

COLIN BAENZIGER  ASSOCIATES

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EXECUTIVE RECRUITING

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*Section 7*

*James P. Gleason*

*Belle Isle City Manager  
Candidate Report*

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*Cover Letter and Resume*

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**James Patrick Gleason**

24 Beacon Street Apt 206 A Littleton, NH 03561  
1237 Union Club Drive Winter Garden, FL 34787

Jgleason58@cfl.rr.com • 407-790-0816 • linkedin.com/in/jim-gleason-b42a9911/

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July 21, 2023

Colin Baenziger & Associates  
Attn: Colin Baenziger  
2055 South Atlantic Ave, Suite 504  
Daytona Beach Shores, FL 32118  
Email: Recruit24@cb-asso.com  
Telephone: 561-707-3537

Dear Mr. Colin Baenziger,

Offering a strong history of driving sustainable municipal business, economic development and financial growth, I am confident that my skill set and background align perfectly with your need for a new City Manager.

As the enclosed resume illustrates, I possess a comprehensive understanding of municipal regulatory, organizational, and personnel management practices. As a result, the City of Belle Isle, FL can trust in my ability to meet and exceed your expectations. Equipped with proven strengths in team building and leadership, I know what it takes to balance frontend operations with backend strategic planning. I will ensure the town runs efficiently, effectively and with a commitment to customer service.

Furthermore, my ability to cultivate and nurture cross-collaborative cultures among executive teams and stakeholders has transformed me into a proactive change agent and mentor. I excel in demanding and highly visible environments and these qualities attract me to an organization such as yours.

A snapshot of my career-wide successes thus far would highlight:

- Completed three financial audits for the Town of Littleton in just over one year bring the town current. \$1.5 million in emergency repairs of the town wastewater treatment plant. Purchase of 7 acres of land along the Ammonoosuc River to be developed into a welcome center, passive park and outdoor entertainment venue. Obtained \$300,000 in federal funding from Senator Shaheen for the project, also received \$700,000 grant for the wastewater treatment plant repairs and upgrades. Increased reserves from \$500,000 in 2021 to \$2.5 million in 2023 while keeping the same tax rate.
- City of Mascotte: The city was \$6 million in debt when I started February 2011 and on the verge of "financial emergency". Fostered business environment that supported swift financial recovery; implemented strategic plan to decrease tax rate from 9.6147 to 7.123% over nine years; achieved zero debt within seven years and built reserves from \$300,000 to \$2.5M. Obtained grants totaling \$2.5 million over 9 years for capital projects. Saved \$500,000 in future interest payments by paying debt off early.
- Directed complex projects and authored policies and processes to improve efficiency within police, fire, parks, water and storm water, streetlight, and solid waste utilities departments; advocated workforce effectiveness; negotiated contracts, forecasted and controlled \$8.7M operating budget and guided 31 personnel.

## Section 7

- Implemented tactical plan to improve services through collaboration with Lake County Fire and Rescue Services; saving \$100,000 in operational budget; eradicated duplication of services and double taxation which saved the city and taxpayers \$5.3M

I look forward to the opportunity to discuss with you in person how my background and personality would make me an asset to the City of Belle Isle leadership team.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James Patrick Gleason', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

James Patrick Gleason  
Attachment: Resume

## James Patrick Gleason

24 Beacon Street Apt 206 A Littleton, New Hampshire 03561

1237 Union Club Drive Winter Garden, Florida 34787

Jgleason58@cfl.rr.com • 407-790-0816 • linkedin.com/in/jim-gleason-b42a9911/

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### City Manager

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Results-driven local government manager, program developer versed in expansion, coordination, and implementation of all local government departments and policies. Exceptional organization, communication, and leadership skills to track, analyze, facilitate, and report response for local ordinances and policies impacting municipal and the private sector.

#### Core Competencies

- Grassroots Government Affairs
- Legislative Engagement
- Local, State & Federal Government Advocacy
- Public Policy Developments
- Intergovernmental Relations
- Public Relations Operations
- Relationship Management
- Social Media Content
- Program Operations
- Financial Accountability & Budgeting
- Problem Solving
- Economic Development
- Strategic Planning
- Organizational Efficiency
- Staff Training & Development
- Grants
- Commercial/Residential Development

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#### *Professional Experience*

Town of Littleton in Grafton County, NH.

**Town Manager, 2021 – Present**

The Town of Littleton is located in northern New Hampshire in the White Mountains. The town has a permanent population of 6,000 due to the workforce (industrial Park) and tourist the day time population can reach 15,000.

#### Key Contributions:

- The town's 2018 audit identified several areas that needed corrections. When I arrive the 2019 and 2020 town audits had not been completed. These were completed in September of 21 and January of 2022. The 2021 town audit will be presented June 2022. Staff addressed all audit comments and updated policy and procedures. additional TAD.
- Managed all town operations with operating budget of \$9,593,608 and 87 FT/PT employees.
- Wastewater Treatment Plant-Emergency repair and replacements of two screw pumps, and bar rack for a cost of \$1.3 million-project will be completed by 6-30-22.
- Completed the purchase of river front property that will host a Welcome Center, passive park and outdoor event area. The \$1.4 million project is currently in design phase with construction anticipated April of 2023.
- Working with the North Country Council and a housing assessment study to address not only workforce housing but housing needs in general in the north country.
- 2021-General Fund was 5.79% under budget returning \$520,130.51
- 2022-General Fund was 6.22% under budget returning \$595,918.63
- 2023-General Fund is 6.13% under budget as of June 30 2023.
- 2021-Town reserves were \$525,077
- 2022-Town reserves were \$1,200,109
- 2023-Town reserves are \$2,535,714

- Took the lead on regionalization and planning for EMS service to surrounding towns.
- Received grants of \$700,000 for improvements of the towns wastewater system and asset capital improvement plan
- Worked with US Senator Shaheen in obtaining \$300,000 infrastructure funding for Riverfront Park in Littleton
- InvestNH-Award the town \$120,000 Streamlined Permit Process

Conveyed successful service delivery strategy with surrounding communities with EMS Services based out of Littleton Fire Department. Improved town employee morale, increased transparency and accountability with the Board of Selectmen and the public.

### **Efficient Municipal Solutions**

**James P Gleason-Consulting, 2016 – 2020**

Consulting services to municipalities in the area of developing policy, procedures, outsourcing contracts for specific services (Building & Planning), capital projects and grants.

City of Mascotte in Lake County FL.

**City Manager-CEO/Community Redevelopment Area (CRA) Director, 2011 – 2020**

Recovered city from financial emergency by initiating strategic prevention and development plan. Adopted new tax rates, authored, and submitted grants, improved cash reserves, and negotiated departmental mergers. Researched, tracked, and analyzed public policy developments at local level that impacted financial status. Led meetings with elected officials by providing background research and talking points. Cultivated productive relationships with public policy makers to steer decision making. Lobby federal state and local representatives on policy and funding requests for projects.

#### Key Contributions:

- The city was in \$6 million debt when I started and on the brink of bankruptcy. Put a financial survival plan in place that prevented bankruptcy, paid 100% off the debt in August 2017. Some of the debt went to 2032, by paying off early saved the city \$500,000 in future interest payments and was able to recommend cutting and or lowering taxes the last 7 of the 9 years I was city manager.
- Created an environment that encouraged economic development; during nine-year and eight-month tenure, advised city to lower tax rates from 9.6147 to 7.123%; achieved zero debt within seven years after starting and the city had \$6 million in debt and built reserves from \$300,000 to \$2.5M.
- Administered operating budget of \$7.8M and directed 31 employees; led projects and authored policies and processes to streamline police, fire, parks, water and storm water, streetlight, and solid waste utilities operations; championed efficient workforce and negotiated contracts to outsource functions to save taxpayers \$200K annually.
- Generated \$2.5M in federal and state grants for city.
- Recommended contract development with Lake County to oversee fire department; boosted efficiency and improved public service to save city \$5.3M; eliminated need to hire six additional firefighters, purchase of new fire engine, and loan to build new fire station; negotiated annual contract with county for \$800K to add \$100K in additional annual savings.

City of Chamblee in DeKalb County GA.

**City Manager-CEO, 2008 – 2010**

Formulated plan to relieve financial issues faced by city. Posted all city budgets, quarterly budget reports, and audits on web page to increase transparency for stakeholders. Initiated recognition by ICMA as Council-Manager form of government.

#### Key Contributions:

- The city had paid for all capital projects so they had no debt, but after 2 months on the job I was advised city would not be able to make payroll in two months. Developed and had approved a plan for a TAD-Tax Allocation District.

## Section 7

The state would lend the city 70% of last year's state revenue but the note had to be paid by 12-31-2009. This was accomplished and the new budget was adjusted to ensure payment of loan and no need for an additional TAD.

- Managed all city operations with operating budget of \$15M and 100+ employees.
- Conveyed successful service delivery strategy with DeKalb County in Parks & Recreation and Police Services; elevated savings for Chamblee taxpayers by .56 mills on county tax bill; plummeting duplication of services and double taxation.

Kirkuk, Iraq.

**ICMA Local Government Advisor-Trainer:** (US State Department and US Military in Kirkuk, Iraq) 2007 – 2008

Worked under a contract with ICMA as a Local City-County Manager Advisor with the State Department and USAID the federal agency implementing and monitoring a contract titled "Local Governance Project II" in Iraq. I was promoted to supervisor of ICMA and RTI ex-patriots in Kirkuk as well as the Iraqi staff of 25. Kirkuk is a city located 120 miles north of Baghdad with an estimated population of 1.6 million residents with a budget of \$400,000 million.

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

City of Woodstock Cherokee GA.GA

**City Manager-** 2004 – 2007

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

- Completed \$2.5-million-gallon expansion of the wastewater treatment plant. Worked with CH2MHILL and the Mayor and Council to get the project back online, within budget and at full capacity. (\$18 million-dollar project)
- Restored morale and built a high-performance management team by restructuring and developing existing staff. Eliminated bureaucracy to ensure the organization became more responsive to all stakeholders. Initiated a new Development Review Committee to streamline development issues and create a one-stop process for landowners and developers for proposed projects.
- Completed Interchange Justification Report in partnership with Federal Highway Administration and Georgia Department of Transportation, Private Business and Local Landowners for a new interchange for I-575 in Woodstock (\$43 million)
- Initiated city participation in the ICMA Metro-Atlanta Performance Measurement Consortium.
- Complete makeover of city web page ([www.woodstockga.gov](http://www.woodstockga.gov))
- Initiated E-Better Place and We Care Hotline - online and 24-hour customer telephone access to report problems or concerns as well as requests for information.
- Revamped budget and financial systems shifted organizational focus from "budgeting to cut corners" to investing in the future and thereby minimizing long-run costs.
- Successful citywide referendum and negotiation with Cherokee County and Cherokee School Board for implementation of TAD (tax allocation district) for redevelopment of downtown Woodstock. (\$18million)
- Implemented a comprehensive storm water utility system.
- Restored financial integrity to the water and sewer enterprise fund with the implementation of new rate structure designed to keep pace with cost increases and inflation. New contract with Cherokee County Water and Sewer Authority to ensure water purchases and future wastewater treatment capacity. Initiated discussion and negotiations concerning consolidation with the Cherokee County Water & Sewer Authority.
- Provided budget to the City Council with a tax cut for 2005 and held the tax rate for 2006.



- Initiated the city's first Five Year Strategic Plan with annual goals and objectives.
- Chaired Cherokee NIMS-COOP City-County Coordination Plan

City of Ocoee Orange County Fl. 2001 - 2004

**City Manager**

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

**Achievements:**

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

*Additional experience as Vice President of Governmental and Community Relations with Florida Healthcare State Tax District - HealthCentral in Orlando, FL.*

***Education & Certifications***

**Master of Arts in Public Administration, Webster University – Orlando, FL**

**Bachelor of Professional Studies in Liberal Arts, Barry University – Orlando, FL**

**Associates in Science in Business, Management & Marketing, Valencia College – Orlando, FL**

***Certifications***

ICMA-Credentialed City County Manager (2006-2021)

Public Management, Georgia Institute of Government

ICS-100: Incident Command System

***Professional Training***

National League of Cities – Silver, Leadership Training Institute

Leadership Florida, Florida Chamber of Commerce

Leadership Orlando, Greater Orlando Chamber of Commerce

Leadership West Orange County, West Orange Chamber of Commerce

Florida Institute of Government - Basic and Advanced Course, Florida League of Cities



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*Candidate Introduction*

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**James Patrick Gleason**

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**EDUCATION**

Master of Arts in Public Administration, Webster University – Orlando, FL  
Bachelor of Professional Studies in Liberal Arts, Barry University – Orlando, FL  
Associates in Science-Business, Management & Marketing, Valencia College – Orlando, FL

**EXPERIENCE**

Town Manager-Littleton New Hampshire	2021- Present
City Manager, Mascotte, FL	2011 - 2020
City Manager, Chamblee GA	2008 - 2010
ICMA City Manager Advisor-Kirkuk, Iraq	2007 - 2008
City Manager, Woodstock, GA	2004 - 2007
City Manager, Ocoee, FL	2001 - 2004
Consultant-Efficient Municipal Solution-Winter Garden Florida	2016 - 2020

**BACKGROUND**

The Town of Littleton, located in northern New Hampshire near the White Mountains, is a thriving community with a permanent population of 6,000. However, due to the presence of the workforce in the Industrial Park, Main Street businesses, and the influx of daily tourists, the daytime population can reach 15,000 to 20,000 individuals.

Recognized as one of the 'Top 10 Best Small Cities in the US,' Littleton enjoys a favorable location. It is conveniently situated 2 ½ hours from both Boston and Montreal and shares a border with Vermont. Although the town maintains a steady population, it serves as a bustling tourist and business hub in northern New Hampshire. Visitors primarily come from Canada and the northeastern US, drawn by the proximity to numerous ski resorts and the opportunity for hiking, camping in the spring and summer, and leaf-watching during the fall.

In recent years, Littleton has successfully attracted new businesses and expansions, including Starbucks, Jersey Mike's, and Five Guys Burgers. Additionally, the town benefits from the presence of White Mountain Community College and Plymouth State University, providing local educational opportunities.

Littleton's budget for 2023 consists of a General Fund budget of \$9.8 million and a total budget of \$25.9 million. This includes allocations for essential services such as the Waste Water Treatment Plant, Parks and Recreation, and the Library. The town employs 87 individuals, overseen by ten departmental directors who report directly to the Town Manager. Littleton boasts a comprehensive range of services, including a full-service Police Department, Fire Department, EMS, Public Works/Highway, and a Transfer Station.

### **James Patrick Gleason**

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The three most significant issues facing the town are:

- **Workforce Housing:** There is a shortage of housing in Littleton, particularly in terms of workforce housing. The state has established a fund called Invest New Hampshire to incentivize the construction of workforce housing. Fortunately, Littleton was selected for state incentive funds for a housing project. The scarcity of rental units impacts local employment as it affects how far individuals are willing to commute for work. Many rentals in the area are vacation rentals, as landlords can often generate more income compared to long-term rentals.
- **Roads and Sidewalks:** Littleton has a total of 51 miles of roadways and sidewalks, which are subject to harsh winter conditions. Maintaining and improving these roads and sidewalks is an ongoing challenge. A capital improvement list is regularly compiled to prioritize road and sidewalk repairs, but it requires annual approval from the voters to allocate separate funds for paving.
- **Planning and Zoning:** Despite its small population, Littleton serves as a significant employment hub with an industrial park and major big-box stores. However, the town has minimal regulations and a limited building and development review or permit process. Currently, efforts are underway to adopt and establish building inspection, code compliance, and a more formal development review process. Implementing these measures is a priority. It is worth noting that the state motto, "Live Free or Die," contributes to local residents and businesses being hesitant to support new regulations, especially if they involve property rights.

### **GENERAL, MANAGEMENT STYLE AND EXPERIENCE**

The Town of Littleton, located in northern New Hampshire, offers a range of development opportunities, employment prospects, cultural activities, and recreational options. As a hub town in the White Mountains region, Littleton holds a fiercely independent population with little diversity. The residents are often resistant to change and are known for their frugality, which has sometimes resulted in emergency repairs for the aging wastewater treatment plant.

Littleton took a chance on hiring me as their town manager in 2021, despite my lack of ties to New Hampshire or New England. It has been a positive experience for me personally, as it has reaffirmed my abilities and strengths in my role. I am determined not to let one negative evening impact my life. The town employees and the Board of Selectmen have expressed satisfaction with their decision to hire me. One of my accomplishments has been negotiating three long-term union contracts, starting in 2023, for Public Works/Highway (2023-2026), Police (2023-2026), and Fire (2023-2027).

Financial challenges have been a common occurrence throughout my career in every town or city

### **James Patrick Gleason**

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I have managed. However, with the support of elected officials and staff, we have ensured that these municipalities are on solid financial footing. This has been achieved through reduced debt, increased reserves, and in many cases, avoiding tax increases or even implementing tax reductions. Littleton was two years behind on town audits, and the financial records were in disarray. Within my first two years, three audits were completed, correcting the financial records and providing the town with a clear understanding of its true financial position. I believe that I can offer uniquely collaborative approaches and solutions, even in demanding environments.

I have developed a highly adaptive management style, which has been crucial to my career. I have encountered professionals who require minimal input to perform effectively, while others benefit from more guidance and oversight. Throughout my career, I have implemented various personnel actions, both positive and punitive. Except in extreme cases, I have taken a progressive approach to address issues, offering employees opportunities to rectify their problems and ensuring that final actions do not come as a surprise.

Throughout my career, I have learned valuable lessons from every employee I have worked with, and I believe that most would say they have also learned a great deal from me. Staff development is a priority for me, recognizing that organizations are highly dynamic and constantly evolving. A static management style quickly becomes ineffective. Therefore, I strongly prefer flexible and participative systems, adapting my management style to best support the employees.

Elected officials I have served would likely describe me as highly competent, ethical, innovative, fair, dedicated, and strategically decisive. Staff members would appreciate my availability, clarity, consistency, support, high standards, team approach, and recognition of their accomplishments. Both groups would see me as a visionary leader who not only sets goals but also follows through to achieve them. Attached is a copy of my recent performance review from the elected board and my direct reports, covering the period from April 2022 to April 2023.

My greatest strength lies in collaborative consensus building. The approach I employ integrates visioning, planning, budgeting, design, project management, operations, and stakeholder engagement. A recent project involved regionalization of Fire/EMS services with three neighboring towns, which has received high praise and support as a potential solution to a statewide problem of funding and providing public safety. The project also included the addition of staff to the town's Fire/EMS through cost-sharing arrangements with the other towns.

In terms of weaknesses, I recognize that at times, I may tend to believe I can fix all problems. It can be frustrating when certain issues cannot be resolved, but I have learned to understand that there are situations beyond the scope of local government. Additionally, I tend to give individuals the benefit of the doubt, which can sometimes be a weakness. Time has taught me to 'trust but verify,' maintaining a positive outlook while ensuring that diverse perspectives are carefully and thoroughly considered. I maintain an open-door policy for town stakeholders and employees, adapting my management approach to best suit each individual. I avoid micromanagement and strive to create an enjoyable and relaxed work environment.

