

November 11, 2020

Ms. Liz Mathis, HR Manager  
City of Flagler Beach  
P.O. Box 70  
Flagler Beach, FL 32136  
hr@cityofflaglerbeach.com

RE: City Manager Application

Dear Ms. Mathis:

It is with enthusiasm that I submit my qualifications for the position of City Manager. Please see the attached resume as application for the position of City Manager of Flagler Beach.

I am pleased to share that I have the qualifications, experience and technical skills required for the position of City Manager highlighted in your advertisement. In my local government career, I have served as a City Manager, Assistant City Manager, department head and senior consultant. I have worked in all levels of government giving me direct experience with budget, human resources, fiscal policy, procurement, grants, emergency management, legislative affairs and planning and growth management to name just a few. One position I would like to highlight is my service in Port Orange, Florida as an assistant city manager. My service in the community occurred during a period of rapid population growth. During that time, I headed our legislative policy efforts, worked on numerous emergency management recovery projects and served as the President of the Florida City/County Manager's Association. All those experiences were among the best and most rewarding periods of my public service career.

I am skilled in working in communities with a coastal environment having served in Milton, Pensacola, Panama City and Port Orange, Florida and now Aransas County Texas. This experience has taught me about the unique qualities and challenges of serving in a coastal community. Earlier in my career, I also served as a senior level employee with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and a senior consultant for multiple local governments across the Southeast. In these roles, I have developed, an extensive professional network and have awarded, received and monitored multi-million-dollar grants that have helped tackle various local projects, and issues like coastal erosion, marine debris, marina restoration, water and sewer operations and community strategic planning. I have earned an impeccable reputation for getting things done and spent over 16 years working with all levels of governments in Florida and other states. Public service and helping others is my passion and I would like to bring those skills to Flagler Beach. I subscribe to the ICMA Code of ethics and have been a Credentialed City Manager as well as a 30-year member of ICMA and a past President of the Florida City/County Managers Association. My skills and abilities for innovation and results are widely known as I helped spearhead the development of the Florida Local Government Center of Excellence housed at Florida State University.

For the last three (3) years I have been working in coastal Texas as a senior technical advisor and employee for Aransas County. Aransas County is a small coastal County where Hurricane Harvey first came ashore in the United States. In this role, I work daily with elected officials, department heads, staff and community organizations as well as federal and state agencies to help design and lead their hurricane recovery efforts at ground zero of this horrific event. We have developed a comprehensive

plan to restore the damage done by Hurricane Harvey and have secured federal and State resources to implement this ambitious plan.

To date, our hurricane recovery effort has secured well over \$130M in Federal and State funding to clean-up storm debris, rebuild roads, make bridge repairs, restore communication towers, rebuild their destroyed courthouse/city hall and implement several major shoreline hazard mitigation projects located along the Texas Gulf Coast. The rebuild of the county courthouse and city hall facilities alone is a \$35M project. I have also spearheaded a major fiber optic loop project that has garnered support from five (5) coastal counties and the City of Rockport and has submitted a \$47M grant request to the State of Texas to realize the design and construction of this major project proposal. Implementation of this project will transform the economic development, communication and emergency management capability of these local government communities for decades to come.

In my career I have developed, organized and lead multiple long- and short-term capital projects, including the design and construction of roads, drainage, parks, water towers, gas lines, marina restoration and more. I have initiated and provided leadership for special projects like the "Citizens Chalkboard" budget outreach initiative, student government days, a multi-state/multi-jurisdiction response to Hurricane Katrina in coastal Mississippi, livable communities comprehensive planning efforts and the one-stop-shop economic development tool. Each of these efforts adopted innovative new methods to engage citizens, build complex partnerships, stretch the organization and attract potential investors in the community. I have worked closely with governments both up and down the hierarchy, developing mutually beneficial relationships, common ground and agreements throughout my career. Forward progress for priority projects, providing outstanding customer service and building a better community are my passion. I enjoy working behind the scenes to solve operational problems and helping others find the best in themselves and succeed in achieving their goals and dreams.

In closing, I would be delighted to share further how my knowledge, love for public service, and accumulated talents and skills can further the mission and goals of your fine community. I have family in Florida and would like to return to the State where my career began. It would be my honor to serve as part of your team and make a lasting contribution to Flagler Beach. I love the coastal environment of my home State of Florida and could see myself contributing my unique skills, background and knowledge as part of the Flagler Beach team for many years to come.

