email.

19 4 False

Troy Shonk's characterization of First Amendment auditors and my role in it is false and slanderous. The auditor had a two-sided sign, with his film crew only capturing one side. Our police camera captured the back side of the sign, which stated, " Homeless veteran, please donate." Prior to the film he uploaded to You Tube, the auditor was aggressively confronting library patrons and families, which prompted families to complain to my front-line staff. The audit or caused a disturbance, refused to stop his behavior and I called the Police Department's back-office line to request an officer speak to the auditor and explain the city's panhandling and solicitation procedures. Shortly after the incident, the then-City Attorney informed City Council that library staff had done nothing wrong during this incident.

19 6 Incomplete

Troy Shank's exclusion from this project might have been partially due to his lack of a background in amenity design. The recent kayak launch is illustrative of this lack of experience in capital projects, with poorly planned site selection, donation of a prime waterfront pavilion to a commercial entity, no interpretative signage and predictably, very little usage by the public once open. Recent changes in Florida's boat rental laws in 2022 should have cancelled the self-serve kayak launch project entirely.

21 4 Incomplete, Misleading

Lindsay Greene fails to note that two FTE employees were hired to support Recreation's Before and After Care program, in addition to numerous seasonal PT staff. When this program was disbanded in August 2023, Troy Shonk reassigned these two employees without requesting permission for the additional expense without any revenue. No other department head would have attempted this.

25 5 Incomplete, Misleading

While stationed at the Simpson Farmhouse, Chris Carson and two other Parks staff members insisted upon room air conditioning units, which required the 117-year-old farmhouse's windows to be propped half open, causing water intrusion. The farmhouse's 16 windows were fully restored in the summer of 2023, which required the upstairs windows to remain shut, necessitating their move out of this building.

30 1 Incomplete, Misleading

The city's CMAR process has mixed results and the City Manager's skepticism of it is a welcome professional understanding of it. The current CMAR process includes a solitary construction firm for small projects, which, in the library's case, results in superior work but also significant management fees. A recent small project at the library received a \$39,000 quote from the CMAR, which exceeded the farmhouse's entire repair and maintenance budget by 30%. A local firm completed the job for \$8,500. The young staff members utilizing the CMAR for their

projects may not have had experience in managing public projects to the taxpayer's benefit, which was the City Manager's focus.

46     4     Incomplete, Misleading

Vershurn Ford's overly close friendship with the Mayor empowered him to produce fewer results as PIO. During his tenure, Vershurn Ford, who had no degree beyond high school graduate or experience serving as a civic spokesperson and media manager, produced significantly less library advertising than his predecessor. When asked about library press releases that had been requested, Vershurn Ford was never able to produce emails corroborating his efforts. In his final months as PIO, Vershurn Ford boasted to Library Circulation Supervisor Jill Santos that he had begun working at his new position well before giving notice to the City of Mount Dora. This was especially evident during his complete absence in the later part of December and most of January during the First Amendment auditor incident.

19 February, 2014

Honorable Mayor and Councilmen:

During the 22 January Special Council meeting Council voted 5 -2 to suspend City Manager, Mr. Patrick Comiskey, based on Council's interpretation of the DSK Law / Lindsey Greene's report. Prior to the meeting Mr. Comiskey had submitted to each Council Member a letter of rebuttal addressing each of the charges alleged by Lindsey Greene. However, during the meeting no one mentioned Mr. Comiskey's rebuttal, the facts he presented against each point, nor did anyone offer any consideration of Mr. Comiskey's rebuttal. In fairness, perhaps no one had time to read and digest the entire letter, but it should have been mentioned and given fair considerations during the discussions. Certainly by now there has been ample time for each of you to review the rebuttal, and we sincerely hope each of you have done so with an open-minded study.

Nonetheless, on February 20 you will face yet another important decision relative to the City Manager issue. This time you will most likely be challenged to decide upon retention or dismissal of Mr. Comiskey. In doing so, it is imperative upon each of you to give fair, unbiased and full considerations to all of the facts, and not limit yourselves to a report which clearly, in my opinion along with the opinions of many others, is undoubtedly biased, and which may or may not hold up in a court of law. More importantly Council must give full considerations to its obligations and what will be in the best interest of the City and its Citizens. Your decisions must not rely solely upon allegations which have not been validated nor proven to be truthful. Those allegations are merely the opinions of Ms. Greene and each of those claims have been clarified, explained, explicated and dispelled in Mr. Comiskey's letter of rebuttal. The issues and illuminations made in Mr. Comiskey's letter, along with all of the facts which have been provided by many of us, must be given careful considerations during your individual deliberations.

Moreover, your decision(s) must be in the best interest, financially and otherwise, to all Parties involved; Mr. Comiskey, Members of Council, City Employees, City Merchants & Businesses, and most importantly the Tax Paying Citizens of this City you were elected to protect.

Accordingly, we would like to propose a possible solution which offers what we believe to be a fair & reasonable resolution for the City Manager issue. It would be a 'Win-Win' for all involved, particularly the taxpayers who ultimately are bearing the load of this whole misaligned fiasco. We do not need to bear additional unbudgeted expenditures; We do not need to endure more chaos with respect to City governance; We do not need

to drag this issue out farther by trying to locate yet another City Manager, bring that person up to speed with everything that is going on within our City; and we certainly do not need to add even more costs to an already overspent budget.