**James Patrick Gleason**

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I take pride in playing a leading role in the development of a regional EMS system, with Littleton serving as the base and key provider for three additional towns in the county. Additionally, I had to address significant failures in the wastewater treatment plant shortly after my arrival, which necessitated emergency repairs totaling nearly \$2 million. The plant is now operational, and we are in the assessment phase while seeking state and federal grants to complete necessary upgrades and ensure the plant's viability for the next 25 years. We have also implemented a town-wide Industrial Discharge Permit Program to meet new state discharge requirements. To engage the local business community as partners, we have planned a public education and outreach program highlighting the importance of their role in extending the life of the treatment plant and ensuring environmental compliance.

In terms of regrets, I reflect upon a difficult night in August 2020 during my tenure as city manager for Mascotte, Florida. This period involved ongoing debates and policy decisions regarding the merger of the city's fire department with Lake County. Unfortunately, I allowed nine months of emotions and frustrations to get the best of me, resulting in the loss of my temper and making unprofessional remarks at the end of a council meeting. I take full responsibility for my actions and recognize that it is something I can never truly live down. This incident served as a valuable lesson, prompting me to seek assistance in managing stress and emotions that come with this profession. While I deeply regret what transpired, I was a competent manager before the incident and have since grown and become an even better manager as a result.

**WHY I AM APPLYING TO THE CITY OF BELLE ISLE AS CITY MANAGER**

Firstly, I consider myself a true Floridian, having moved to the Orlando area in 1965. Florida has always been my home, and my family and friends are here in Central Florida. The desire to return home and be closer to my loved ones drives my strong interest in this position.

Secondly, my extensive experience as a city manager in both Orange and Lake County has provided me with a deep understanding of how things work not only in Florida but also within the Central Florida Region. I have fostered valuable working relationships with professionals at the City of Orlando and Orange County Government, which will allow me to quickly get up to speed and reestablish those connections despite my current role in Littleton, New Hampshire, where I have been since April 2021.

Third, my personal ties to Belle Isle are significant, having graduated from Oak Ridge High School and maintaining long-term friendships with individuals from the area who attended school with me. My time spent in Belle Isle during my youth means that the transition into the role of City Manager would be seamless, enabling me to promptly address the challenges that the city is facing.

I understand the delicate balance between maintaining the small city feel and charm of Belle Isle while effectively managing the impact of the explosive growth occurring in the Orlando area.

**THE CHALLENGES I FORESEE FOR THE CITY OF BELLE ISLE INCLUDE**

- Addressing the desire for growth while facing obstacles to annexation due to regulations and developed areas surrounding the city. I believe that fostering positive interlocal relationships and skillful negotiation with property owners, residents, and Orange County will present opportunities for successful annexation efforts.
- Overcoming the space limitations of the current city hall and police department, with parking being a pressing issue. Identifying suitable locations for new facilities and securing funding for their development will be a priority.
- Ensuring that Belle Isle has a prominent role and genuine partnership with the county and neighboring cities on crucial matters such as annexation, traffic, and growth impacts. Additionally, collaborating with the Lake Conway Water and Navigation Control District will be essential to rebalancing the equity in the cost of providing public safety services on the lakes.
- Promoting a culture of open, honest, and transparent communication both internally within the organization and externally with the community. Alignment between city employees and the community is crucial when addressing challenges and seeking solutions.
- Maintaining a strong and effective relationship with Orange County, the Orange County Sheriff, and the city's police department to ensure the safety and well-being of Belle Isle residents, making it an ideal community to live, raise a family, and conduct business.
- Ensuring comprehensive communication with elected officials and citizens, keeping them fully informed about their city government, and striving to maintain transparency, openness, honesty, and a strong focus on customer service.
- Cultivating intergovernmental partnerships and fostering open, positive relationships with the state, county, City of Orlando, and all other governmental entities that have an impact on the quality of life in Belle Isle.

**DURING THE INITIAL SIX MONTHS IN THE ROLE, MY PRIMARY FOCUS WILL BE**

- Engaging in meetings with staff, elected officials, citizen groups, and collaborating with county/state officials to thoroughly assess city operations, concerns, positions, and dynamics.
- Gaining a comprehensive understanding of the Council's goals and perspectives to formulate appropriate strategic directions for the city's development.



### **James Patrick Gleason**

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- Conducting a thorough evaluation of the City's financial position and studying anticipated future trends to make informed decisions.
- Familiarizing myself with the relevant codes and policies of the City to ensure compliance and effective governance.
- Assessing the current performance measures in place to gauge if the organizational goals are being met and if we are fulfilling the expectations of the commission and citizens.

I have a strong working relationship with the media, and my commitment is to ensure accurate and high-quality coverage for the citizens of Belle Isle. I will make consistent efforts to keep the media updated on the City's operations and programs, appearing as needed or preferred by the Mayor and elected officials.

Regarding any potential negative feedback, I do not anticipate any issues, except for a possible exception involving a former elected official from the City of Mascotte. Nonetheless, I have learned valuable lessons from my challenging experience in August 2020, which drove me to seek opportunities outside of Florida. While I have successfully contributed to Littleton's financial and organizational growth, my heart is set on returning to Central Florida to conclude my career in a place I consider home.

In my spare time, I enjoy various activities such as football, traveling with my family, spending quality time with my grandchildren and friends, and relaxing at the beach.

### **SIX ADJECTIVES I WOULD USE TO DESCRIBE MYSELF**

- Innovative
- Decisive
- Accessible
- Humorous
- Ethical
- Proactive

I believe these qualities are crucial in effectively addressing the challenges and opportunities that the City of Belle Isle faces. My aspiration is to be an instrumental force in ensuring the city's progress and maintaining its unique charm amidst the vibrant growth of Central Florida. I sincerely look forward to contributing my expertise, experience, and passion as the City Manager of Belle Isle.

**James Patrick Gleason**

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**REASON FOR DEPARTING CURRENT POSITION**

I am grateful for the opportunity that the Board of Selectmen in Littleton has given me. After my challenging experience in August 2020 at the City of Mascotte, I did not want my career in this profession to end on that note. I took a position in a state I was unfamiliar with, in a town I had never visited, and made it work despite leaving my family in Central Florida.

Littleton is currently in a stronger financial and organizational position than most locals can recall. As an outsider from Florida, I was able to prove myself and win over those who initially opposed my hiring. I brought new ideas and perspectives to the town while also learning valuable lessons about the profession and myself from the local community. While I have exceeded expectations as Littleton's town manager, I feel it is time to seek an opportunity back in Florida to be closer to my family and friends.

Although I have less than a year remaining on my three-year contract, I have informed the Board of Selectmen that I am actively seeking a position in Florida. Specifically, I aspire to finish my career working in Central Florida. Florida is home, particularly the Orlando area. I will miss the daily mountain views, hikes, kayaking, and even snow skiing (who would have thought an old Florida guy would learn to snow ski), but I believe that returning to Central Florida presents a fantastic opportunity with the City of Belle Isle.

**CURRENT / MOST RECENT SALARY**

My base compensation at the Town of Littleton, New Hampshire is \$123,632.

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*CB&A Background Checks*

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**Background Check Summary for  
JAMES "JIM" PATRICK GLEASON**

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**Criminal Records Checks:**

Nationwide Criminal Records Search	No Records Found
County	
Grafton County, NH	No Records Found
Orange County, FL	No Records Found
Lake County, FL	<b>August 2020</b> – Felony and Misdemeanor filed against Mr. Gleason. <b>Disposition: November 2020</b> <b>Charges dropped.</b>
	<i>*See Personal Disclosure for Candidate Explanation for Records Found</i>
DeKalb County, GA	No Records Found
State	
New Hampshire	No Records Found
Florida	No Records Found
Georgia	No Records Found

**Civil Records Checks:**

County	
Grafton County, NH	No Records Found
Orange County, FL	<b>November 2016</b> – Disposition of Personal Property without Administration. <b>Status: Closed.</b>
	<i>*See pages 20-21 for Candidate Explanation for Records Found</i>
Lake County, FL	<b>April 2014</b> – Writ of Habeas Corp. Mr. Gleason is included in his capacity as City Manager.
DeKalb County, GA	No Records Found
Federal	
New Hampshire	No Records Found

**Background Check Summary for  
JAMES "JIM" PATRICK GLEASON**

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Florida	<b>June 2004</b> – Mr. Gleason filed a civil rights lawsuit against City of Ocoee, FL. <b><i>Disposition: August 2005 Dismissed with Prejudice.</i></b>  <i>*See Personal Disclosure for Candidate Explanation for Records Found</i>
Georgia	No Records Found
<b>Motor Vehicle</b>	
New Hampshire	No Records Found
<b>Credit</b>	Excellent
<b>Personal Bankruptcy</b>	No Records Found
<b>Sex Offender Registry</b>	Not Listed
<b>Education</b>	Confirmed
<b>Employment</b>	Confirmed
<b>Social Media</b>	Nothing of Concern Found

Under the Fair Credit Reporting Act, 15 U.S.C. 1681-1681Y, credit and bankruptcy information are very sensitive and should not be used in the consideration of hiring. The information is included for each candidate because we do not want you to be surprised if third parties raise what they consider to be a concern. Also, some states have limited the reporting to seven years, so any records older than that will not be available in those states. In addition, motor vehicle reports are limited to three to seven years, depending on the state.

**Background Check Summary for  
JAMES "JIM" PATRICK GLEASON**

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James Patrick Gleason  
24 Beacon Street Apt 206A  
Littleton New Hampshire 03561

August 16, 2023

Dear Ms. Monique Rogers,

Below is my Responses to Matters **#117794942, #117794917, and #117794877"**

I hope this email finds you well. I appreciate the opportunity to address the matters outlined in your email and the attached report. Please find below my comprehensive response.

**Individual Matter Responses:**

**Matter: #117794942: Page 7:**

Regarding the incident mentioned on page #2 of the Public Disclosure related to the court action in Lake County (battery-disorderly conduct), I wish to provide additional context. This incident involved a verbal encounter with a councilmember after a council meeting on 8-20-20. While I accept full responsibility for my verbal actions that evening, I want to clarify that I did not engage in any physical altercation or battery. Notably, video evidence revealed that no physical contact occurred, leading to the state attorney's subsequent decision to drop/dismiss the case. Though I recognized the potential for a false arrest claim, I opted to prioritize resolution and closure. I have always taken full responsibility for my actions and will live with this for as long as there is the internet and social media. While there was an eighth month build up to that evening I can not use the actions of other to justify loosing my temper and professional composure.

**Matter: #117794917: Page 10:**

Regarding the lawsuit concerning the termination of police officer David Grice, as named in your report, I was included due to my role as City Manager overseeing the Chief of Police. The case centered around Grice's refusal to comply with a lawful investigation, resulting in his termination. The matter was settled prior to a jury verdict, as advised by our city's attorney and insurance company. Although the jury later ruled in the city's favor, solidifying the appropriateness of the decision, we chose settlement as the preferred course of action per the city's legal representatives even after taking the case to trial.

**Matter: #117794877: Pages 10-11:**

In reference to the \$237.00 amount listed in connection with my name as a creditor, I must clarify that I have no knowledge of this debt. My financial history is characterized

**Background Check Summary for  
JAMES "JIM" PATRICK GLEASON**

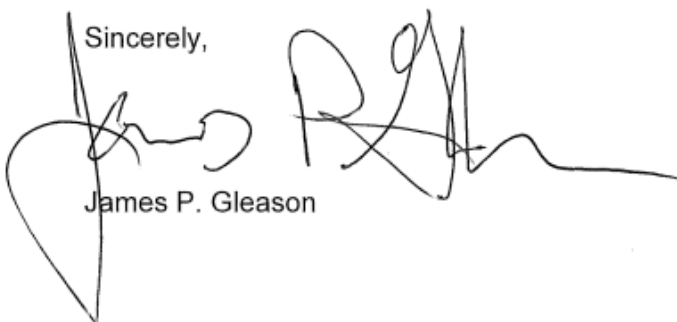
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by prudent practices, evidenced by my excellent credit score of 830. Notably, I have managed my financial obligations diligently, ensuring that all debts, loans, and credit card balances are paid on time and in full. It is possible this was related to my late son Patrick William Gleason's prior bankruptcy and discharged debts of which I paid for the attorney. Patrick passed away September 25, 2016 so again I have no idea what the debt was for or why it was not cleared with his bankruptcy.

If you require further details or have additional inquiries, please do not hesitate to reach out. Your attention to these matters is greatly appreciated.

Thank you for your understanding and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James P. Gleason', is written over the printed name. The signature is stylized with a large initial 'J' and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

James P. Gleason

**Background Check Summary for  
JAMES "JIM" PATRICK GLEASON  
Personal Disclosure**

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Personal Disclosure Questionnaire

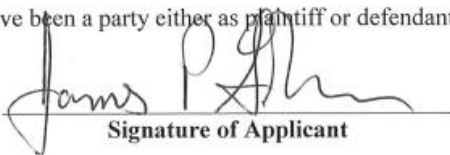
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Name of Applicant: **James Patrick Gleason-Belle Isle**

The following questions are designed so that we will be able to make full disclosure to our client concerning your background. Please answer them honestly. Cutting corners or misrepresenting your past will result in you being eliminated from all further searches conducted by this firm. We understand that frivolous charges are sometimes made and that charges do not mean you were guilty. We also understand that you may have been wronged and needed to seek compensation. The bottom line is that we want to be certain that our client is fully informed. If you have any questions, please contact us for clarification.

**Please explain any yes answers on a separate sheet of paper.**

1. Have you ever been charged or convicted of a felony?  
Yes  No
2. Have you ever been accused of or have been involved in a domestic violence or **abuse incident**?  
Yes  No
3. Have you ever declared bankruptcy or been an owner in a business that did so?  
Yes  No
4. Have you ever been the subject of a civil rights violation complaint that was investigated or resulted in a lawsuit?  
Yes  No
5. Have you ever been the subject of a sexual harassment complaint that was investigated or resulted in a lawsuit?  
Yes  No
6. Have you ever been charged with driving while intoxicated?  
Yes  No
7. Have you ever sued a current or former employer?  
Yes  No
8. Please list links to all your social media accounts (Facebook / Instagram / LinkedIn / Twitter, etc.) and your personal web page if you have one.  
**LinkedIn:** Jim Gleason  
**Facebook:** Jim Gleason
9. Is there anything else in your background that, if made public, would cause you, our client or our firm embarrassment if it came to light through the press or any other mechanism?  
Yes  No
10. Please provide a list of any lawsuits in which you are or have been a party either as plaintiff or defendant.

Attested to:   
**Signature of Applicant**



**Background Check Summary for  
JAMES "JIM" PATRICK GLEASON  
Personal Disclosure Explanation**

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**Additional Personal Disclosure Questionnaire  
James Patrick Gleason  
City of Belle Isle-FL - City Manager**

2. On August 18th, 2020, at the end of the city council meeting, I engaged in a verbal argument with a city council member and her husband, who was the Fire Chief with the City of Mascotte. The council was discussing my termination without cause, which was set to take effect on October 1, 2020. This was the fourth meeting in which this item was on the agenda, as the issue originated in February when the fire chief requested the council's approval to hire six new firefighters. The council's decision to merge the city fire department with the county instead of hiring the new firefighters escalated the issue and led to a personal confrontation with the council member and her husband.

I take full responsibility for my actions and for losing my temper. While I could provide context regarding the eight months of emotional turmoil and conflicts that led to that regrettable meeting, none of that justifies my behavior. What matters is that I made a mistake, and regardless of the circumstances, I should never have lost my temper or composure. I have learned from this mistake, and I now understand that, in this profession, one does not have the right to lose control of their emotions or composure. I cannot take back those 15 minutes but I did learn from that mistake.

7. In April 2004, I was terminated from the City of Ocoee on a 3-2 vote without cause. There was a dispute over severance and compensation. I sought legal counsel and acted to ensure the terms of my contract were upheld. Fortunately, the issue was resolved to the satisfaction of both parties without the need to proceed to trial.

9. The only significant issue is the one that is related to question two. I can address that further in writing or in person if the opportunity to do so is available.

10. I began my career as a City Manager in January 2001. It is not uncommon for disputes to arise in various aspects, such as Commission/Council votes, Planning and Zoning decisions, or personnel matters that may lead to disciplinary actions or terminations. In such cases, it is often the case that parties involved may seek legal recourse if they feel aggrieved. It is also common for the city/town manager to be named if a lawsuit is filed. Throughout my 22 years as a city/town manager, I have been involved in various legal cases. However, only two of these cases were directly aimed at me. One involved the termination of the Chief of Police in 2003, and the second was a claim of a hostile work environment by an employee in 2015. Both cases were settled without court action. Out of all these cases that my name was listed as one of the parties, only one went to trial, and even then, it was settled while the jury was deliberating. It is worth noting that the city settled, and ironically, the jury ruled in favor of the city.

**Background Check Summary for  
JAMES "JIM" PATRICK GLEASON  
Most Recent Performance Evaluation**

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**Littleton, NH Town Manager's Performance Evaluation  
30 May 2023**

This evaluation is a confidential document to be provided to the Town Manager and for inclusion in his/her permanent record of employment. The final evaluation document may represent reviews prepared in draft form by the Board of Selectmen Members and combined into a summary document. This document will represent the entire evaluation.

**Rating Key:**

- |   |                                       |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| 1 = Unsatisfactory                          | 3.5 = Exceeds Expectations            |
| 2 = Consistently Falls Below Expectations   | 4 = Far Exceeds Expectations          |
| 2.5 = Occasionally Falls Below Expectations | NR = No basis for rating at this time |
| 3 = Meets Expectations                      |                                       |
- 

**Name: James Gleason**

**Evaluation Period: 29 April 2022 – 30 May 2023**

**Relationship with Board of Selectmen:**

Maintains effective verbal and written communication so the Board of Selectmen are informed of items and events pertinent to the duties of their office. **3.5**

Provides information to all Board members on an equal basis. **4**

Maintains personal availability to Board members. **4**

Plans, organizes and presents materials for consideration in a clear, comprehensive and timely manner to enable Board members to make sound decisions. **3.5**

Effectively communicates with Board members regarding their concerns and delegates or follows through to see that the appropriate response is provided. **3.5**

Keeps Board members advised of new and pending legislation and State/County developments **3.5**

**Comments:**

Jim continues to communicate with Board Members regarding their concerns and questions.

He either delegates or personally follow through with answering all questions & inquiries.

He continues to notify Board Members of upcoming legislation as well as State and/or County developments

**Background Check Summary for  
JAMES "JIM" PATRICK GLEASON  
Most Recent Performance Evaluation**

---

**Relationship with Employees:**

Maintains positive employee/employer relations with reporting employees. 3.5

Effectively manages employees so they work toward common objectives 4

Effectively selects, trains and consistently monitors employee performance on a regular basis. 3.5

Addresses personnel problems and takes appropriate action up to and including termination when warranted. 3.5

Maintains a safe and productive workplace atmosphere. 3.5

**Comments:**

Littleton Municipal employees respect Jim.