I look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Sincerely,

William R. Whitson

# William R. Whitson, ICMA-CM 2002-2018

Email [wwwhitson454@gmail.com](mailto:wwwhitson454@gmail.com)

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## OBJECTIVE

To return to local government service in Florida and contribute to my passion of building community by joining with a quality organization. Following several successful years as a consultant, I would like to return to a role where I can more directly impact organizational efforts to build strong community and create lasting ties within the communities I serve.

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE SUMMARY

Significant experience in local and federal government operations, serving in senior-level professional management and administrative positions. Extensive experience in budget/finance and fiscal operations, emergency operations, legislative policy, human resources, public utility operations (water/sewer/gas/electric) union negotiations, risk management, purchasing, communications, intergovernmental agreements, grants, police and fire operations, purchasing & contracts. Skilled in public meeting facilitation and intergovernmental relations.

## CAREER HIGHLIGHTS OVERVIEW RELATED TO PAST POSITIONS

- Provided critical leadership to develop and implement Five Year Technology Improvement Plans in Port Orange, FL and Hapeville, GA that transformed the technology, efficiency and effectiveness of the organizations.
- Guided and directed Citizens Chalkboard Budget Planning initiative.
- Successfully oversaw budget process including first year of the new Florida TRIM Act.
- Successfully worked with City Council to increase revenue growth by 35% with no increase in property taxes.
- Reduced tax burden by reorganizing City staff, saving significant resources and improving service delivery.
- Secured significant savings in employee health care costs in East Ridge, TN.
- Engaged as a private consultant on process improvement evaluations and payroll upgrade reviews.
- Initiated multiple process improvements including, but not limited to, risk management, new application of fiber optic technology, establishment of rural broadband networks, employee safety committees and insurance premium savings in multiple local government organizations.
- Led capital improvement projects (water/sewer, roads) in Milton, Panama City, Port Orange, Fl. Cairo, and Hapeville, GA.

## COASTAL COMMUNITY HIGHLIGHTS

- Coordinated the launch of the new City Marina redevelopment project for Downtown Panama City.
- Led collaborative effort between FDOT, City officials and citizens to beautify and re-design S.R. 5/Nova Road in Port Orange. Coordinated \$1.2M effort to redesign Jenks Ave. as a professional corridor in Panama City.
- Coordinated the development of the Riverwalk Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) outlining a major downtown waterfront redevelopment effort valued at over \$350M in Port Orange, Florida.
- Helped secure award of \$2.2M in BP funding for various marina improvements in Panama City.

## EMERGENCY RESPONSE HIGHLIGHTS

- Led efforts to develop the Florida Coalition EMAC response to Hurricane Katrina in south Mississippi, delivering nearly \$1M of local recovery aide. Extensive experience with Long-Term recovery operations.
  - Appointed by ICMA to serve on the National Emergency Management Network Board of Directors (NEMN). NEMN pioneered new emergency management software development for State/Local government use.
  - Served on the Incident Command staff in Hurricanes Erin, Opal, Charley, Frances Jean, Katrina and Harvey.
  - Served in Incident Command leadership for East Ridge, Tennessee Flood.
  - Provided Significant leadership in planning and constructing a new 15,000 sq. ft. multi-purpose City Hall building in Milton, FL, hardened for emergencies with State/FEMA grant and a 46,400 sq. ft. Courthouse Facility for Aransas County, Texas.
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## OTHER SELECTED HIGHLIGHTS

- Recruitment and opening of three multi-million dollar economic development projects for the City of Port Orange, creating over 350 new jobs and over \$30M dollars in new tax base.
- Led efforts to complete a new \$13M food distribution facility at new industrial park in Cairo, Georgia within a one-year time frame and creating over 80 new jobs.
- Worked with Cairo, Georgia Council Members to lower ad valorem property tax rate from 7.90 mills to 7.52 mills. Worked to Reduce tax rate in East Ridge, Tennessee by 1.2 cents per hundred.
- Worked to develop innovative grant incentive programs, attracting over \$500K in new investments, supporting expansion of various redevelopment activities in Panama City, Florida.

## RELATED EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

### **Director/Owner/Technical Consultant, Local Government Affiliates & Local Government Visions, LLC** **2014 - Present**

Utilizing my extensive public sector background, I envisioned, built and operate a consulting firm dedicated to supporting the improvement of local government operations. Previous and current Client base includes:

- The Florida League of Cities (FLC) - Providing training and technical assistance services through webinars on various issues impacting local government operations. One major issue of focus is the NFIP and Biggert-Waters legislation as well as the impacts of the Home Owners Flood Insurance Affordability Act (HFIAA) in Florida.
- Currently serve as a technical consultant & Senior Advisor to local governments severely impacted by Hurricane Harvey on the Texas Gulf Coast, providing key leadership to build and implement a Long-Term Recovery plan to guide the recovery operations in coastal Texas. The Recovery Plan will utilize over \$130 million in Federal/State funding for recovery operations to restart the economy and restore the area hard hit by this major storm.
- Conducted study to improve efficiencies for the Bluefield, West Virginia Fire Department Operations.