With all of the foregoing thoughts and commentaries in mind, we believe the following course of action would be in the best interest of all Parties:

Reinstate Mr. Comiskey for 1 year with the following provisos:

1. Effective immediately all communications with the former City Attorney pertaining to City business past or present between City Employees, all members of Council and the City Attorneys shall cease. There is no need for any additional communications, written or verbal, regarding City business with the previous City Attorney as all details, records, information, facts, etc. sufficiently reside within the existing archives of the City;
2. Immediately hire a Conflict Resolution Counsellor to work with Council & Mr. Comiskey, and work with Mr. Comiskey & his direct reports. This was voted on and approved during the 20 June 2023 City Council meeting. The exigency of this action was again revisited and confirmed during the 28 August Council meeting. To date this agreed up action remains open;
3. Immediately the City Attorneys need to clearly explain the defined roles, obligations and responsibilities of the Mayor and all Council members;
4. The City Attorneys need to point out any and all past violations of Charter and Ethics violations which have been committed by everyone on Council, and provide legal counsel to ensure everyone knows and understands the ill effects of ethics violations, Charter violations, which shall include an explanation of how fraternization with City employees not only gives the appearance of an ethics violation, but it serves to undermine Policies, Procedures and normal day to day operations;
5. Immediately establish a set of mutually acceptable and attainable 'goals and objectives' for the City Manager with clearly defined points of success; document and sign those specific goals & objectives;
6. Council to meet with the City Manager every 4 months during the first year to review progress towards achieving the defined goals & objectives, highlight areas where accomplishments meet or exceed expected results, document areas requiring progress improvement, realign goals where necessary and redefine goals as may be required based on changes in on-going operations. After the first year Council and the City Manager can determine frequency of follow on reviews;



7. Council agrees to work with Mr. Comiskey to help foster and ensure success by offering its full support in accomplishment of the goals and objectives;
8. Council shall immediately back off from interfering with and interjecting itself in the day-to-day operations of the City;
9. Council agrees to support the decisions entrusted to the City Manager and will refrain totally from any intervention with City employees;
10. Council will immediately and without hesitation defer any City employee queries, complaints or any other communication, by referring the employee to his / her immediate supervisor/ manager;
11. Mr. Comiskey agrees to work with his direct reports in a professional manner (assisted by the Conflict Resolution Contractor) to rebuild those professional relationships and establish better lines of communications where needed;
12. At the end of the year, re-evaluate performance against the agreed upon goals and objectives – if then it is determined to be in the best interest of the City to terminate and seek another CM, so be it. However, if at the end of the year the CM has met and/or exceeded the goals & objectives then favorably reward his efforts and achievements.

In our opinion, this solution presents a win-win for all parties. We need an excellent City Manager, and based on Mr. Comiskey's past performance, his documented savings and the fiscal policies he has established we believe we have one. His job is not a popularity contest, it's a role of managerial responsibility and accountability.

This approach provides positive solutions to many of the problems which have been identified within our City. It saves us time (and money) by not having to immediately find a suitable replacement. It gives Mr. Comiskey the opportunity to once again prove himself and reestablish himself as an effective Leader, but as stated in the provisos above, he must have the unqualified support of Council. Additionally this approach can help put a lot of issues behind us and help us move forward as a City.

At the end of the day, the course of action will be a Council decision. We trusted each of you enough to secure our votes. We trust that at this extreme juncture you will take all of the issues, many of which were triggered by and caused by Council itself, into full accountability. We trust you to make sound, fair and reasonable judgements. Lastly, we trust you will assume full responsibility for your actions, whatever they may be, and you will accept accountability for your decision(s).

Sincerely, We the Citizens of Mount Dora (Note: All signatories have provided electronic concurrence with and approval of this letter along with authorization to insert their signature block):

Bob Gordon  
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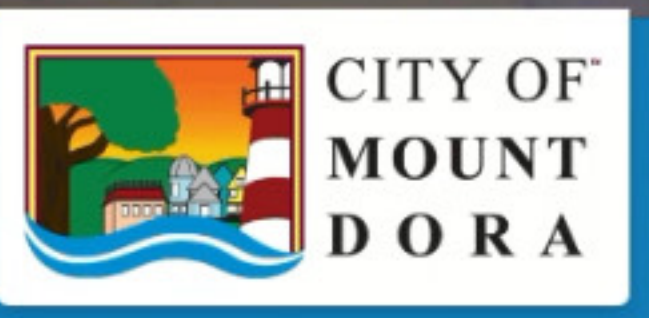
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November 1, 2022 City Council Regular Session - November 01, 2022

SIGN IN



Video player controls: play, 10x, volume, 29:25 / 1:18:21, full screen

- City Manager Annual Review 00:29:24
- Request Adoption Of The Single Reading (Final/Adoption) Ordinance No. 2022-18, Small-Scale Future Land Use Map Amendment For Green Wheat LLC And Donnelly LLC (1.14 Acres) 00:40:46
- Request Approval Of First Reading Of Ordinance No. 2022-19, Change In Zoning For Green Wheat, 00:45:01