They appreciate his support and open-door policy for whatever they need to discuss with him.

---

**Public Relations:**

Serves as an effective liaison between the Board of Selectmen and other Town boards, commissions and elected officials. 3.5

Effectively communicates with community members regarding their concerns and delegates or follows through to see that the appropriate response is provided. 3.5

Maintains sufficient visibility, identity and availability in the community. 3.5

Maintains to the public a Town image that represents service, vitality and professionalism. 3.5

Ensures that Town employees who have public contact demonstrate a perception, attitude and feeling of helpfulness, courtesy and sensitivity. 3.5

**Comments:**

Jim continues outreach in the Community. He attends most Chamber events and represents Littleton with dignity and respect for the position he holds.

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**Background Check Summary for  
JAMES “JIM” PATRICK GLEASON  
Most Recent Performance Evaluation**

---

**Financial Management:**

Plans, organizes and presents the annual budget with adequate documentation and support information to enable Board Members to make informed policy decisions. 4

Controls costs by economically using manpower, materials and equipment. 3.5

Provides monthly financial reports to the Board with sufficient information on the Town’s current financial status. 4

Plans, organizes and administers the adopted budget within approved revenues and expenditures. 4

Administers the adopted budget within approved revenues and expenditures. 4

**Comments:**

Jim continues to work with each Municipal Department Head to keep on or below budget.

---

**Organizational Management: Program Development and Follow-Through**

Plans and organizes on-going service delivery systems to assure efficient and effective services to citizens. 3.5

Plans, organizes, and follows through on requests assigned by the Board so that they are completed in a timely and efficient manner. 3.5

Plans and organizes responses to public requests and areas of concern that are brought to the Manager’s attention. 4

Anticipates and recognizes future needs and challenges and plans accordingly. 3.5

Plans and organizes for proper utilization and maintenance of Town owned facilities and equipment. 3.5

**Comments:**

Jim continues to return correspondence in a timely fashion, maintaining an efficient working environment.

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**Background Check Summary for  
JAMES "JIM" PATRICK GLEASON  
Most Recent Performance Evaluation**

**Suggestions for Additional Goals & Objectives:**

Continue to attend area events.

Continue to focus on correspondence verbiage. Jim purchased (out of his own funds) a software program that has helped in his correspondence.

Continue to be aware of others' needs, questions and concerns. Follow the Select Board's direction.

**General Comments:**

Jim worked to close several abatement issues with properties in Littleton.

Jim has exceeded expectations.

Jim is working with the State to clean up the Stoddard Field encroachment on the NH Rail Trail.

**Compensation and Benefits:**

Jim received a 3% increase for Budget Year 2022 - 2023.


*Jim RECEIVED A 5.9% INCREASE for BUDGET Year 2023-2024*

I have personally reviewed this evaluation and have discussed it with the Select Board.

  
James P Gleason, Town Manager

6-15-23  
Date

This evaluation was prepared by the Board of Selectmen, all of whom participated in the review process.

  
Chair Roger Emerson

  
Vice Chair Linda MacNeil

  
Select Board Member Carrie Gendreau

**Background Check Summary for  
JAMES “JIM” PATRICK GLEASON  
Most Recent Performance Evaluation**

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*Linda MacNeil  
Littleton Select Board Vice Chair  
Littleton, NH*

15 May 2023

To Littleton Select Board Members

I requested that all Department Heads answer four questions about Jim as a manager. Signatures were optional, however, several did sign their form.

Hopefully, with this information we will be able to complete our review of Jim’s performance as our Town Manager with a more complete picture of what he does on a day-to-day basis and how he interact with those that report directly to him.

We will need to review these (after we have had an opportunity to read each of them) and complete our review for this past year (2022 – 2023). Then set a time to present our results to Jim.

**Background Check Summary for  
JAMES “JIM” PATRICK GLEASON  
Most Recent Performance Evaluation**

---

**1. Please explain/state the Town Manager's greatest strength as a manager.**

Patience. Jim is a very patient person, which is required in spades in order to do his job. While inherently patient, Jim also has no issues speaking openly and honestly when the situation requires it, and that balance is perhaps his most valuable asset.

**2. Please explain/state what type of manager/boss he is.**

Jim is jovial and even-keeled, but also assertive on behalf of his employees and the common good, as well as reliable and trustworthy. He is an ideal boss.

**3. When faced with a crisis, how does he respond?**

Jim demonstrates an ability to take a step back and assess all the facts and does not tend to make rash decisions or judgements. His temperament and patience qualifies him for this position uniquely. As someone who admittedly tends to panic and get worked up in crisis situations myself, I especially appreciate and respect Jim in this regard and aim to be more like that myself.

**4. Is he open & responsive to your personal needs as well as job responsibility needs?**

I fully trust my ability to go to Jim and openly express my needs and concerns and I know he will approach any situation with the care and attention it deserves and make the best decision possible.

**Background Check Summary for  
JAMES "JIM" PATRICK GLEASON  
Most Recent Performance Evaluation**

---

*Linda MacNeil  
Littleton Select Board Vice Chair  
Littleton, NH*

To Littleton Municipal Employees

In our attempt to create a full picture of what the Town Manager, Jim Gleason, does as your supervisor we ask that you...

Please answer the following questions honestly & openly. If you wish to sign your name, thank you. Do not feel that you must. Once complete, please put in the envelope @ the mail station in the Town Offices before Friday, May 12<sup>th</sup>. Thank you.

1. Please explain/state the Town Manager's greatest strength as a manager.

*Jim's greatest strength would be his confidence in his employees and the support he provides them. He takes the time to know all his employees on an individual level which then falls into him understanding the best way to work and support those employees.*

2. Please explain/state what type of manager/boss he is (example: dictatorially, authoritarian, fair, understanding, supportive...).

*Jim is a welcoming "open door policy" type of manager. He is very supportive for our department and the individual employees within it.*

3. When faced with a crisis, how does he respond?

*Jim responds with attaining all information on the crisis before proceeding. Being well informed and taking the time to meet with all parties shows the fairness Jim has brought to this position.*

4. Is he open & responsive to your personal needs as well as job responsibility needs?

*Yes!*

Signature (optional) \_\_\_\_\_



**Background Check Summary for  
JAMES "JIM" PATRICK GLEASON  
Most Recent Performance Evaluation**

---

*Linda MacNeil  
Littleton Select Board Vice Chair  
Littleton, NH*

To Littleton Municipal Employees

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1. Please explain/state the Town Manager's greatest strength as a manager.

*Jim talks to everyone, engaged! opens discussion points to talk out concerns and problems. Open minded. Positive. He is direct. I like this about him.*

2. Please explain/state what type of manager/boss he is (example: dictatorially, authoritarian, fair, understanding, supportive...).

*Collective best describes Jim. Likes others opinions, Allows staff to be invested in the towns operations. I have been a senior mgr for 30 of my 43 yrs. Hes a good one!*

3. When faced with a crisis, how does he respond?

*Jim is direct. Pulls into conversation all necessary to make good decisions. Sometimes quick to the draw.*

4. Is he open & responsive to your personal needs as well as job responsibility needs?

*Yes.*

Signature (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

**Background Check Summary for  
JAMES "JIM" PATRICK GLEASON  
Most Recent Performance Evaluation**

---

*Linda MacNeil  
Littleton Select Board Vice Chair  
Littleton, NH*

To Littleton Municipal Employees

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1. Please explain/state the Town Manager's greatest strength as a manager.

leadership  
ability to make decisions  
Multy task  
Think on his feet } Complete package is his strength

2. Please explain/state what type of manager/boss he is (example: dictatorially, authoritarian, fair, understanding, supportive...).

He is actually a manager and allows his people to do their jobs. He fair, approachable, and gets results.

3. When faced with a crisis, how does he respond?

Jim's ability to be Fluid and think on his feet is some of the best I have ever seen. Top notch

4. Is he open & responsive to your personal needs as well as job responsibility needs?

Absolutely

Signature (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

**Background Check Summary for  
JAMES "JIM" PATRICK GLEASON  
Most Recent Performance Evaluation**

*Linda MacNeil  
Littleton Select Board Vice Chair  
Littleton, NJ*

To Littleton Municipal Employees

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Please answer the following questions honestly & openly. If you wish to sign your name, thank you. Do not feel that you must. Once complete, please put in the envelope @ the mail station in the Town Offices before Friday, May 12<sup>th</sup>. Thank you.

1. Please explain/state the Town Manager's greatest strength as a manager.

*He takes the time to meet or take calls from the public even when its unplanned. He always addresses their problems and/or directs them to the right Dept head that can. He faces all challenges head on and takes care of it immediately*

2. Please explain/state what type of manager/boss he is (example: dictatorially, authoritarian, fair, understanding, supportive...).

*He can be firm when it is required but he also is very fair, understanding and supportive to all of his employees. He listens to their situation and gives advice on how to handle it best to rectify the problem*

3. When faced with a crisis, how does he respond?

*He keeps a level head and if he doesn't no the answer right off, he does what he has to, to find the answer. That include contacting legal advise or members of other depts.*

4. Is he open & responsive to your personal needs as well as job responsibility needs?

*yes - Re: personal needs he makes sure that his employees know that their health comes first and Re: work he makes sure that we have everything required to do our jobs correctly.*

Signature (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

**Background Check Summary for  
JAMES "JIM" PATRICK GLEASON  
Most Recent Performance Evaluation**

*Linda MacNeil  
Littleton Select Board Vice Chair  
Littleton, NH*

To Littleton Municipal Employees

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Please answer the following questions honestly & openly. If you wish to sign your name, thank you. Do not feel that you must. Once complete, please put in the envelope @ the mail station in the Town Offices before Friday, May 12<sup>th</sup>. Thank you.

1. Please explain/state the Town Manager's greatest strength as a manager.

The Town Manager is an exceptional Leader. A true leader understands that decision making does not and will not please everyone, but is generally the right thing to do for the employees of the town and the Town of Littleton. He is soft spoken, but carries a big stick. He listens when he should and provides advice/insight when most appropriate. He is an asset to the community.

2. Please explain/state what type of manager/boss he is (example: dictatorially, authoritarian, fair, understanding, supportive...).

The Town Manager is fair, understanding, and supportive which best describes a Transformational Leader. This type of leader works with his teams beyond his immediate self-interests to identify needed change, creating a vision to guide the change, while supporting current municipal policy and finally, to improve productivity with his employees through his influence and inspiration.

3. When faced with a crisis, how does he respond?

When the Town Manager is faced with crisis, he quickly relies on employees and citizens with experience and expertise to address the issue at hand. Although he has many years of crisis management experience that is very helpful, he will not hesitate to inform others if he is working beyond his expertise in order to allow an exchange of ideas to resolve the crisis in the best interests (economically and legally) of the Town of Littleton.

4. Is he open & responsive to your personal needs as well as job responsibility needs?

Yes, he responds immediately to personal and personnel needs very quickly. He is always available to assist. He makes an effort to resolve the issue in an expeditious manner. Additionally he is not afraid to constructively provide criticism when needed to help an employee advance in his or her job classification.

Signature (optional)	
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**Background Check Summary for  
JAMES "JIM" PATRICK GLEASON  
Most Recent Performance Evaluation**

---

*Linda MacNeil  
Littleton Select Board Vice Chair  
Littleton, NH*

To Littleton Municipal Employees

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1. Please explain/state the Town Manager's greatest strength as a manager.

Jim is a manager. Many past managers have had a different vision of management and Jim has brought back in what my opinion is of what a town manager should be doing.

2. Please explain/state what type of manager/boss he is (example: dictatorially, authoritarian, fair, understanding, supportive...).

Jim in my opinion is fair, understanding and supportive. He is open to all conversation and is willing to listen and guide.

3. When faced with a crisis, how does he respond?

Cool, calm, collect. He is open to understand the situation at hand and if needed, learn how things are handled and also lend an opinion.

4. Is he open & responsive to your personal needs as well as job responsibility needs?

I have had no need to involve him in any personal needs, but have no doubt whatsoever that he would lend an ear. He is very supportive in the needs of our job responsibilities.

Signature (optional)


**Background Check Summary for  
JAMES "JIM" PATRICK GLEASON  
Most Recent Performance Evaluation**

---

*Linda MacNeil  
Littleton Select Board Vice Chair  
Littleton, NH.*

To Littleton Municipal Employees

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1. Please explain/state the Town Manager's greatest strength as a manager.

*He came here and observed how we worked as a unit and then individually. And then basically said "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." He understands there was no need to micromanage*

2. Please explain/state what type of manager/boss he is (example: dictatorially, authoritarian, fair, understanding, supportive...).

*Supportive. If we need him, he's available.*

3. When faced with a crisis, how does he respond?

*He looks at what the solution is & then formulates a plan to get to ~~the~~ the solution.*

4. Is he open & responsive to your personal needs as well as job responsibility needs?

*Yes to personal needs - very appropriate.  
Yes to job needs - helps if I need him to.*

Signature (optional)	
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**Background Check Summary for  
JAMES "JIM" PATRICK GLEASON  
Most Recent Performance Evaluation**

*Linda MacNeil  
Littleton Select Board Vice Chair  
Littleton, NH*

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1. Please explain/state the Town Manager's greatest strength as a manager.

*Jim has a lot of great strengths in his position but I would say that his greatest strength is communication. From when I first started in my position he has always stated that he had an open-door policy and this has remained true. I know that he is very busy and has a lot on his plate but he always had time to talk about any project that I am working on or just to chat. Even with email communication, he is always very prompt with responses and supporting me when needed.*

2. Please explain/state what type of manager/boss he is (example: dictatorially, authoritarian, fair, understanding, supportive...).

*It's hard to encompass a person into one word, but if I had to do so I would say that Jim is very understanding. He had always expressed to me about maintaining a good work/life balance. He doesn't micromanage and is not a "seat-watcher," what's important is that the job gets done and deadlines are met.*

3. When faced with a crisis, how does he respond?

*Jim is always thinking three steps ahead and has many years of experience in municipal departments which helps him greatly in this role. From what I can tell because of his great strengths in communication is always ready for whatever is thrown at him.*

4. Is he open & responsive to your personal needs as well as job responsibility needs?

*Absolutely! With his open-door policy and strength in communication and understanding, he is always there whenever I need his support; be it within my job or personal need.*

Signature (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Background Check Summary for  
JAMES "JIM" PATRICK GLEASON  
Most Recent Performance Evaluation**

---

*Linda MacNeil  
Littleton Select Board Vice Chair  
Littleton, NH*

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1. Please explain/state the Town Manager's greatest strength as a manager.

*Honest, straight forward, fair. Jim is not afraid to speak honesty and facts.*

2. Please explain/state what type of manager/boss he is (example: dictatorially, authoritarian, fair, understanding, supportive...).

*Fair, Supportive. Lets his dept heads do their jobs without micromanaging.*

3. When faced with a crisis, how does he respond?

*Stands up for what he believes is right.*

4. Is he open & responsive to your personal needs as well as job responsibility needs?

*Jim has always been responsive to our needs when we have tried to meet. He has been open and honest since day one.*

Signature (optional)



**Background Check Summary for  
JAMES "JIM" PATRICK GLEASON  
Most Recent Performance Evaluation**

*Linda MacNeil  
Littleton Select Board Vice Chair  
Littleton, NH*

To Littleton Municipal Employees

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Please answer the following questions honestly & openly. If you wish to sign your name, thank you. Do not feel that you must. Once complete, please put in the envelope @ the mail station in the Town Offices before Friday, May 12<sup>th</sup>. Thank you.

1. Please explain/state the Town Manager's greatest strength as a manager.  
*The numbers show that he excels at keeping the budget in line. He lets you run your department with minimal involvement unless required.*
2. Please explain/state what type of manager/boss he is (example: dictatorially, authoritarian, fair, understanding, supportive...).  
*I feel he is Dictatorially when the chips are down and it's critical, but very understanding and approachable.*
3. When faced with a crisis, how does he respond?  
*I think he tackles it head on. I have no concerns with his commitment.*
4. Is he open & responsive to your personal needs as well as job responsibility needs?  
*He is very open. I feel he are often on the same page.*

Signature (optional)	
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*CB&A Reference Notes*

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Reference Notes  
James “Jim” Gleason

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**Art Tighe – Owner of Foto Factory, Town of Littleton, NH 603-513-8181**

Mr. Tighe is a small business owner in the community of Littleton, where Mr. Gleason serves as Town Manager. He is a civic-minded person and volunteers for several local organizations, including Growth for Common Sense, which is a political watchdog group. He has known Mr. Gleason since the latter became Town Manager in 2021.

Mr. Gleason makes good decisions under pressure. He has gained a great deal of experience in his over 30 years of being a municipal manager. He knows how to accomplish tasks under pressure. Being a Town Manager is a controversial position in its very nature. Mr. Gleason is always at the center of controversial situations. In 99 percent of these cases, he has done very well in stressful situations. When he is not fully prepared for something controversial, he changes his leadership style from being in charge and confident to being more guarded and quieter until he has all the facts and knows who all the key players are. This is a mature response, and an appropriate one, instead of simply blasting ahead and correcting the course later.

Mr. Gleason has a strong leadership style in most cases. He lets everyone voice their opinions, mediates, summarizes, and then acts. He leads the discussion and helps move the Board forward to clear action items. During town meetings full of constituents, some of whom are aggressive in voicing their positions, he eloquently displays the facts in a convincing manner and has a way of quieting the room and helping people understand the reasoning behind the decisions.

Mr. Gleason has exceptional financial skills. He is better than the past eight town managers prior to him. The most recent town manager before Mr. Gleason left a catastrophic mess, which caused an uproar in the community. Mr. Gleason came in and quickly went to work. He secured grants, loans, and bonds, and cleaned up the finances of the city very quickly.

Mr. Tighe was on the hiring committee when the Town of Littleton hired Mr. Gleason, and he would hire him again. Mr. Gleason is a mature, seasoned manager, with nothing embarrassing in his background. While he has made decisions that were not always popular in the town, everyone can agree that he has done a great job for their community. He walks to work every day, he is active in the community, he is innovative and goes out of his way to help community members. He will be a strong asset to any community as their Manager.

**Words or phrases used to describe Jim Gleason:**

- Thorough,
- Laser-like focus,
- Incredible response time,
- Follows through, and
- Impeccable character.

Reference Notes  
James “Jim” Gleason

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**Strengths:** Communication with the public. He does not mince words. He derives what questions are most likely going to be asked and helps bring the whole room together and help people get on the same page.

**Weaknesses:** Because he is not from New Hampshire, he has a nonregional knowledge of the area. Littleton is in a rural area, and he is not as familiar with the culture or some of the specific state requirements. However, he is quick at learning them.