### **City Manager, City of Hapeville, GA (pop 6,800)** **2015 - 2017**

Served as City Manager responsible for overall daily operations to include Police, Fire, Public Works, Parks and Recreation, Information Technology, Economic Development, Planning, Finance, and HR. Budget of over \$30 Million and 140 employees. Small urban community located adjacent to the Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport in Atlanta, GA.

- Adopted a new FEMA Emergency Management Plan.
- Guided and directed Citizens Chalkboard Budget Planning initiative.
- Lead efforts to Adopt a new Liveable Community Comprehensive Plan.
- Created a One Stop Shop program, coordinating millions of dollars in new economic growth, jobs and tax base.
- Provided leadership for the City's active participation in the film industry and the ATL Aerotropolis initiative.
- Led efforts to develop and adopt a new Storm water management utility system.
- Organized T-SPLOST efforts to pass in the community netting over \$6M in new transportation project improvements.

### **Director, Panama City, FL (pop 38,000)** **2011 - 2014**

Served as Director of the Panama City Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) with four separate CRA Districts established under FS Ch 163. Total budget of \$4M and seven full-time staff. In addition, CRA was responsible to contract and manage expanded community Policing Services (6 FT Police Officers) as well as maintenance of various CRA properties and assets. Successfully negotiated contract service agreements; developed marketing and long-range planning efforts, organized community input for design and creation of new public spaces including streets, parks, downtown marina/streetscape and various urban development projects.

- Awarded and administered local redevelopment grant dollars. Grant program served as a tool to attract numerous jobs and hundreds of thousands of dollars in new investment and supported historic preservation.
- Led design development efforts for phase I Downtown Marina Master Plan Project valued at over \$13M in new City investment in 2012/13.
- Responsible for strategic planning and administration of numerous grant and construction projects such as the MLK Blvd. beautification and the Jenks Ave improvement valued at over \$1.2M.
- Implemented aggressive new efforts to increase and automate Code Enforcement targeted at properties that lowered property values.
- Worked as a key part of the City team to successfully secure the expansion of a medical software company iSirona/Nant Health in Panama City a medical software company with over 400+ jobs.
- Negotiated agreements to leverage over \$18M in new parking improvements at Bay Medical Center.
- Worked to establish plans for African American Cultural Heritage District.
- Pioneered and coordinated implementation of flexible streets program for Downtown.

## William R. Whitson, ICMA-CM 2002-2018

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### **City Manager, City of East Ridge, TN (pop 20,000)**

**2009 - 2010**

Served as City Manager for full service City with approximately 140 employees and a budget of \$14 Million. Services include police, fire, solid waste, streets, parks, library, building and code enforcement, traffic control, animal control and municipal court.

- Worked to secure \$2 Million in new federal grant funding during employment.
- Responded to reduce tax burden, re-organized the City staff saving significant resources and improving service delivery.
- Secured significant savings in employee health care costs. Successfully lead efforts to respond to major flood events impacting the community in September, 2010.
- Worked closely with developers and elected officials to lay economic development foundation and plans that helped secure a future 85,000 sq. ft. Bass Pro- shop site selection for the City.

### **Budget Director/Special Assistant, City of Panama City, FL (Pop 38,000)**

**2008 - 2009**

Served as Director of Budget for approximately \$60 Million and 550 employees. Services included police, fire, solid waste, water & sewer, marina, streets, parks, building and code enforcement.

- Successfully oversaw budget process including first year of the new State TRIM Act.
- Coordinated special projects for the City Manager to include bio-diesel initiative, and various issues associated with organizational efficiency and community redevelopment.

### **City Manager, City of Cairo, GA (pop. 9,500)**

**2006 - 2008**

Served as City Manager under newly revised Council/Manager form charter; a full service City with approx. 170 employees and a budget of \$34.3 Million. Services included electric, cable TV/internet, water, sewer, gas, landfill, garbage collection, roads/streets, parks, municipal court, small municipal airport, cemeteries, joint development industrial park, police, fire and building dept./code enforcement.

- Responsible for daily management of all departments and operations including NIMS training and preparation for City staff.
- Worked closely with the South Georgia Governmental Services Authority (SGGSA) to improve and expand fiber-optic cable services, Municipal Electric Association of Georgia (MEAG) and the Georgia Municipal Association (GMA) on various projects, intergovernmental issues and legislative matters to include long-range planning for consortium purchase of Nuclear power plant capacity.