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**Linda MacNeil – Board of Selectman, Town of Littleton, NH 603-444-2533**

Ms. MacNeil has known Mr. Gleason since 2021. She would rate him a solid 5 out of 5 as Town Manager. He is passionate about their town and is passionate about what he does. He works well with the people who report to him, with the citizens of the town at large, and with each individual on the selectboard.

Ms. MacNeil works closely with Mr. Gleason, including daily emails, and in-person meetings two or three times per week. Everything that goes through him goes through the selectmen as well. He makes sure to keep them in the loop and updated on everything that is happening. He is an incredible mentor for Ms. MacNeil. He can tailor his interactions with people so they get what they need out of him, whether that is a quick response from an email, or an in-depth one-on-one meeting explaining a complicated process in a way that the person can understand.

Mr. Gleason makes good decisions generally. He is fiscally conservative. He is under budget on both a yearly and monthly basis. He is innovative. He thinks outside the box. His ideas are not always implemented, but they are appreciated in the brainstorming sessions and help everyone open their minds to the possibilities before them.

Mr. Gleason communicates well with the public. Most towns have individuals who are rather vocal, and Littleton is no exception. Mr. Gleason has built a rapport with the community, so they know he will be patient and listen to their queries without judgement. He responds to the community quickly with answers to their questions. While Mr. Gleason is usually gregarious and leads out, he can shut down during stressful situations and let the high emotions play out before he starts to work through the situation. He does not try to interfere until people are calmer and in a headspace where they can receive counsel and hear what he has to say.

Mr. Gleason has not been involved in anything that would be considered embarrassing to a potential employer while he was employed by Littleton. Ms. MacNeil would hire him again in a heartbeat. When they hired him in 2021 they made the right choice. He is a good man and an exceptional manager.

Reference Notes  
James “Jim” Gleason

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**Words or phrases used to describe Jim Gleason:**

- Communicator,
- Patient,
- Listener,
- Passionate,
- Mentor, and
- Conservative,

**Strengths:** Good manager and leader. Does not micromanage his employees. He lets his people do their jobs and if they have an issue that needs to be solved, they go to him, and he helps them with their concern promptly and efficiently.

**Weaknesses:** None identified.

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**Carrie Gendreau – Board of Selectmen, Town of Littleton, NH 603-443-2570**

Ms. Gendreau was part of the team who hired Mr. Gleason in 2021 as Town Manager. At that point she was the Chairman for the Selectboard. She is currently a State Senator as well as serving on the Board of Selectmen. She is very pleased with their choice of Mr. Gleason as Town Manager. He was one of 14 applicants, so the board did a great deal of research on him prior to their decision. While he did have a rough spell in Florida prior to working with them, they believed in him and took a chance on him and made the right decision. Ms. Gendreau cannot say enough good things about him. He has been amazing. He follows through with the board, he is easy to work with, and open to new ideas.

When Mr. Gleason was first hired, he was greeted with 112 projects that were left undone by the previous Town Manager. He went right to work and quickly got those cleaned up as well as taking on more projects on the way. He does not have a secretary, so he answers all his own emails and phone calls. He is personable and prompt in his replies.

Mr. Gleason is a whiz financially. He works magic with their budgets. He knows how to balance the budget while taking good care of his employees and the people in the town. He is fiscally responsible to the taxpayers.

Mr. Gleason is customer service oriented. Coming from Florida to Littleton, there was a bit of a culture shock, and he had to adapt from saying “your community” to “our community.” Not only did Mr. Gleason have to tackle all those projects from the previous manager, but he had to get used to the culture and the environment. He threw himself in with everything and held nothing back. He took up skiing, even though he had never skied in his life. He went hiking on their trails so he would know the area and know what the locals prized. He wanted to fully embrace and make the most of the time he had in the community.

Reference Notes  
James “Jim” Gleason

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Mr. Gleason has been the best town manager the Town of Littleton has ever had. He helped them in so many ways and Ms. Gendreau will be sad to see him go. He will be an excellent manager for any location.

**Words or phrases used to describe Jim Gleason:**

- Follows through,
- Hard working,
- Compassionate,
- Responsible,
- Leader, and
- Customer service oriented.

**Strengths:** Follows through, compassionate heart. Wants to take care of his people.

**Weaknesses:** Tends to rush through his emails, which causes grammatical and spelling errors. A professional correspondence full of mistakes does not represent the right kind of image for the town. However, the Board has addressed this with him, and he has improved dramatically. Also, he has the habit of jumping into a conversation and interrupting people when they are speaking. He does not do this with any malice, he just needs to slow down and give people time to share before responding. The board has brought this up to Mr. Gleason in performance reviews as well, and he has made an effort to improve this tendency.

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**Laura Spector-Morgan – Partner, Mitchell Municipal Group, NH 603-524-3885**

Ms. Spector-Morgan is a partner at the Mitchell Municipal group that represents the Town of Littleton. She has known Mr. Gleason since he assumed the Town Manager position in 2021. Mr. Gleason is a fantastic Manager. He has a real common-sense approach to solving problems. He does not fly off the handle or overact.

Mr. Gleason makes good decisions to the extent that he is allowed to by the board of selectmen. Sometimes he is not allowed to fully do his job because the selectmen in Littleton are more hands on than in most towns and Mr. Gleason does not push back as much as he could, which is probably the right decision in Ms. Spector-Morgan’s opinion. However, this makes it so his hands are tied more than they could be. With that said, he is innovative and thinks outside of the box to resolve some of their more challenging problems to the best of his ability. For example, there is currently a dispute going on over an inconsistency in the boundary between Littleton and the next town over. Mr. Gleason has worked with Ms. Spector-Morgan to find an innovative solution that will be practical and solve the problem without involving too much expense on the part of either town.

**Reference Notes  
James “Jim” Gleason**

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Mr. Gleason is honest and upfront in his communication style to the public. He does not add on any frills or pandering. He is customer service oriented in the way he deals with the public. He listens to them and allows them to vent about their grievances. He does not give in to every whim of the public but takes the time to listen to them and offer counsel.

Mr. Gleason has not been involved in anything overtly controversial during his time as Town Manager. He stays above the fray. There has been nothing embarrassing in his conduct with them. He is one of the better town managers with whom Ms. Spector-Morgan has worked over the years. She recommends him to any municipality as their manager.

**Words or phrases used to describe Jim Gleason:**

- Smart,
- Reasonable,
- Honest,
- Upfront,
- Kind,
- Patient, and
- Firm.

**Strengths:** Communication style with Ms. Spector-Morgan and with the public.

**Weaknesses:** Mr. Gleason lets people complain to him for too long without cutting them off. This tends to be an expense for the town if she must get involved in the dispute. This is a very common weakness in the various town managers with whom Ms. Spector-Morgan has worked over the years. He could be more decisive in cutting people off and being more direct in his decisions with the community.

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**Roger Emerson – Chair of Board of Selectmen, Town of Littleton, NH 603-444-5047**

Mr. Emerson was on the board when they hired Mr. Gleason in 2021. He has had an excellent job performance since then. He has done a great deal for the town including completely turning around the financial situation and building a healthy reserve.

When Mr. Gleason started as Town Manager, he had over 100 projects already on his desk that the last Town Manager did not address. He saw that the purchase date was coming up on a chunk of land that was to be purchased by the town. He bent over backward to make sure the town secured the property. He held special town meetings and made the necessary arrangements to purchase the property. The plans to develop this land are now on target and in motion.

Mr. Gleason involves the board with everything. Transparency is very important to him. He makes good decisions and gives back to the taxpayers a quality product. The Town of Littleton



Reference Notes  
James “Jim” Gleason

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only has roughly 6,000 people and he has made an effort to reach all the department heads and create a relationship with them. He holds weekly meetings with the fire department, police department, and the highway crew. All the town employees love him and would not say anything negative about him.

The Chair of Selectmen screened Mr. Gleason heavily when they hired him and were reassured that he was not a racist, as he was accused in Florida. They have not had any problems with him, and he has been well worth their investment. Mr. Emerson would hire him again and recommends him to any municipality as their manager.

**Words or phrases used to describe Jim Gleason:**

- Interactive,
- Friendly,
- Listener,
- Focused, and
- Good with people.

**Strengths:** Financial ability. When Mr. Gleason became Town Manager, they were three years behind on their audits with very little money in the reserves. Two years later they are on top of things with the audits and have over \$1.6 million in reserves.

**Weaknesses:** Mr. Gleason is quick to use the town lawyer for any questions that come up instead of figuring out the answer on his own, which ends up costing the town in legal fees. While he can appreciate Mr. Gleason’s caution, he would prefer Mr. Gleason to use the attorney less.

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**Dolly Miller – Finance Director, City of Mascotte, FL 352-874-7977**

Ms. Miller has known Mr. Gleason since 2012 when she came to work in Mascotte. He did an excellent job as City Manager until he left in 2020. The city was significantly in debt for a predominantly residential community. They managed to get the city completely out of debt and put away \$1.6 million in reserves.

Mascotte has very little turnover, which indicates that Mr. Gleason makes good decisions when hiring personnel. His decisions in general are good. He is very innovative and is always looking to the future. Their budget year starts October 1 and as soon as one budget year starts, he is already looking at the next budget year and planning ahead. He is innovative and pushed the staff to consider new ideas or seek different revenue sources. He kept everyone informed.

Mascotte does not have many community meetings, but Mr. Gleason attended the ones they have. He was also active in meetings that were held by different groups but pertained to the city,

Reference Notes  
James “Jim” Gleason

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like the Southlake Chamber of Commerce. He works well with the public but when you cannot give someone what they want, they are not happy. He tells everyone the truth even when it is not what they want to hear.

A weekly staff meeting was held where department heads sit around a table to flesh out ideas and to discuss situations. In 2006 an HOA deeded a 15-foot strip of land to the city. The HOA has since been turned over to the homeowners and they tried to give this land to the state for a Rails to Trails project. In the process they realized that it was owned by the city. The homeowners wanted to know what would happen with that land and asked if the city would start maintaining it. Mr. Gleason and the staff discussed options for the most cost-effective way to manage the land for the city and the taxpayers. The land is connected to a giant vacant parcel that is not maintained and it may look odd if a 15-foot strip in the middle of a vacant parcel is maintained. They worked as a team to decide the best way to tackle issues such as these.

Deadlines are important to Mr. Gleason. He strongly believes that if you tell someone you will call them, you call them even if you do not have the answer and tell them you are looking for the answer. If the staff tells him they will have a report to him on the 10<sup>th</sup> and they realize they are not going to make that deadline, they let him know a few days before and explain why. Stress does not seem to bother him.

In 2015 Mr. Gleason was involved in a lawsuit that ended in a settlement. A former employer claimed racial discrimination against him. Mr. Gleason is so far from that type of behavior, and it is incredible what people can say about someone’s character. Nothing in his background or conduct would concern a reasonable person.

Ms. Miller would hire Mr. Gleason and was sorry to see him leave Mascotte because they worked very well together.

**Words or phrases used to describe Jim Gleason:**

- Energetic,
- Caring,
- Fiscal conservative,
- Conscientious,
- Goal oriented,
- Timely, and
- Responsive.

**Strengths:** Excellent manager, good with money, calls it like he sees it.

**Weaknesses:** He has a hard time telling people no at times.

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Reference Notes  
James “Jim” Gleason

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**Dave Colby – Executive Director, Southlake Chamber of Commerce, FL 352-394-4191**

Mr. Colby has known Mr. Gleason since 2016. The Chamber works with managers in the Southlake area, which includes Mascotte. Also, Mr. Gleason is an ex officio on their Board of Directors. They have worked on various projects and have gotten to know each other very well.

Of all the city managers in the area, Mr. Gleason was the most active with the Chamber and one of Mr. Colby’s all-time favorite government officials. Mr. Gleason attended the meetings and regularly communicated with the Board. He served on the economic development committee. He is very thoughtful and has great wisdom. He shared how cities view certain topics and guided them in their policy decisions.

Mascotte was financially in the hole when Mr. Gleason was hired, and he turned it around. Bringing together the diverse board was no small feat. He helped the elected officials, who had different priorities, develop common priorities and address the financial issues in the community, which enabled them to do many other projects. His work to improve the financial standing of Mascotte really opened up many other opportunities but it only happened because he was able to get people with different points of view on the same page.

When meetings were held Mr. Gleason was one of the first to arrive. He is very approachable and friendly. People are drawn to him, and he is a good conversationalist. He can talk about other issues besides city policy and have very human conversations. He is at ease coming to events and relates well to others.

Mr. Gleason is more thorough than most managers. He always comes with information and shares real insight. He does well in formal settings but also does well in informal settings, like when they call him directly on an issue. He is very credible and has integrity. He has a good temperament and is professionally well rounded. Mr. Colby gives Mr. Gleason high marks.

Any time that Mr. Colby requested a meeting with Mr. Gleason, it was scheduled within a few days. When making requests to other managers in the area it is generally a few weeks before they could meet. Mr. Gleason was very responsive and has been a good sounding board for ideas.

One of the most personally stressful situations one can go through is losing their child. Mr. Gleason experienced this and continued to perform gracefully while staying engaged. He has grace under fire and can balance stressful issues to make those around him feel comfortable when they do not know how to respond. He always takes care of his responsibilities, regardless of the difficulties he is experiencing.

Combining their fire service with the county was controversial but it allowed for a model that was more cost effective and better supported. Even so, when you take something away that people feel is theirs, they have a sense of loss. Mr. Gleason championed the idea because it was the right thing to do for the taxpayers while improving the system. He is an outstanding man who

Reference Notes  
James “Jim” Gleason

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uses public transportation to come to Chamber meetings. He has never done anything that was off color. The Chamber Board is very diverse, and everyone likes him.

Mr. Colby would definitely hire Mr. Gleason; he was one of the best managers in the area. He is a great person and has developed friendships in the community. He has done a great job.

**Words or phrases used to describe Jim Gleason:**

- Energetic,
- Determined,
- Fun,
- Loyal,
- Responsive, and
- Professional.

**Strengths:** Very organized, very determined, excellent listener, collaborator with the city but also the greater community and county, brings together diverse groups of people to work on the issues.

**Weaknesses:** None identified.

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**Michelle Hawkins – Former City Clerk / HR Director, City of Mascotte, FL 407-375-0024**

Ms. Hawkins reported to Mr. Gleason between 2011 and 2020. Mr. Gleason did a great job in Mascotte. He makes good decisions both when hiring personnel and in general. He came up with innovative ideas and brought the organization to a higher level. He was in charge, but employees felt they were part of the team.

Mascotte is very rural and has only one community event a year, which Mr. Gleason always attended. He worked very well with the public. He kept the staff informed. He led the organization around the vision of the elected officials.

During the COVID pandemic Mr. Gleason wanted to ensure the staff was protected. One of the ideas they discussed was shields for the cashiers. He planned to keep City Hall closed to the public until he felt it was safe. He brought the team together to come up with ideas and discuss the pros and cons of various options.

Mr. Gleason has good financial skills and accomplishes tasks given to him in a timely manner. When something more personally stressful happens, he went into his office and shut the door to relax his mind. The rest of the time one does not see the stress affecting him. He knows when he needs to sit back and relax for a minute.

Reference Notes  
James “Jim” Gleason

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Fire service was turned over to the County and it was controversial. Mr. Gleason does not make decisions; he presents information to the elected body and they decide the course of action. The situation was stressful but he worked through it.

In 2015 an employee filed a racial discrimination claim against Mr. Gleason and an investigation was conducted. According to the witnesses, many of the events and conversations were twisted and did not happen the way that the accuser said they did.

Ms. Hawkins would hire Mr. Gleason. When he came to Mascotte, the city was in debt, retirement was cut in half, and employees were not receiving raises. When he left, employees had received raises and retirement was back to where it was. Mr. Gleason always looks out for employees. Some employees, like the fire employees, have forgotten how it used to be and how much he has worked to protect them, which is unfortunate.

**Words or phrases used to describe Jim Gleason:**

- Funny,
- Smart,
- Very informative
- Happy go lucky person,
- Motivator, and
- Team player.

**Strengths:** Honest, overall management, not a micro manager, team player, great person.

**Weaknesses:** If he is passionate about something, he can become overly excited about it, which is a positive but sometimes it is too much.

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**Larry Walker – Public Services Director, City of Mascotte, FL 352-630-5752**

Mr. Walker lived in Ocoee when Mr. Gleason was a Councilmember there in the 1990s. They worked side by side from 2011 until 2020.

Mascotte was in debt and in a fairly detrimental state when Mr. Gleason was hired. He turned it completely around. He hired good employees and made great decisions. He is innovative, a change agent, and he maintains an organization at a high-performance level.

Mr. Gleason was very visible in the community. He attended the City Council meetings as well as other city and agency meetings. He kept everyone informed. He led the organization around the vision of the Council.

**Reference Notes  
James “Jim” Gleason**

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Every issue in Mascotte was resolved by Mr. Gleason leading department heads and directors as they were a team. He is customer service oriented. One of his pet peeves is missing a deadline so he is very timely in his work. His way of handling stress is situational and depends on the issue, but he seeks advice from the executive team and elected officials in challenging times.

The situation with their fire department was stressful and there have been personal attacks against Mr. Gleason. He has had his outbursts as well, which was to be expected. He handled the situation better than most would have. He was in a difficult position and had to follow the direction of the Council. Mr. Walker is not aware of anything controversial that involves Mr. Gleason.

Mr. Walker would hire Mr. Gleason. He was a great manager for Mascotte. He addressed the issues and turned their financial situation around.

**Words or phrases used to describe Jim Gleason:**

- Strong minded,
- Fiscally conservative,
- Loyal,
- Determined,
- Hard working, and
- Responsive.

**Strengths:** Fiscal conservative.

**Weaknesses:** None identified.

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**Mark Wedge – Former Councilmember, City of Chamblee, GA 404-245-0779**

Mr. Wedge has known Mr. Gleason since 2008. Mr. Gleason saved Chamblee from financial ruin. The previous City Manager had been in the position for 15 years. The Council was told that they had a \$2 million surplus when he started. As Mr. Gleason began to review the books, he uncovered many poor accounting practices. In reality, the city was broke. It took him six months to reconcile the books. Mr. Gleason made very difficult recommendations to the Council and was very factual. He gave many options as well as an explanation and what the result would be for each option. He was an excellent advisor. Within two years of his hiring, the budget turned from a deficit to a \$1 million surplus. This achievement is particularly commendable as it occurred during the economic downturn.

Mr. Gleason made massive cuts to balance their budget but was able to retain all employees and keep city services functioning at the same level. He also implemented moving all new hires to the government version of the 401k, thus giving the city a fixed number for employment rather

**Reference Notes  
James “Jim” Gleason**

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than a “float” based on how the pension fund did – this greatly helped the city for budgeting in the years to follow. They annexed a new portion to the city, and he had the numbers down to make sure the transition went superbly.

After a previous City Manager of long tenure, many senior staff were worried about the change in command. Mr. Gleason made his transition as City Manager an easy one. He took time to develop a personal relationship with the department heads. He exuded a can-do attitude and positive energy. He quickly earned the respect of his staff and helped them feel comfortable following his leadership. He reestablished professionalism in the organization and full accountability for the work that was done.

Mr. Gleason is an excellent manager of his staff. He leads by example. He demands much from his staff, but also from himself. He saw areas where people were underperforming and was able to purge the dead weight. He kept morale as well as production at a high level.

Mr. Gleason is prompt and efficient. He follows through with tasks to a “T.” If the Council asked him to research something, he did it quickly and thoroughly. He provided good information.

Mr. Wedge was very sad to see Mr. Gleason leave Chamblee as he did an outstanding job. He left the city much better than he found it. His leadership, attention to detail, and being a down to earth human being who possesses empathy make him an ideal candidate for any municipality. Whoever hires him is getting a great employee and a good human being.

**Words or phrases used to describe Jim Gleason:**

- Professional,
- Knowledgeable,
- Prompt, and
- Organized.

**Strengths:** People skills.

**Weaknesses:** He kept a record of problems employees were having and actions taken against them. However, more details would have helped build a better case against an offending employee. That said, in other areas he was very detailed.

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**Marc Johnson – Former Chief of Police, City of Chamblee, GA 404-819-9346**

Mr. Johnson has known Mr. Gleason since 2008. Mr. Gleason has a participative management style. When he took over as the City Manager, he clearly communicated his expectations to his staff. He empowered his department heads and relied on them to be the experts in their respective fields. He was open to their ideas and rallied the group by involving each member.

Reference Notes  
James “Jim” Gleason

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Mr. Gleason followed a manager who had been in place for 15 years and she had worked for the city in other capacities before becoming City Manager. The finances of the city were handled by her and the City Clerk. Mr. Gleason quickly found many errors. He convinced the Council that any company operating with such a large budget would have a Finance Director managing the budget. A Finance Director was quickly hired.

In early 2010 Mr. Gleason was made aware of a possible annexation to the city. The annexation was scheduled for a vote in November of 2010. The annexation was a three-square mile area and included a population of 12,500. Mr. Gleason spent the rest of 2010 preparing for the annexation. If passed, it would go into effect seven weeks after the vote, so Mr. Gleason needed to be ready. He worked on intergovernmental agreements and the necessary service agreements. The annexation did pass in November of 2010. However, Mr. Gleason left his position before the annexation was put into effect. Nevertheless, his preparation and planning allowed the process to be smooth and easy.

Mr. Gleason is an analytical problem solver. This was a refreshing turn since the previous City Manager was not. Mr. Gleason did not quickly jump at a problem but thought it through. He sought advice from others and weighed the pros and cons. He assured all were on board with the decision and then moved forward. This was apparent in the planning of the 2010 budget. He made budgetary decisions with the help of his department heads. He was clear and open with his staff about what cuts needed to be made in order to maintain a healthy budget. He ensured that they were all on the same page and were a united front as they presented the budget to Council.

**Words or phrases used to describe Jim Gleason:**

- Level-headed,
- Open,
- Analytical,
- Good leader,
- Clear, and
- Listens well.

**Strengths:** Budget skills.

**Weaknesses:** One area Mr. Gleason could have handled differently concerned an employee who was not performing well. Mr. Gleason asked the Council to allow him one year to work with him. However, after a year’s time the individual had not improved.

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Reference Notes  
James “Jim” Gleason

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**Joe Fowler – City Attorney, City of Chamblee, GA 404-633-5114**

Mr. Fowler worked with Mr. Gleason from 2008 to 2010. He is a great manager and people person. He knew how to build confidences and motivate his staff. He is a friendly, outgoing person who is easy to work with.

Mr. Gleason’s major accomplishment in Chamblee was improving the budget. The city was spending more than it was taking in. The financial books were poorly kept and misleading about the city’s actual financial state. He created a Financial Director position to keep better watch over the budget. In the short time Mr. Gleason was City Manager, the budget stabilized.

When Mr. Gleason started as City Manager, many long-term staff members had retired. Mr. Gleason was left with a staff that was not as experienced in working for the city. It was a tough challenge to be in a new city with a young staff. He made some good hiring choices. He hired a City Clerk and a Finance Director. He responded well to the challenge.

Mr. Gleason allowed the department heads to do their jobs. He did not overstep his bounds. He did not pretend to be a subject matter expert in areas he was not. He let the City Attorney do his job and did not try to act as a lawyer as some Managers try to do. He relied on his staff to help solve problems. He involved those who were experts in the field. He listened to their input before making the decision.

Mr. Gleason had a good relationship with the Council, minus the mayor. For some time, the mayor and Mr. Gleason got along fairly well. In fact, Mr. Gleason was the mayor’s first choice to be the Manager in 2008, while the council members preferred someone else. Mr. Fowler believes the problems were because of the mayor’s ego and not because of anything Mr. Gleason did. Mr. Gleason is very easy to work with. He does not become openly angry about anything. If he has a problem with someone, he deals with it behind closed doors.

Mr. Gleason is an experienced manager who would excel in any local government and in virtually any high-level management position.

**Words or phrases used to describe Jim Gleason:**

- Well liked,
- Easy to work with,
- Outgoing,
- Friendly,
- Built confidence, and
- Motivator.

Reference Notes  
James “Jim” Gleason

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**Strengths:** Budget skills and people skills.

**Weaknesses:** He makes gestures with his hands while speaking.

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**Fran Diedrich – Former HR/Risk Manager, Woodstock, GA 352-226-5130**

Ms. Diedrich has known Mr. Gleason since 2001. He is excellent at redevelopment and stays current with new developments in the industry. He is also creative, a good planner, and has strong public relation skills.

Mr. Gleason was able to take any situation and make it into a positive outcome. One example was regarding the finance director that was in place before he came to the city. She had no relevant experience when she was hired and made a vital mistake in confusing some data. She was definitely in over her head. Instead of firing her from this position, he took the skills she did have and found a position that was better suited for her. Everyone benefited.

Customer service was important to Mr. Gleason. He has a strong public relations background and that helped the city. He implemented a program called RSVP; a phone line that citizens could call with issues they were facing. He also took time to survey the public to find out what they felt they needed. He also met personally with citizens to deal with their issues.

Mr. Gleason had great vision. He was a good advisor and manager of redevelopment. His new ideas were vital to the success and changes of Woodstock. Ms. Diedrich is impressed that he used his management skills to teach the people in Iraq how government should work and how to utilize their skills.

Ms. Diedrich highly recommends him for any local government manager level position.

**Words or phrases used to describe Jim Gleason:**

- Creative,
- Friendly,
- Vivacious,
- Hard worker,
- Good manager, and
- Good planner.

**Strengths:** Strong abilities in redevelopment, keeps current with trends, strong public relation skills.

**Weaknesses:** None identified.

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Reference Notes  
James “Jim” Gleason

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**Jarvis Middleton – Former City Engineer/Public Works, Woodstock, GA (404) 312-8641**

Mr. Middleton has known Mr. Gleason since 2005. He has a strong work ethic and brought positive change to Woodstock. He was a good manager who empowered his staff. He was fair, ethical, and energetic.

Mr. Gleason maintained a positive relationship with the public. He is very outgoing and blends well with any type of person. He directly responded to the public and took the time to give them answers to questions at any time day or night. He also had a strong relationship with the Council. He focused on face-to-face communication with them. Mr. Gleason is also a good facilitator. He sees the whole problem and brings all parties at the table to a mutual decision. He dealt well with outside agencies also. This skill was instrumental in a waterway dispute he helped resolve.

One of Mr. Gleason's strong suits is the budget. He sets goals and objectives with the staff and works within those guidelines. He was also a great sounding board. He polled the citizens to find what they needed and wanted and took that information back to the Council. His experience in government has helped him to make decisions that were beneficial to the city. He understands the right way to handle situations.

Mr. Gleason would be a great asset to any organization.

**Words or phrases used to describe Jim Gleason:**

- Fair,
- Energetic,
- Ethical,
- Empowering,
- Informative, and
- Facilitator.

**Strengths:** Finding strengths in others and using them to improve the organization, good manager, strong facilitator.

**Weaknesses:** None identified.

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**Prepared by:** Amanda Jenkins and Lynelle Klein  
Colin Baenziger & Associates



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*CB&A Internet Research*

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**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**James Patrick Gleason**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Caledonian-Record, The (VT)  
July 21, 2023

**Meadow Street Property Presents Concept For New Development**  
Author/Byline: Robert Blechl

LITTLETON — After years of floating concepts for a development at Meadow Street and Interstate 93, the owner of the land behind McDonald's has recently met with town and state officials for a concept that involves a convenience store and gas pumps and a possible hotel. "They've been in a couple of times and have shown us concepts," said Littleton Town Manager **Jim Gleason**. "They don't have anything formal to say this is what they want to go forward with. The last time they were here, there was a little bit of a debate on whether it was a truck stop or a super gas station. There's a building designed to accommodate trucks, but there weren't bathrooms and there weren't the hookups to park, per se, that you might see at a formal truck stop. We never got to the point of defining it because they were still talking about some uses and still talking about a potential hotel."

The property that once supported the Traveller's Inn, demolished in 2009, is owned by Kamlesh Patel, of Massachusetts. According to town property records, the land encompasses, 7,623,000 square feet, or 175 acres. In recent years, the intersection at Meadow Street/Route 302 and I-93 has seen more businesses, more stoplights, and more traffic and congestion. The real issue with any development at the Patel site won't be so much town approvals regarding zoning, setbacks and environmentals, but what the New Hampshire Department of Transportation might require in terms of entrance configuration, modification to the curb cut, and additional stoplights or the timing of existing lights, said **Gleason**. "It's the same issue that's come up with anything they've ever proposed down there," he said. "It's going to be DOT and whatever happens at that intersection curb cut. That would be their hurdle." Along with Littleton town officials, recent conceptual meetings have included representatives from DOT.

In addition to possible DOT challenges, McDonald's Corp. seems to be reluctant to any change in their restaurant entrance in Littleton, said **Gleason**. "In order for Patel to develop, there probably has to be a re-look at the whole in-and-out in the area," he said.

After McDonald's open in 2010, concerns were voiced about traffic safety. An intersection reconfiguration with a new entry and exit and parking for large vehicles was completed in 2016 that alleviated most concerns. At the last meeting with Patel, two DOT representatives were present and the discussion touched on stoplights and information Patel could incorporate into his plan, said **Gleason**. "They were going to go back and do some additional research on some of the new technology that does the timing and triggering of lights," he said.

Newer technology that would count a certain number of vehicles for triggering a stop at existing lights might be a possibility for that intersection to work without being a lighted one, said **Gleason**. While DOT often hears concerns about traffic safety and suggestions for new traffic lights at other locations, any DOT decision to install a new light is still driven by data, he said.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**James Patrick Gleason**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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One suggestion to Patel, who could not be reached for comment by press time Thursday, was to give DOT his complete vision for development, said **Gleason**. "So if you're working with DOT, you give them an impact of what would be the full build-out of that site because it might help DOT to determine or be part of a solution where we don't create any worse traffic impact than what we already have there," he said. In the 2 1/2 years he's been town manager, **Gleason** said he's seen two or three development concepts for the site.

The question is if the current concept is a gas station or truck stop, because each one triggers different approval conditions, he said. According to the concept map presented to the town, the proposed convenience store would encompass 6,000 square feet, have 21 parking spaces, and have a drive-through.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**James Patrick Gleason**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Caledonian-Record, The (VT)  
July 19, 2023

**Littleton Staff Prepare For Possible “First Amendment Audits”**

Author/Byline: Robert Blechl

LITTLETON — Town staff are preparing for the possibility of aggressive people with video cameras recording "First Amendment audits," which are posted online to make money for the videographers and have also been used in lawsuits against municipalities for alleged First Amendment violations. During the Select Board's meeting on Monday, board member Carrie Gendreau said the issue of people with cameras seeking to provoke municipal staff as they request public records, and then posting on the Internet the video of the interaction, was recently highlighted in July/August issue the New Hampshire Municipal Association's Town and City Magazine. "They are alive and well and go around to different New Hampshire municipalities, town offices, and they've been at the statehouse," she said. Gendreau suggested that town staff get some training.

Town Manager **Jim Gleason** said it can be addressed with staff this week, and it's something that he and Littleton Police Chief Paul Smith and other municipal staff have discussed regularly. "Every time we hear a story of another community, we talk about it and stress the fact that we are not going to be one of those videos that people look at," he said. The key thing is for staff to remain calm under pressure and to not react inappropriately when someone shows up and begins recording video, said **Gleason**. "We have our town offices that are marked so therefore they'd have to remain in the lobby because they don't have a right to go into private offices," he said.

There were some concerns about access in the Littleton Opera House, which has some signage involving that office, he said. "Every time we see one of the videos or we hear they're around we'll get notification from other towns," said **Gleason**. "It's a constant reminder that there's a way you deal with these folks. You're polite and you provide whatever you can. But at the same time, don't get intimidated because somebody puts a camera on you. Don't get angry."

As long as the person with a camera is not in an employee's workspace or in any area unauthorized to the public, they have a legal right to video an interaction, he said. "They're trained to poke the bear," said Gendreau. "And of course they make a lot of money. The angrier the person behind the camera gets, the more clicks. So our goal would be to make it as boring possible."

Gendreau and **Gleason** said the aim is to make Littleton a no-click zone. "We've actually had a couple of audits and our municipal employees have been phenomenal," said Smith. "They don't really address these individuals because they're trying to get a rise out of you. Police officers have just walked away from them. And it's more than clicks. They have legal representation and will sue the town. Based on our conversations with staff and the way that we've improved our town offices, I think we're in a much better position to address First Amendment audits."



**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**James Patrick Gleason**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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And unlike some other communities that don't have strict policies and allow people to walk into records rooms, Littleton's town offices have boundaries and off-limits areas and are in good shape, said Smith.

**Gleason** said he will add it as an agenda item as a refresher for staff. "Because they're rearing up again," said Gendreau. After the discussion, Smith said those with the cameras have typically been non-residents. According to the NHMA's July/August 2023 story, attorneys HariNarayan Grandy and Keriann Roman, of the Drummond Woodsum law firm, said towns across New Hampshire and the nation have recently "begun experiencing a new, unsettling type of encounter with members of the public that has increasingly caused confusion, irritation, and even court battles and the resulting payment of money damages."

First Amendment audits are an American social and political movement that involves filming in a public space, such as town halls, libraries, police stations and parking lots, to provoke employees and officials and interfere with employees' ability to conduct town business, with the goal of provoking public officials or employees into violating the First Amendment, they said. A "failed" audit involves confrontations with public officials or employees, where the auditor is told to stop recording, threatened with arrest or removed from the property, which can result in liability for the municipality, they said.

First Amendment audits have become a significant source of income for auditors, who get paid by posting their videos online, primarily on YouTube, where they request and receive donations from "subscribers" to help fund their "work," said Grandy and Roman. "The more inflamed the interaction, the more views they get and the more money they make," they said. While auditors might have a right to record public officials engaged in their official duties on public property, it does not mean they can record anywhere in a public building, and they cannot violate the law by trespassing into non-public areas, impeding official town business, or engage in disruptive conduct, they said.

Auditors have a right to record in town hall public parking areas and in lobbies, hallways, and waiting areas of the town hall or other town buildings. "During a First Amendment audit, employees and officials should be welcoming, friendly, and helpful," said Grandy and Roman. "This behavior will prevent escalation and will also likely shorten the encounter ... If an auditor arrives at a town hall to welcoming, calm, and unruffled employees, they may never return." While Littleton police have had encounters, **Gleason** said in his 2 1/2 years as Littleton's town manager he has not experienced a First Amendment auditor coming to the town offices on Main Street.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**James Patrick Gleason**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Caledonian-Record, The (VT)  
July 10, 2023

**Non-Union Littleton Staff Votes To Unionize**

Author/Byline: Robert Blechl

LITTLETON — Historically non-union employees, some town office staff members, administrative staff at the fire and police departments, and several employees in the parks and recreation department are now eligible to have their own collective bargaining unit within the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees union. On June 26, six town employees took the vote to form their own unit with AFSCME, largely to ensure wage security, equity and certainty and, in that regard, bring them up to par with the town's union employees in the fire, police and highway departments and in the transfer station, Town Manager **Jim Gleason** said Monday.

On Monday, July 17, the Select Board is expected to choose one of their own to serve on the team that will begin negotiations in August, followed by a proposed contract and a vote that will go to residents at the March 2024 town meeting. "There were 11 positions total that qualified," said **Gleason**. "They had to have a minimum of 10."

The positions include two non-sworn administrative staff at the police department; one administrative staff position in the fire department; several town office staff positions that encompass one in the town clerk's office, one in the finance office and one in planning and zoning; the Littleton Opera House manager; and three positions in parks and recreation. Exempt from the union are the tax collector because of state laws, the administrative secretary because of her role with the Select Board and nonpublic sessions, the position of welfare director because of its uniqueness, the parks and recreation director, and the town clerk, which is an elected position.

Currently, non-administrative sworn police officers belong to the State Employees Association union; highway department and transfer station employees to the AFSCME Unit A; and firefighters/EMTs, following the March 2023 town vote and after being in the same unit as the highway department and transfer station, to AFSME Unit B. "This will be another unit with AFSCME," said **Gleason**. "It will be completely stand-alone. Even though [fire and highway/transfer station] have individual contracts done, we call them unit A and unit B, but this will be a completely new AFSCME unit."

Beginning negotiations next month and not later in the year should allow sufficient time to develop a contract to present to town meeting voters, he said. "Not going off of an existing contract may take a little more time just because you're starting from scratch," said **Gleason**. At the same time, the upcoming negotiations should be less complicated than the others because there aren't callback hours in regard to snow-plowing and filling an ambulance or fire truck and the new union employees aren't working holidays, such as police officers and firefighters do on days like the Fourth of July, he said. "These are folks who for the most part work you standard hours when the town is open and are off on holidays," said **Gleason**.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**James Patrick Gleason**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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In speaking with the town employees seeking to unionize, **Gleason** said the motivation is not so much work hours, environment, or conditions. "Those weren't the problems," he said. "It was more historical. I think what most people are looking for is some fairness and equity in reference to some wage security, which traditionally those employees have always received less of than the union employees. What they want is no different from the others and is some sense of knowing that over a certain period of time that they're assured a certain percentage of raises and are not left to the annual whim of any board." While 11 positions are eligible, six employees turned out for the June 26 vote to unionize, and all voted in favor.

That makes a majority, and with New Hampshire being a right-to-work state, any of the 11 employees who choose not to join the union are still entitled to the pay and benefits that will be negotiated, the same as police, fire, highway, and transfer station employees, said **Gleason**.

Joining the union is an individual decision as to who pays dues and who doesn't, but the benefits are the same, he said. Because negotiations have not yet begun, there is currently no estimated cost of a proposed contract, said **Gleason**. The negotiating team will include **Gleason**, the town finance director, a Select Board member, and Mike Elwell, the town's labor attorney.