### **Assistant City Manager, City of Port Orange, FL (pop. 55,000)**

**1998 - 2006**

Served as the Assistant City Manager providing major leadership and policy input to support the operation and management of the City of Port Orange. The City is a full service City with over 450 employees and a budget of over \$85 Million and a solid reputation for creativity, innovation, strategic planning and leadership in the local government community throughout Florida. Major responsibilities included management of the technology department, economic development programs, inter-governmental relations on a wide variety of topics, emergency management, grant programs including CDBG & SHIP entitlement funding as well as a Neighborhood Investment (NIP) Grant Program. Also responsible for franchise agreements, citizen service delivery and citizens complaint tracking system and a wide variety of additional special duties, programs and projects.

- Established innovative outreach programs such as team development of the City of Port Orange web site, a 3CMA SAVY Award winner (2003).
- Served as part of (NIMS) Incident Command structure for several natural disasters including wildfires of 1998, Hurricanes Charley, Francis and Jean.
- Responsible for organizing and leading a coalition of Florida local governments responding to long-term recovery efforts in south Mississippi after Hurricane Katrina delivering over \$1M in recovery aide.
- Responsible for all City's Legislative Programs. Served as the lead staff for City CRA's, environmental issues & programs.
- Served as Property Manager & Project Officer for well over \$15 million dollars in capital improvement projects and other special initiatives.
- Led efforts to create POG-TV, the first local government channel in Volusia County. Served as acting City Manager in absence of the City Manager when designated.

### **Management Assistant, Office of the City Manager, City of Pensacola FL (pop. 60,000)**

**1997**

Served as a member of City Manager's senior staff. Worked on a variety of complex policy issues including development of special assessment districts, Local option sales tax, City facility lease agreements, downtown re-development RFP's, various technology issues and cell tower siting policies.

# William R. Whitson, ICMA-CM 2002-2018

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## **City Manager, City of Milton, FL (pop. 8,500) 1993 - 1997**

Served as City Manager for full service City including police, fire, water, sewer, natural gas, solid waste collection, public works operations and a downtown re-development advisory board. Exercised management oversight for a budget of approx. \$10M, including supervision of 110 employees.

- Improved technology systems as well as customer service levels.
- Successfully worked with City Council to increase budget revenue growth by 35% with no increase in property taxes.
- Organized staff to effectively respond to Tropical Storm Alberto, and Hurricanes Erin & Opal in 1995.
- Initiated and lead capital improvements for water, sewer and gas exceeding \$5M
- Organized and lead initiative to build a new City Hall

## **Assistant Director for Operations, Stennis Space Center, Mississippi, United States EPA 1983 - 1993**

Planned and organized the establishment of a new field office for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to protect the environmental quality of the Gulf of Mexico and related waters. Prior to promoting to Assistant Director, I served as Communication Strategist for External Affairs and as a Presidential Management Intern - Contracts, Grants, Congressional Operations.

## **Assistant to the Director of Community & Economic Development, City of Milton, FL**

**1982 - 1983**

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### **Education**

- **Masters of Public Administration**, University of West Florida, Pensacola, FL
- **Bachelor of Arts**, Political Science, University of West Florida, Pensacola, FL

### **Community Involvement, Awards & Professional Associations**

- Credentialed by ICMA from 2002-2018
- Served on Florida Governor's Task Force on Water Supply & Funding
- Awarded Florida League of Cities – State of Florida Municipal Employee of the Year Award
- Awarded U.S. EPA Bronze medal for commendable service
- President, Florida City/County Management Association (FCCMA). During Presidency, efforts included:
  - Creation of new Center of Excellence in Florida Local Government at Florida State University
  - Conducted Tour De Florida bicycle charity ride across Florida- over 1,500 miles
  - Established standing Long-Term Disaster Recovery Strike Teams
- Past President and former member of FCCMA Board of Directors
- Served on various Florida League of Cities Policy Committees including legislative affairs
- Member, International City/County Management Association (ICMA), Georgia City/County Manager's Association, Florida City/County Management Association (FCCMA) & Tennessee Manager's Association.
- Selected by the Georgia Municipal Association to serve on the City Manager's Advisory Committee.
- Past President & Member, Milton, FL Kiwanis and Member, East Ridge, TN Kiwanis
- Past Member Cairo, GA Rotary
- Past Member of Hapeville Exchange Club – Former Chairman of Fund Raising
- Published Author- ICMA PM Magazine/Crisis Response Journal 2020 on Long-Term Recovery
- Co-Author ICMA Concept Paper establishing the need for a Foundation to support Long-Term Recovery Operations