**Gleason** said it's the employees' legal right to unionize, and he respects that, and it's his job to protect taxpayers. "We'll go into it with a positive attitude that we should be able to work out something that is fair to them and fair to the town," he said. In March, town meeting voters approved a 3-year SEA union contract, a 3-year AFSCME Unit A contract, and a 4-year AFSCME Unit B contract.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**James Patrick Gleason**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Caledonianrecord.com  
January 26, 2023

**Littleton Manager Says Town’s Finances In Good Shape Going Into 2023**

Author: Robert Blechl

The town’s finances are in good shape going into 2023, Town Manager **Jim Gleason** said to the Select Board during a budget update on Monday. “We finished the 2022 budget at 6.22 percent under budget,” he said. “That equates to \$595,918.63.” A few municipal departments were over-budget.

With a new town clerk coming on board in 2022, that department’s budget wasn’t set and there were some costs associated with laptop computers needed for the supervisors of the checklist, said **Gleason**. The finance department had to catch up on town audits, a project now completed, but **Gleason** said that the department’s budget was over by only \$2,428.

Real property appraisals and professional services were up \$16,881 because of tax abatement cases. “The one that really was the kicker was legal, which was \$122,177.86 over,” said **Gleason**. “That had to do with the settlement of 25 Ammonoosuc and labor negotiations, in addition to five of eight tax abatement cases that were settled.” Three tax abatement cases (two went to mediation on Tuesday) are still pending, but the town anticipates much less money being spent on abatements in 2023, he said.

Town insurance was a difference of \$1,400 between the premium, which is the town’s liability, and property insurance, he said. “In one case, we had two deductibles of about \$6,000 so that left us with \$1,000 there,” said **Gleason**. “So even with those few departments over and legal being \$122,000 over, we still ended up \$595,918.63 under budget ... And considering the year of inflation and the economy, I’m very pleased with the job that staff and finance did in getting us to that point.”

“That’s great,” said Carrie Gendreau, vice-chair of the Select Board. “I want to thank you for your hard work, you and staff.” “It’s always good news,” said Select Board Chairman Roger Emerson. On Friday, **Gleason** said the under-budget amount is subject to a town audit and could change, but if it does, it would not change by a significant amount because the town would not have made that kind of error.

**Gleason** said he wanted to provide context to the \$595,918.63 and how it affects the town’s overall bottom line. “We had \$1,200,109 in general fund reserves for emergencies, unplanned, anything severe that could happen,” he said. “That amount was at \$1.6 million, and the board used \$475,000 to buy down the tax rate, to keep it the same. So if we add the \$595,000 that we’re under, in addition to the \$91,348 from the excess meals and room tax the town received, we have an estimated general fund reserve balance of \$1,888,376 for starting in 2023.” If the Select Board believes that \$1.2 million is an appropriate amount to hold in the general fund, which it did in 2022, that would allow the board the discretion to use \$688,376 to buy down the

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**James Patrick Gleason**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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2023 tax rate, said **Gleason**, who consulted the finance department for those numbers. If all of the 2023 town warrant articles pass, the audit is completed, and the difference of \$688,376 is applied toward the town tax rate, it would equate to about a 4.4-cent tax increase per \$1,000 of assessed valuation for 2023, he said. “So we’re in a pretty good strong financial position both in reserves and on track with the budget,” said **Gleason**.

**Gleason** on Friday said the town does not control the state, county or school tax rates, and if any one of the other three increased significantly in 2023, the overall tax rate could be impacted by the other governmental entities, even with a town tax buy-down.

2022 was the second consecutive year the town came in under budget.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**James Patrick Gleason**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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New Hampshire Union Leader  
April 13, 2021

**Littleton town manager starts job after surviving petition to rescind his hiring**

Author: John Koziol

**Jim Gleason** started his job as Littleton’s town manager Monday, two weeks after the Board of Selectmen refused to reconsider his hire over questions about his behavior in Florida. Selectmen chose **Gleason** following a search they said included 14 candidates. The former city manager of Mascotte, Fla., succeeds Andrew Dorsett, who went on to become the Grafton County administrator. As news of **Gleason**’s hire circulated, Littleton resident and business owner Chris Sweeney launched a campaign to pressure the selectmen to find someone else, citing what he called **Gleason**’s history of questionable, unprofessional behavior in person and on social media.

Sweeney presented the board with a petition bearing more than 500 signatures during the March 29 selectmen’s hearing on **Gleason**’s hiring. But the board was unmoved. Chair Carrie Gendreau and Selectman Roger Emerson said they knew all about **Gleason**’s controversial background and still believed he was the best person to be town manager. During Monday’s selectmen’s meeting, Gendreau briefly introduced **Gleason**, saying he has 20 years of municipal experience, has fostered economic development and has helped turn around a financially struggling community. “**Jim**, welcome to Littleton,” Gendreau said.

**Gleason** did not address the public during the meeting nor was he the subject of public discussion. Sweeney was not immediately available for comment Tuesday. During an interview prior to Monday’s selectmen’s meeting, **Gleason** said he had not heard from Sweeney nor anyone who opposed his hiring as town manager. “It has been a little bit of a quiet day,” **Gleason** said, which included his laying out his office and filling it with alligator-themed tchotchkes — he is a huge fan of the University of Florida Gators football team — as well as setting up his e-mail and being briefed on the town’s several pending development and redevelopment projects. He reflected on his good fortune to work in a “postcard town” and to have an assistant in his office.

The Orlando Sentinel reported that **Gleason** was arrested after a confrontation with a Mascotte, Fla., city council member he called a “white trash (expletive)” after a vote against renewing his contract. Charges of disorderly conduct and battery were dropped in November. **Gleason** previously said he took “100 percent ownership” for his actions and that he had lost his temper. **Gleason** said he thought critics might have something to say about him at the selectmen’s meeting, but no one said anything. **Gleason** thinks that within six months to a year, he will have proven himself and that his being hired will be a “non-issue.” He said he was prepared to ride through whatever might have been brought up Monday. “I’m not here with a dispute,” he said. “I’m here to do a job.”

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**James Patrick Gleason**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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<https://www.orlandosentinel.com/news/lake/os-lk-jim-Gleason-charges-dropped-20201130-w6zfmvvhxvh5fiojnjatgbe25e-story.html>  
November 30, 2020

**Charges dropped against former Mascotte City Manager Jim Gleason**

Author: Stephen Hudak

Prosecutors in Lake County have dismissed all charges against former Mascotte City Manager **Jim Gleason** stemming from a confrontation with a city council member he called a “white trash [expletive]” after a vote against renewing his contract. Court records show prosecutors filed an “announcement of no information,” deciding they had insufficient evidence to prove elements of the crimes alleged.

**Gleason**, 62, was arrested Aug. 20 on charges of battery on a city official and disorderly conduct after an argument and shouting match with council member Brenda Brasher, her husband Mascotte Fire Chief Randy Brasher, and their supporters. A police report alleged **Gleason** threatened Brenda Brasher verbally, “poked” her shoulder in an aggressive manner and bumped her with his chest while screaming profanities. He and Brasher’s husband also bumped one another while chest to chest. The dismissal was filed Nov. 9 by assistant prosecutor Lenis Archer.

“I was unprofessional, lost my composure and used some very vulgar words and am fully responsible for my actions,” **Gleason** said in an email to the Orlando Sentinel. “[But] I knew from the moment of arrest I had never touched anyone, never!” “That is not my nature,” he added. **Gleason**, who served nearly a decade as city manager of Mascotte, a south Lake County city of about 6,000 residents, said he hopes to move on with his personal and professional life. He said he also intends to apply to have the arrest record expunged.

Before Mascotte, he had served as city manager for Chamblee, Georgia, and for Woodstock, Georgia, both located north of Atlanta; as an advisor to a project in Kirkuk, Iraq, for the U.S. State Department; and as city manager of Ocoee from 2001 to 2004. “The outcome of the case will not change Google or the information that is out there about me on social media ...” he said.

Mascotte police responded to an argument at the Mascotte Civic Center at about 10 p.m. Aug. 19 after the city council’s meeting. **Gleason** was quarreling with Mayor Pro Tem Brenda Brasher and her husband, according to an arrest affidavit. The argument in Mascotte was rooted in a decision to put Lake County Fire and Rescue in charge of city fire services. “This decision saved the city taxpayers from spending \$5.3 million,” **Gleason** said in his email.

Although Mascotte City Council voted for the switch, **Gleason** had presented the board with options to improve the city’s ISO rating for fire protection which can affect insurance rates for home-owners. Two options required hiring six additional firefighters at a cost of about \$700,000 a year, likely leading to increases in either property taxes, fire assessment fees or both. The rating helps determine the insurance costs for homeowners and other property owners. **Gleason**

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**James Patrick Gleason**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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was angry the council then had decided against renewing his three-year contract, which ended June 17, 2020. City Council later affirmed his termination by a 3-2 vote in September. His termination was effective Oct. 1. Former Groveland City Manager Dolly Miller is serving as Mascotte's interim city manager. The council will discuss the search process Tuesday and may hire a company to recruit candidates, according to the meeting agenda.



**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**James Patrick Gleason**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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State of Florida Commission on Ethics (FL)  
July 29, 2020

**Press Release (Excerpt on Candidate)**

Author: Unknown

Probable cause was found to believe Mascotte City Manager **Jim Gleason** violated the anti-nepotism law regarding the hiring of his son as a Code Enforcement Officer for the City.

However, given the totality of the facts of the matter, the Commission will take no further action on the allegation unless **Mr. Gleason** requests a hearing. The Commission found no probable cause to believe he misused his position to hire his son.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**James Patrick Gleason**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Spectrum News 13 (FL)  
December 9, 2019

**Watchdog: Mascotte Releases Findings in Police Use-of-Force Investigation**

Author: Stephanie Coueignoux

An internal investigation into the allegation of excessive force by a Mascotte Police Officer was released Monday. The report determined there is not enough evidence to prove or disprove the claim, from a February arrest. The city launched its investigation after Spectrum News 13's Watchdog reporter Stephanie Coueignoux began asking questions months ago. The investigation involves an incident captured on body camera video, showing Mascotte police officer Alvin Silverio using force against a man he was arresting.

That man, Eduardo Ramirez, spoke to Spectrum News 13: "I never pushed him. I never touched him. I never did anything to him. He just had the handcuffs on me." Monday's report describes the body cam video as showing Ramirez spitting on Officer Silverio, who then reacts: "...you can see Officer Silverio swing at Mr. Ramirez 3 times only making contact with the 3<sup>rd</sup> strike to the rear of Mr. Ramirez's head." "Officer Silverio was responding to an aggressive physical attack, based on the fact that spit is known to carry blood borne pathogens."

Mascotte City Manager **Jim Gleason** says he's satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, but wishes the police department hadn't waited until months later to start it. **Gleason** credits Spectrum News 13's inquiry into the incident for prompting the process.

The report also outlines why it's unclear if excessive force was used—including lack of witness cooperation. One of the witnesses listed in the report is Silverio's colleague who also responded to the incident. Officer Jody Beyer was let go from Mascotte Police soon after. The report states she "did not participate in the investigative process" and that "Ms. Beyer failed in her duties as a sworn officer to report what she allegedly perceived to be a violation of department policy and violation of a citizens rights." Spectrum News 13 has learned Beyer is now suing the City of Mascotte under the Whistleblower's Act, claiming she was fired for "objecting to the actions of Officer Silverio...and the attempted cover up". In her lawsuit, Beyer claims she witnessed Silverio "beating Eduardo Ramirez upon his face, neck, and head".

**Gleason** told Spectrum News 13 he wasn't aware Beyer was suing the city. He says while he takes every lawsuit seriously, and is pushing for better officer training and procedural improvements, he has full confidence in Police Chief Eric Pedersen and the police department. Beyer's attorney told Spectrum News 13 he doesn't have a comment at this time. Chief Pedersen also did not return our request for an interview. Officer Silverio is now undergoing counseling about filing reports in a complete and timely manner.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**James Patrick Gleason**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Orlando Sentinel (FL)  
November 1, 2019

**Tiny Montverde Could Become Region’s Smallest Town with a Professional Manager**  
Author: Jerry Fallstrom

Running a small town with all of nine employees might seem like it would be a snap. But Mayor Joe Wynkoop says: Think again. “It’s a little town with all the little tiny moving parts,” said Wynkoop, who juggles his job as a Realtor with mayoral roles that include overseeing the town’s operation. “Until you sit down and do it, you really don’t understand how much there is to do.” In his four years as mayor he said he has learned that running a local government -- even a pint-sized one like Montverde, population 1,878 -- is a time-consuming undertaking. Voters will go to the polls Tuesday to decide whether it’s time to bring a trained government manager on board to take over the duties. If approved, the laid-back Lake County town will become the smallest community in Central Florida with a full-time manager.

It’s smaller than Windermere, which has a population of 2,972; Oakland, 3,365; and Belle Isle, 7,365, all of which have managers. Among other cities in the area with fewer than 10,000 residents, Mascotte, population 6,205, and Umatilla, with 4,154 residents, also are run by managers who report to their city’s elected representatives. Windermere Town Council member Bob McKinley said Montverde has the right idea with its referendum. “With the town of Windermere I would say it would be extremely hard to function without a town manager,” said McKinley, referring to the town’s point man, Robert Smith. “We would not be near as efficient as we are.”

**Jim Gleason**, city manager in Mascotte, said it makes sense to bring someone on board trained in city government operations who can administer Montverde’s \$1.8 million budget. From time to time over the past three years, **Gleason** and his finance director, Dolly Miller, have helped Wynkoop professionalize the town’s operation on their days off, at a rate of \$70 an hour. Miller is a former Groveland city manager. “In the beginning there was much more hands-on work,” **Gleason** said, adding that they’ve provided assistance only about five times this year. While Wynkoop has embraced his administrator obligations and has received a lot of on-the-job training, **Gleason** said “getting elected to office doesn’t mean you necessarily have the skill set to run a city on a day-to-day basis.”

Admitting he’s “probably a fanatic,” Wynkoop said he puts in 50 to 60 hours a week, presiding from his office at Town Hall, which was converted from the old Montverde schoolhouse built decades ago. He receives \$1,500 a month as mayor compared with \$500 a month for town council members and \$550 for the council president. If the ballot measure passes, he said, “Hopefully we can get someone in here that’s got 10, 20 years’ experience and brings a lot to the table for us to look at.” He said a manager would be paid in the ballpark of \$75,000 a year. Wynkoop’s pay would be reduced to that of a council member.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****James Patrick Gleason***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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**Gleason** said with the progress made the past few years, Montverde is “in a position where the transition [to a council-manager system] would be smoother for them.” Montverde, which was founded in 1925 along Lake Apopka’s west shore, has a minimalist government to go with its size. For starters, the town has no police department, the biggest cost in many cities. Montverde does pay \$86,000 a year for the services of one full-time Lake County deputy sheriff, Wynkoop said, and off-duty Florida Highway Patrol troopers are hired for 20 to 25 hours a month to handle traffic enforcement. If those options aren’t available when needed the Lake County Sheriff’s Office responds to calls. Also, the town keeps expenses down with its 22-member volunteer fire department, founded in 1934, that has three firetrucks and a full-time fire chief. Volunteers receive \$25 per 12-hour shift, and two of them are on duty nearly 24 hours a day, according to Wynkoop. Montverde also benefits in that major roads through and leading into the town are county roads, so keeping them up isn’t the town’s responsibility. Consequently, Montverde has the lowest tax rate among Lake County’s 14 cities.

Wynkoop said changing to a town manager won’t impact the budget greatly. The proposal is backed by Kasey Kesselring, headmaster of Montverde Academy, an international boarding school that sits along County Road 455. The school established in 1912 is known for its Mediterranean-revival architecture, which gives the town an old Florida feel. The school also has provided the town with a national identity -- at least to sports fans -- thanks to its powerhouse basketball team, which has won four national championships and produced numerous players who’ve gone on to Division I colleges and the NBA. “As the expectation for sophistication grows with the provision and timely delivery of services, it is fair to say that the current structure may no longer be reasonable to adequately provide steady and sustainable leadership of the town’s operations,” Kesselring wrote in an email.

On Thursday, those operations for Wynkoop included guiding the driver of a truck towing a trailer to a spot where its cargo, a haunted house, was to be unloaded for that evening’s Halloween Trunk or Treat event at Kirk Park. He acknowledged that such tasks probably don’t fall to Orlando Mayor Buddy Dyer. “He’s got a little bit different gig there,” said, Wynkoop, adding that if voters give their OK he looks forward to remaining as mayor without the responsibility of being the town boss.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**James Patrick Gleason**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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South Lake Tablet (FL)  
July 22, 2019

**Mascotte City Manager Jim Gleason and Montverde Mayor Joe Wynkoop Provide Updates on Their Communities**

Mascotte City Manager **Jim Gleason** and Montverde Mayor Joe Wynkoop were guest speakers at July's South Lake Chamber of Commerce Breakfast held at Bella Collina. Chamber Chair Kalena Meyers led the discussion with questions to both city officials on their community's anticipated growth, vision, and long-term vision. The City of Mascotte is a Council-City Manager form of government. The elected council serves as the policymakers (Board of Directors), and the City Manager (CEO) works for the Council to implement their policy directions in addition to the day to day administration of the city.

Mascotte City Manager, **Jim Gleason** has been Mascotte's City Manager for over 8 years during which time the city has had 6 tax cuts in the past 6 years with the last 4 tax cuts being full rollbacks in the tax rate, the 2019-2020 tax rate is lower than the rollback rate. **Jim** proudly explains the city has a lower tax rate today than the 2010-2011 tax year, the one before he started. The tax rate has gone from 9.6147 mils highest in Lake County to a proposed rate for 2019-2020 of 7.55 mils. Currently, Mascotte is the only city in south Lake County that has approved permitting marijuana dispensaries within city limits.

**Gleason** said that the city unveiled its new website last week and is working on updating the city's logo to be revamped to a descriptive representation of Mascotte. Mascotte's current logo is a ship with no actual ties to the present or future of Mascotte. The city is also working on plans for a new Public Safety Building with the first phase being the fire station. The building will be located across the street from Mascotte's city hall, located at 100 West Myers Blvd (SR 50), on the south side of 50 next to Family Dollar and CR 33. This phase will cost an estimated \$3 million. **Jim** is a self-proclaimed social liberal and a fiscal conservative, who knows how to eliminate debt, balanced budgets, and cut taxes. His leadership style is working for Mascotte.

The Township of Montverde consists of 5 locally elected residents that are Councilman and women who work with Mayor Joe Wynkoop to govern the town. Mayor Wynkoop is presently responsible for running the town's day-to-day operations but said that will soon be changing if the residents pass a Charter change in November to a council/city manager government. Both the Montverde Mayor and Mascotte City Manager predict lots of business and housing growth in the upcoming years.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**James Patrick Gleason**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Mynews13.com (FL)  
June 21, 2019

**Watchdog: Cop's Use-of-Force Investigation Raises Questions About Transparency**  
Author: Stephanie Coueignoux

An internal investigation into a Mascotte Police officer's use of force during a February 25 arrest is raising questions about the agency's transparency in the case. Spectrum News 13's Watchdog team spent weeks looking into the case, requesting reports and body-camera footage from the arrest of 20-year-old Eduardo Ramirez by Officer Alvin Silverio. Ramirez, now an inmate at the Lake County Jail, agreed to sit down for an interview with Watchdog reporter Stephanie Coueignoux. During that interview, we asked whether he should be charged with battery on a law enforcement officer. "There was no reason for them to arrest me, and I didn't touch him, I didn't hit him, I did nothing to him," Ramirez said about Silverio.

But that's different from what Silverio wrote in a "use of force" report from the incident. "The defendant... attempted to twist my fingers," and "... shouted 'Get the (blank) off me!' several times and refused to walk. As the defendant pulled away from me, I effected approximately two to four knee strikes and ordered him to walk," Silverio wrote, describing what happened after he put Ramirez in handcuffs. He continues: "The defendant continued to pull away... and spit his saliva on me. As a reactionary movement... I effected approximately two to four strikes to the defendant's head area with closed hand."

Mascotte Police Chief Eric Pedersen repeatedly declined our requests to talk about the case. But City Manager **Jim Gleason** sat down with us. "I do take it very serious," **Gleason** said. "And if someone were to make a complaint or concern, when it comes to me, I get it into the right hands, because I want to know at the end of the day, I can tell residents, 'You can have faith in our police officers.' " The city of Mascotte has worked to improve the reputation of its police department after the suspension and resignation of former Police Chief Rolando Bonasco. During Bonasco's tenure, a number of officers filed lawsuits against the department, some involving allegations of discrimination and illegal recordings.

In his case, Ramirez is charged with two felonies: battery on a law enforcement officer and resisting an officer with violence, as well as a misdemeanor trespassing charge. He claims those charges aren't warranted. "There was no way I was resisting, because I was in handcuffs," Ramirez said. Ramirez said he was taking out the trash when his dog ran off to the Mascotte Recreational Complex. That's when Silverio and another officer showed up for a call about suspicious individuals. Here's part of an audio transcript from the body camera video:

"What... You getting mad just because I'm getting my cigarette?" Ramirez says.

"Dude. You want another charge?" Silverio replies.

"What... You what want another charge... What you mean? Assault. Assault." Ramirez asks.

"Uh-huh," Silverio replies.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**James Patrick Gleason**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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"Uh-huh what? Don't touch me... Oh wow, you see that? You see that? He's punching me! That's assault!" Ramirez is heard saying.

You can hear the audio in the footage, but police blurred the video. Chief Pedersen says the agency redacted the entire video because there are juveniles in it. But **Gleason**, the city manager, said he's concerned about that complete redaction. "I don't want us holding anything that can help clear the story regardless of what the answer is," **Gleason** told Spectrum News 13. "It may not be the answer I want, but that's just as important. I need to know that. I'm sorry on that. I don't have that answer, but I sure will get it." Ramirez told us he hopes the public will be able to see the video and decide for themselves.

Following our conversation, **Gleason** requested that the police chief provide us with the unedited version of the body-camera footage. We've been told we should receive that video next week. As for Silverio, he will remain on active duty and not be put on administrative leave or desk duty, which is sometimes done during these types of investigations, Pedersen said.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**James Patrick Gleason**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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South Lake Press (Clermont, FL)  
January 16, 2019

**South Lake cities helping federal employees**

Author/Byline: Katie Sartoris

Three south Lake County cities are giving federal employees a break as the government shutdown continues. Minneola, Mascotte and Groveland announced this week they will defer utility payments and waive late fees for affected employees until the government shutdown is over. Meanwhile, other local communities continue to monitor the situation. The federal government has been defunded since Dec. 22. The closure has affected about 800,000 federal workers; 380,000 are furloughed while 420,000 of them, deemed essential, are working without pay. Among them are TSA and other federal air safety employees at airports, including Orlando International, and correctional officers at federal prisons including Coleman Federal Correctional Complex in Sumter County. Some of those employees live in Lake County communities.

Over the past couple weeks, Mascotte has fielded questions from these workers about utility payments. “Those that brought it up paid their bills, but asked what would happen if this prolonged into February or later,” city manager **Jim Gleason** said in an interview. “We wanted to put a policy in place that would work with those folks for any period of time it took to straighten out this mess in Washington.” **Gleason** sent an email Wednesday evening to city employees about the policy, saying the city will not disconnect services or charge late fees to federal employees with proof of employment. Payments due normally in January will be due in February, or after the shutdown is over, **Gleason** wrote.

Minneola was the first in the county to adopt the policy. The city announced it in a Facebook post Wednesday, and reactions were overwhelmingly positive. By Thursday afternoon, the post had more than 230 shares and 50 comments. Before offering to defer utility payments, mayor Pat Kelley said he hadn’t received any resident complaints. Instead, he wanted to take a proactive approach. “Families are having to make decisions,” he said. “They only have limited funds. Do they pay their electric bill, water bill or buy food? I just don’t want them to worry about it.” Kelley’s wife, Ann, is a flight attendant. The couple recently had a conversation about how TSA workers are going without pay. “These people are there trying to protect us and they aren’t getting paid,” Kelley said. “It really clicked for me.”

Groveland also took to Facebook to inform its residents of the relief, receiving similar praise. Amanda Clancy commented thanking the city, saying her family was affected by the shutdown. In an interview, Clancy explained that her husband, Joseph, works at Coleman as a corrections officer. They have a 15-year-old daughter at home. “Even though our water bill isn’t much, it still helps immensely and allows us to put that money to other bills where other companies haven’t been so willing to work with us,” Clancy said. Groveland’s city manager Mike Hein said the policy was an extension of gratitude to those serving their country.



**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**James Patrick Gleason**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Meanwhile, Leesburg is taking a “wait-and-see” approach, and isn’t currently offering deferred utility payments, said Al Minner, city manager. “I know we have our share of Coleman folks in Leesburg,” Minner said. “So far, customer service hasn’t received any complaints. But if it becomes an issue, we’ll address it.” It hasn’t been brought up in Tavares, Eustis or Mt. Dora either, according to city officials. The city of Clermont provided a statement Thursday afternoon saying it's "monitoring the situation," and encouraged those affected to contact the utility billing office. As of Thursday afternoon, Lady Lake hadn’t considered it. However, town manager Kris Kollgaard commended the idea, and said she’d bring it to the town commission.

As the shutdown enters its 20th day Friday, **Gleason** hopes to see other communities offer their residents assistance — and send a message. “In our community, the (federal employee) population is extremely low,” **Gleason** said. “I would like to think that our example and maybe other communities that are doing this would bring attention to how wrong it is to use employees as a bargaining chip for political gain.”

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**James Patrick Gleason**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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South Lake Press (Clermont, FL)  
June 27, 2018

**School Board weighs the price of safety**  
Author/Byline: Tom McNiff

TAVARES – Area cities are not as gung ho as they appeared to be several weeks ago about helping bear the cost of stationing police officers in area schools. In May Schools Superintendent Diane Kornegay talked to police chiefs and city managers from many of Lake County's 14 municipalities and said she found them eager to help beef up school security in the wake of school massacres in south Florida and in Texas in recent months. Those were never ironclad commitments, however, and in recent weeks many of those cities have cooled to the idea. Only tiny Howey-in-the-Hills and Mount Dora, which has long provided a police officer at Mount Dora High School, have committed to helping the School District with the cost of additional officers.

Asked whether Eustis would help, City Manager Ron Neibert said it is unlikely. Neibert noted that the city is having trouble filling its own vacancies in the police department and would have to take an officer off the street to staff one of its elementary schools. "There are a lot of operational and financial concerns that really do not make it feasible for us to help the district meet their obligation," he said. Others polled by the Daily Commercial did not reject the idea outright but were taking a wait-and-see approach. Fruitland Park City Manager Gary LaVenia said the Fruitland Park Commission hadn't discussed the idea and hadn't scheduled it for discussion yet. Leesburg City Manager Al Minner said the Leesburg Commission is waiting to see how much the School District would expect Leesburg to chip in for one or more full-time officers in the city's elementary schools.

The most vociferous opposition to the idea came from the City of Mascotte and City Manager **Jim Gleason**, who fired off a pointed letter on June 12 critical of the Florida Legislature for mandating better school security but not providing enough funding to county school districts. "Education and Schools are not the constitutional responsibility of City and County Governments," the letter states. "The responsibility for all support of our Public Education System is given to the State of Florida and the 67 County School Boards. We can be a partner but we are not the solution. While safety is a priority at all levels of government, the Governor, Florida legislature and our School Boards have failed the students, teachers and parents in many ways with public safety being one of those responsibilities."

The letter concludes: "Unless directed by the Mayor and City Council of Mascotte, we will not take on the cost, responsibility and liability of a State and County School Board Function. Our taxpayers already pay for the public services provided by the city and I cannot see raising taxes or take away from other services to take on a responsibility of the state and local school boards."

Kornegay said she understood that the cities have financial constraints just as the School Board does, but she's still hoping more will join Mount Dora and Howey. At present, there are resource

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches  
James Patrick Gleason**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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officers — mostly sheriff's deputies — in every high school and middle school in Lake County, but none in the elementary schools. Sheriff Peyton Grinnell said the additional 20-22 officers it would take to staff every school would cost \$4 million. The Florida Legislature has allocated some money to help with the cost. Lake School District officials say they expect to receive about \$1.3 million. That's not the only cost they will incur. The School District is evaluating "school hardening" measures that include security cameras, metal detectors, upgraded doors and ballistic film for windows, among other things.

The cost is unknown at this point, but one of the district's top finance officers said last week that it could easily exceed \$20 million. To help pay for all that, the School Board decided June 11 to put a tax increase of .75 mills on the August primary ballot. A mill is \$1 of taxes for every \$1,000 in the taxable value of a home. With the \$25,000 homestead exemption, someone with a home valued at \$100,000 would pay about \$56 a year for school security.

School Board member Bill Mathias said while taxpayers generally oppose increases, he believes the public will be "passionate about supporting this one." "It will fully fund safety and security but more importantly, it will fund trained counselors in all of our schools to detect and address kids who are having issues," he said.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**James Patrick Gleason**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Orlando Sentinel, The (FL)  
October 22, 2017

**Commissioners thwart voters' will with ban**  
Author/Byline: Lauren Ritchie

Lake County commissioners have voted to move ahead with plans to ban a legal business, thereby abandoning their supposed free-market principles and spitting in the face of voters who approved the business last year. And these people call themselves Republicans? Apparently, their personal preference trumps both the will of the people and and their less-than-firm commitment to a fundamental belief of their party.

The issue is medical marijuana - which can't really be called an "issue" any more since it was settled in November 2016 by nearly 72 percent of voters across the state who decided that residents suffering chronic pain, nausea, spasticity, glaucoma, Parkinson's and other movement disorders should have that option for relief. Voters in Lake County went for the measure by nearly 67 percent. Apparently that's not good enough for Republican commissioners who think they know better. Commissioners will vote Tuesday on a second reading on whether to ban medical marijuana dispensaries in unincorporated areas, making the current temporary moratorium permanent.

Dispensaries already are open in The Villages and Orlando. No one has died. In Lake, the cities of Mount Dora and Mascotte have said they will let the businesses open, but Mount Dora must make changes in its ordinance first. Commissioner Leslie Campione said at the Oct. 10 meeting, "My concern all along has been it's getting the foot in the door, it's the opportunity that maybe these will morph into something else, and this is not really where I would like to see Lake County go." One has to wonder what horrors Campione is envisioning. Drug drive-thrus? Would you like a lid of Colombian Gold with that burger? Sorry, m'lady. This is not your decision to make. Florida voters have spoken, and it's your job to carry out their will, not to thwart it - like it or not.

The other excuse commissioners are offering is that state rules forbid treating marijuana dispensaries differently than the local pharmacies which are typically along busy roads or in downtowns. State officials presciently realized that locals would try to bury these dispensaries down dark alleys, and they prevented such treatment by requiring they be allowed in commercial areas. Local officials must get their minds wrapped around the notion that marijuana can be used for a legitimate, positive purpose for people whose daily lives can be miserable.

In Mascotte, the attitude is different. Perhaps that's because of City Manager **Jim Gleason**, a devout Democrat who grew up in the 1960s when weed was a popular drug of choice for young people. Marijuana holds no mystique to many who simply breathed while attending just about any concert in 1968. **Gleason** rightly pointed out that some states have had medical-marijuana dispensaries for more than a decade. This isn't a challenging, new viewpoint on the herb. Mascotte has had inquiries from dispensaries, but so far no one has applied to open a store. He

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**James Patrick Gleason**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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said the city will "treat an application no different than any other legally approved and licensed business." **Gleason** also pointed out that patients at a medical-marijuana dispensary won't be a bunch of drug dealers and addicts. Most of them are standing in line for painkillers or other anti-spasticity drugs at the local Walgreen's or CVS right now.

Lake commissioners, all Republicans, should allow free-market principles to apply in this arena. This proposed ban is a solution on the hunt for a problem. If Republicans want to make a meaningful dent in drug use, they should tackle the opioid crisis in Florida. A ban of marijuana dispensaries, where a prescription from a licensed doctor is required, is a waste of time, not to mention money, when the first dispensary decides to take the ban to court.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**James Patrick Gleason**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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[CB&A Note: Only the information relevant to **James P. Gleason** is listed below.]

<https://capitalsoup.com/2017/06/05/florida-city-county-management-association-elects-new-officers-board-directors/>

Capital Soup (FL)  
June 5, 2017

**Florida City and County Management Association Elects New Officers and Board of Directors**

At the Florida City and County Management Association’s (FCCMA) 2017 annual conference at the Hilton Orlando this week, the organization elected new officers and members of the Board of Directors. The Association, created in 1946, is the professional association for city, county and some special district managers, and their management team members. FCCMA is an affiliate of the International City/County Management Association (ICMA).

Outgoing president Bobby Green, City Manager for Auburndale, presided over the conference and recognized those board members completing their respective terms. Incoming president Jim Hanson, Town Manager for Orange Park, recognized new board members following the election and congratulated them for their time, commitment and leadership. “The lifeblood of any association is its active members; and we are very grateful for the dedicated leadership, vision and hard work of our board of directors,” he said. “I want to thank the new board for volunteering to represent their areas, and for their commitment to leading the Association for 2017-18.”

The following FCCMA members were elected to serve as officers and members of the Board of Directors:

District VIII Director: **James (Jim) Gleason**, City Manager, Mascotte (Lake County)

FCCMA was formed in 1946 and is an affiliate of the International City/County Management Association (ICMA), which awards the designation of Credentialed Manager (ICMA-CM). The FCCMA has more than 600 members across Florida. FCCMA is a member-driven, ethical, inclusive organization committed to the council-manager and commission-manager forms of government, dedicated to effective partnerships with elected officials, devoted to the advancement of excellence in professional management of local government in the state of Florida and determined to provide quality of service to its membership and the local governments it serves.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****James Patrick Gleason***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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<https://www.nydailynews.com/os-lk-lauren-ritchie-mascotte-debt-free-20170510-story.html>

Daily News (FL)

May 17, 2017

**Congrats to Mascotte, Debt-Free After Austere Years**

Author: Lauren Ritchie

**Jim Gleason** was stuck in Georgia in 2011 — his wife had moved home to Orlando to teach, and he was looking for a job in city management somewhere in Central Florida. That's when he chanced on an advertisement from little Mascotte, desperately looking for a savior to get it out of financial hot water. Mascotte was \$6 million in debt — about \$1,200 per resident — and was perilously close to declaring bankruptcy. Today, Mascotte is debt-free. Its reserves have been built up from \$300,000 to \$1.3 million, and the city is poised to consider building a new, combined center for police and fire. "For the first six to eight months, I wasn't sure it could be done," said **Gleason**, 59, who took the city manager job as an interim and stayed. On May 1, council members signed him for another three years.

Being debt-free is a rarity among Florida's 410 incorporated municipalities, but neither the Florida League of Cities nor the Florida Auditor General's office could say how many don't owe money. A quick internet search turned up three cities in Florida boasting of their status over the last four years. Small cities such as Mascotte — the population is about 5,500 today — struggle to make do mostly on property taxes and some sales taxes. Bigger cities have the resources to tap into more robust revenue. But Mascotte's trouble wasn't lack of money. It was thinking too big. This is a cautionary tale that other small municipalities should be examining and heeding right now because building in Lake County is picking up dramatically and the Mascottes of Central Florida will be getting their share.

During the real-estate bust, Mascotte had precisely zero new homes built in the city limits for several years. So far this year, 28 permits for single-family structures already have been issued. Anything those homes bring in will be "frosting," **Gleason**. The city manager is determined never to make the same mistake that got Mascotte in such trouble during the bust, and that is to rely on growth to pay for infrastructure. Half of the money Mascotte owed in 2011 had been spent on a sewer plant that never got built, **Gleason** said. However, the city bought land and had the facility designed. "Thank God it wasn't built — that would have been another \$9 million in debt," **Gleason** said.

Could he have fixed that scenario? "I'm the manager, not a miracle worker," he quipped. A \$700,000 chunk of the debt came from a water line "that just sits there right now," still waiting for growth. "Somehow, people thought this was going to be Clermont with 30,000 people," **Gleason** said. "No matter how good things are, there's always going to be a downturn. "If you're going to go out and take on debt, you better have a Plan B." Unfortunately, Mascotte did not. **Gleason** vowed it won't happen again. The city is considering the construction of a \$2.5 million public-safety building — about 10,000 square feet at \$250 a square foot for a turnkey operation.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**James Patrick Gleason**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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**Gleason** already has the financing planned in his head: a five-year loan with \$500,000 a year payments. "Going into debt in itself isn't bad — it's how you handle it," **Gleason** said. "You also have to know where your paycheck's coming from to pay it." The cautious approach is the smart approach, especially since it seems that Central Florida is poised for at least a little boomlet of growth. That always get the blood stirring, and cities thinking that they need to take some action. Municipal managers should be thinking about larger circumstances, too. Consider that President Donald Trump has remarked that a "major, major" conflict with North Korea is possible. Those are circumstances that should make cities step gingerly as they go about planning their spending for the coming year.



**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**James Patrick Gleason**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Daily Commercial.com (FL)  
November 7, 2016

**Mascotte Settles with Former Officer David Grice**  
Author: Roxanne Brown

The last of five labor-related lawsuits filed against the city of Mascotte by employees in the past couple of years was settled recently with the outcome that former police sergeant David Grice was seeking. The settlement was reached on Oct. 26 at the conclusion of a three-day trial at the Lake County Courthouse, right before the jury came back with a verdict. “There was no real concrete offer until after we made our closing arguments and the jury was deliberating,” said Derek Schroth, Grice’s attorney with Bowen & Schroth out of Eustis.

The settlement, offered by Mascotte’s lawyers from the Florida League of Cities on behalf of Mascotte City Manager **Jim Gleason** and former Police Chief Ronaldo Banasco, included a total payout of \$250,000 for Grice and his attorneys, full reinstatement for Grice and his full rate of pay from his January 2014 termination with three pay raises, equal to about 10 percent, that general officers have received. Schroth said that upon his return to duty on Dec. 1, Grice will be earning \$42,000 annually, plus approximately \$10,000 in health insurance. The settlement includes reinstatement of other benefits, including a take-home vehicle with transponder, and that any internal affairs investigations be dismissed as unfounded. “It’s everything we sought,” Schroth said.

Grice’s lawsuit, filed in April 2014, alleged that city officials made false accusations against him in retaliation for complaints he made about Banasco, including the alleged bugging of police cars. Grice was also secretly videotaped, harassed, humiliated and mistreated, according to the lawsuit.

The Florida Police Benevolent Association also filed a suit alleging that Grice’s Officers’ Bill of Rights was violated as a result of the way the firing process was carried out. After the settlement was accepted by all parties and before dismissing the case, the judge allowed the jury to reveal their verdict. It was in favor of Mascotte and if not for the settlement, Grice would have received nothing.

**Gleason** said that he and the city’s lawyers, at lunch, decided to settle because of the likelihood of an appeal and another looming lawsuit. “We found out the jury reached a verdict saying that Mr. Grice was not retaliated against but the insurance company wanted to settle. They weren’t as concerned about the case on trial, but they were concerned about a potential age discrimination suit,” **Gleason** said. “This could have dragged on for another 18 months to two years and based on what I heard about in depositions and conduct uncovered, the likelihood of us prevailing in an age discrimination case was highly unlikely.”

**Gleason** said the gamble was not worth taking. “This was an opportunity to end every issue they had in one settlement and it worked out to be beneficial for Grice and beneficial for the city,” **Gleason** said. “I have no animosity toward Grice and I’m happy for him. There were no bad

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**James Patrick Gleason**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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reports about him before all this and we can put it behind us.” Grice also spoke about his feelings. “I have so many people to thank,” Grice said. “But I also think there was some spiritual intervention because everything just fell into place. This was just too big of an event that I didn’t have the energy, money, time or rhetoric for. God was in it all the way around and I think others felt it too.” He also said that when he was leaving the courtroom, a couple of jurors approached him. One was crying and they said that they wanted to rule in his favor, but could not because of the judge’s orders on how to conclude their decision.

Grice said **Gleason’s** demeanor and attitude during the trial was positive and with Banasco out of the picture, he is confident and excited about returning to work. He’d been working in security and already put in his notice. **Gleason** said he does not foresee future problems, but does expect higher insurance premiums because of the lawsuits. He said things have been calmer since Banasco’s departure. Still, Grice said he knows he will have to get to know the new chief, reacquaint himself with the department and get caught up on training before getting back out on patrol. “Going back to work is not going to be hard for me, because the person who was the cause of all this is gone. I think most people now realize the magnitude of what he was doing,” Grice said. “I think we can all call it a bad time in the city and move on.”

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**James Patrick Gleason**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Mynews13.com (FL)  
November 3, 2015

**Mascotte Approves Measure to Stop LGBT Discrimination**

Author: News 13 Florida Lake County

Mascotte is a small city of a little more than 5,000 people, but that's not stopping them from tackling a big, national issue. "I kind of see this in the sense that this is almost maybe the equal rights of 2015," said Mascotte city manager **Jim Gleason**. "That we are an open, progressive city for all types of people. Race and religion and sexual orientation," said Mascotte Mayor Brenda Brasher.

On Monday night, Mascotte City Council unanimously approved a new local human rights ordinance which prohibits discrimination based on gender and sexual orientation in Mascotte. The ordinance is aimed at protecting members of the LGBT community from being discriminated against in employment, housing and public accommodations because of their sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.

"For a small city in Lake County, a conservative county, in a conservative part of the county, and when you're trying to attract businesses and grow sometimes you want to send the right message that you're an all-inclusive community and you're open to everybody. And we don't discriminate," **Gleason** explained. The new law does create exemptions for religious and non-profit organizations. "If you're a landlord or you're a business owner or you've got a business building that you can't just discriminate against someone based on their sexual orientation," **Gleason** added. "But again, the religious exemption is carved out so that we do respect freedom of religion and government itself is staying out of the religious part of the issue."

**Gleason** further explained the ordinance is not only about being on the right side of history but also being a leading municipality in the state of Florida. "It's a nice opportunity to be able to play a small role and also hopefully an important role that may send a message both to the state, that this should be something they should be taking a look at, and maybe even the county itself," **Gleason** said.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**James Patrick Gleason**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Orlando Sentinel (FL)  
October 9, 2015

**Mascotte Settles Discrimination Suit with Clerk, in Trouble with Other Claims**

Author: Lauren Ritchie

Let the payments begin. The city of Mascotte, the subject of six lawsuits and complaints from employees, settled the first of them from a black woman who said she was harassed by the city manager. Utility department employee Alana Wilson walked away this week with \$115,000 plus three months of paid leave with benefits. The city must tell future employers seeking references for her only that she had excellent reviews, which she did. Mascotte taxpayers are shelling out \$50,000 of the settlement, with the other \$65,000 being paid by the city's insurer. One down. Five to go. These are bound to get expensive for the little south Lake city. An observer can't really know whether there is merit to the other complaints, but the way this one went portends trouble for Mascotte with the rest, which feature claims ranging from retaliation to illegal wiretapping.

Meanwhile, the city has approved the first reading of a nondiscrimination ordinance that mirrors one passed recently by Leesburg. The ordinance prohibits discrimination in employment, housing and public accommodation based on all the standard protected classes such as religion, age or race. But it also includes sexual orientation or "gender identity and expression." The latter is defined as "a person's innate, deeply felt psychological identification as a man, woman or some other gender, which may or may not correspond to the sex assigned to them at birth."

The move boosts Mascotte into a leadership role in preventing discrimination against gays and transgender people. Now, if they can just get down pat that whole business about not discriminating based on color. Wilson first complained to the city that:

- City Manager **Jim Gleason** suggested to Wilson that she should change her computer password to "token black person." The city manager denied it, but a witness stated she heard the remark.
- Gleason** acknowledged using the word "pickaninny" and telling Wilson to be sure to ask her mother-in-law what it meant.
- Gleason** and other employees were looking at bobble-headed knickknacks when Wilson said the city manager remarked, "All we need now is a nappy-headed doll for Alana."
- And finally, **Gleason** talked about "jam boys." He told staffers that during more racist times, black boys would be smeared with jam and told to stand a few feet away from a picnic, party or golf foursome to attract insects away from whites. Supposedly, the child was sent home still smeared in jam so the family could eat it, the city manager stated. Whether such a thing even is true is unclear.

After the police chief and fire chief conducted an "investigation" of their boss, the city manager, and of course cleared him — is that laughable or what? — Wilson filed a complaint with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, which decided there was "reasonable cause" to believe she'd been subjected to discrimination, a ruling the agency makes for fewer than 3

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches  
James Patrick Gleason**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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percent of complaints. Shortly after she filed, **Gleason** held a meeting with Wilson in which she testified that he screamed at her, just inches from her face. Finance director Dolly Miller said in a sworn statement that **Gleason** was frustrated and "getting loud" but was not angry. Another employee who was there to witness the meeting got up and walked out.

Wilson also complained that the city retaliated against her by installing a digital security camera and microphone, said her lawyer, Derek Schroth of Eustis. **Gleason** has said that no cameras point directly at Wilson and that their purpose is to capture cash transactions. However, other employees stated in sworn depositions that a camera is located between Wilson and another utility employee and that it records audio. That camera is the only one with a microphone, Schroth said.

These sorts of actions are the ones that are going to hang Mascotte in the other disputes. Judges in discrimination cases tend to abhor petty little maneuvers — they expect governments not to be used for retaliation and frown on it when they are. About a week ago, a police officer stepped forward to testify in the other cases, which all involve police officers. Immediately, Schroth said, Mascotte police conducted an "inspection" of his vehicle. Sigh. When will they ever learn?

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**James Patrick Gleason**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Daily Commercial, The (Leesburg, FL)  
October 5, 2015

**South Lake cities reflect on new fiscal year budgets**

Author: Roxanne Brown

**MASCOTTE**

City Manager **Jim Gleason** said Mascotte is doing well financially. “We definitely would like to see some growth, but the good news for us is we’re doing pretty well with very little growth,” **Gleason** said. “It looks like home builders are active in inquiries and we’re reducing debt. If we’re able to do this with zero growth, I can just imagine if the growth starts to pick up in Mascotte.”

The total budget is \$5,477,400 and the general fund budget is \$2,925,000, with no shortfalls. The council voted to decrease property taxes by a whole mill, taking the millage rate from 9.3000 to 8.8138. The city also was able to lower its fire assessment fee from \$115 to \$105 for residents.

The budget did not fund any new positions, but it did allow for a 3 percent across-the-board pay increase for all employees, two new police vehicles, air/life packs and a \$100,000 new Class A pumper truck for the fire department and the ability to pay off the remaining \$140,000 of a USDA loan. “Instead of refinancing, we thought if we could eliminate debt, it would help our general fund reserves, which are now at about \$1 million.

We haven’t had to use reserves to balance our budget in the last three years,” **Gleason** said. “Residents are also getting the same services as they were getting in the boom, but for less money.”

Projects that were funded in the 2016 budget include the completion of the pipeline that will connect Mascotte to Groveland’s wastewater treatment plant, allowing a change from septic to sewer, a move officials hope will attract new businesses to town. About \$105,000 also was allotted for new sidewalks, the replacement of playground equipment and the resurfacing of streets throughout the city.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**James Patrick Gleason**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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[CB&A Note: Only the information relevant to **James P. Gleason** is listed below.]

[http://www.orlando-chamber.org/index.php?src=gendocs&ref=EM\\_092115%202015%20Class%20Announced#.XsWcmmhKjIU](http://www.orlando-chamber.org/index.php?src=gendocs&ref=EM_092115%202015%20Class%20Announced#.XsWcmmhKjIU)

Every Monday (FL)  
September 24, 2015

**2015 Class Announced**  
**The Central Florida Political Leadership Institute**

The Central Florida Political Leadership Institute (PLI) has announced the members of its 2015 class that were accepted into the innovative, groundbreaking initiative designed to strengthen and equip the region’s future leaders with training prior to their decision to run for public office. Twenty (20) finalists were chosen from the seven-county Central Florida region, which includes Brevard, Lake, Orange, Osceola, Polk, Seminole and Volusia. “The Central Florida Political Leadership Institute allows the opportunity for those considering a bid for public office to learn more about the process and the issues impacting Central Florida,” said Craig Swygert, chair of BusinessForce. “We are thrilled with the selected applicants and look forward to their thoughtful determination if elected office is part of their future,” continued Swygert, President of Clear Channel Outdoor Orlando and a corporate sponsor of PLI.

A Selection Committee consisting of Investors and Members of BusinessForce reviewed the strength of applications, conducted interviews and selected the twenty (20) participants, ensuring representation from a wide range of business, civic and community organizations across the seven-county Central Florida region. They include:

**James P. Gleason**    City of Mascotte; graduate, Leadership Orlando Class 42

The 2015 Institute sessions will be held Thursday, October 8, through Saturday, October 10, 2015, on the campus of the Roy E. Crummer Graduate School of Business at Rollins College in Winter Park. During the course of the bipartisan two and one half day session, Institute participants will hear from prominent state and national experts discussing a broad range of topics – government, media, campaigning, fundraising, ethics and key public policy issues. Already, 14 members from the first six PLI classes have been successfully elected or appointed to state and local public office in Central Florida. There is no cost to apply or attend. PLI is made possible by the support of its sponsors including AT&T, Bright House Networks, Central Florida Partnership, Clear Channel Outdoor, Orlando Magic, Roy E. Crummer Graduate School of Business at Rollins College, and Universal Orlando Resort. For additional information, please contact Mike Ketchum, President of BusinessForce at 407.835.2464 or via email at [mike.ketchum@orlando-chamber.org](mailto:mike.ketchum@orlando-chamber.org), or Christina Johnson, Director of the Central Florida Political Leadership Institute at 850.391.5040 or via email at [Christina@on3pr.com](mailto:Christina@on3pr.com).

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**James Patrick Gleason**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Daily Commercial (FL)  
May 6, 2015

**Mascotte Manager Contract Approved**

Author: Linda Charlton

As anticipated, the city council on Monday night approved a new two-year contract for City Manager **Jim Gleason**. There was no hint of dissension from the council and the only input at all from the audience of five people was from former council member Barbara Krull, who asked for clarification and expressed her objections to a number of the finer points in the contract, including benefits for professional licenses and continuing education. When she brought up the latest lawsuit against the city and **Gleason**, Mayor Pro Tem Steven Sheffield cut her off, saying, “It has nothing to do with the contract. We are not discussing this.” In response to Krull’s partially stated objection, though, City Attorney Virginia Cassady pointed out that by statute, municipalities are required to provide legal representation to employees whose alleged offenses were committed in the process of doing their jobs.

The city manager contract is for two years and takes effect on June 18, giving **Gleason** a base salary of \$105,019. The draft contract was approved last month by a vote of 4-0. This time the vote was 5-0, with council member Alberto Dominguez making the motion and council member Sally Rayman seconding. In a similar manner, the Preliminary Resolution for Fire Assessment fees also passed unanimously. A public hearing on the matter is scheduled for June 15 — the same date as the public hearing for the proposed Amended and Restated Initial Assessment Resolution for Solid Waste.

For both assessments, the proposals will put the charges on property owners’ property tax bills. The proposed fire fees represent a small reduction for residential property owners and a small increase for non-residential owners. The residential rates go to \$115 per year, down from \$120. The non-residential rates go to 15 cents per square foot, up from 12 cents. The major change is that vacant properties will be assessed at \$40 per parcel. The city does not currently collect any fire fees for those lands. For the solid waste resolution, Rayman expressed concern that failure to pay the assessment could lead to individuals losing their homes. Mayor Brenda Brasher’s response to Rayman’s concern was: “If people don’t pay their taxes, they’re not that interested in keeping their homes.” Brasher also pointed out that it is possible to set up a payment plan for property taxes and to pay quarterly.

Krull’s expressed concern that there are people in Mascotte who will not be able to pay the yearly solid waste cost all at once, and that for the first year “we’ll be paying twice.” Speaking after the meeting, council member Louise Thompson echoed Krull’s concern. Thompson cast the lone vote against the proposal. “I know that we have in the city a lot of one-person employed households and the elderly, and I know they can’t come up with it once a year,” Thompson said. “They prefer to pay monthly.”



**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**James Patrick Gleason**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Daily Commercial, The (Leesburg, FL)  
June 17, 2015

**Mascotte breaks ground on its first sewer line**

Author/Byline: Roxanne Brown

City officials gathered Monday afternoon for a ceremonial ground breaking for the city’s first sewer line. The city has no wastewater treatment plant or enough infrastructure in town to support it. The line actually will run under State Road 50 from Sunset Street in Mascotte to County Road 33 in Groveland, where it will hook into that city’s plant. Mascotte residents, businesses and developers will end up paying Groveland to dispose of their wastewater and treat it.

The project is being funded by a \$700,000 Community Development Block Grant issued by Florida’s Department of Economic Opportunity and matching funds Mascotte accumulated from one-cent infrastructure sales taxes in the amount of \$125,000. “We wanted to have something in place to connect somewhere and when you look at the population for this city, it was definitely more economically feasible to hook into Groveland,” City Manager **Jim Gleason** said. “It just makes sense. Groveland will make revenue treating it and having the re-used water to use.’

Mascotte is one of the only Florida municipalities still operating solely via septic systems and having a wastewater treatment plant line could help attract new businesses, **Gleason** said. Some residences along the SR 50 corridor will also be able to hook into the new system.

“It’s been a long time coming but it’s definitely worth it,” city council member Louise Thompson said. “The main part of a growing city is businesses and that’s what we’re looking for. If we can get them hooked up, we can get more to come.”

**Gleason** said the city also has an agreement with Leesburg to be able to hook into its sewer plant from the northern parts of Mascotte somewhere down the line via a similar process. More residential areas may also be able to get hooked into the Groveland plant at a later time, should Mascotte be able to secure more funding and grants. “We can only have one grant at a time, so when we’re done with this one, we’ll apply back in,” **Gleason** said.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**James Patrick Gleason**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Daily Commercial, The (Leesburg, FL)  
May 24, 2015

**Jim Gleason, Mascotte city manager, responds to critical editorial**

Upon arriving at City Hall an employee advised me of the “Our Opinion” in the Daily Commercial on May 14. I normally do not respond to articles or editorials in the paper, and because I do not read your paper, I would not have known about the opinion had it not been brought to my attention. I have been involved in public service for over 22 years and understand the role of the press, and as such, you have the right to publish whatever you choose and express your opinion on any issue. You own the paper and can write what you want and are not accountable to anyone but yourselves. Although I do not expect to change your opinion, I do feel it is important that I clarify some points in the editorial.

First, there are not a half-dozen suits against the city. At one time there were five suits: four against the chief of police and one against me, the city manager. As of today, there are three suits: two were resolved and closed without costing the city of Mascotte or its taxpayers one cent. If you had made the effort to check the court records, you would have known that.

Second, in this country, we have a judicial system which is the forum for disputes and differences to be resolved, and we all are entitled to due process and are presumed innocent until proven guilty. Any person can make accusations, hire an attorney, file suits and play to the press. In this country, all one needs to do is call Derek Schroth, who will take any case and sue any city while also being paid to represent two cities. If anyone is benefiting from the process, it is Schroth, who feeds from both ends of the public trough. Making accusations and filing a suit does not mean it is factual or even valid — the judicial process will make that determination. You are drawing your own conclusions before you have even heard all of the facts. That is like predicting the score of a game before it has been played. There are many steps and much time before a case ever goes to court, and each party will have the opportunity to present evidence and witnesses.

Third, is it possible the Mascotte City Council might know more about the cases than you do because it is their city and the chief and I work for them? Unlike you, the council is not prejudging but is allowing the judicial process to be completed and ensuring all parties are entitled to due process. If in the end any of the three remaining plaintiffs prevail, the council can take any action they feel is appropriate and necessary. The attorneys that represent the city are hired by the Florida League of Cities and the League is not going to waste their time and money defending individuals who would miss use their public positions. You have only bothered to print the plaintiff’s side of the story without any evidence that has been validated in a court of law, and as you know, none of these cases will be tried in your paper but in a court of law.

Finally, my contract. I did not receive an \$18,000 raise with the new contract. In fact, there was no raise at all. My contract states I get the same percentage increase as all other employees, and I also get the same benefits all employees get. The past two years the city council approved 3

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches  
James Patrick Gleason**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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percent pay increases. When I arrived in February 2011, the city of Mascotte was on the verge of bankruptcy. The city had \$6 million in debt with very little revenue sources to pay the debt, property values had dropped by more than 60 percent and they had less than \$500,000 in savings. Today the debt stands at \$2.6 million. The city savings now stand at \$1 million (\$250,000 was added to savings just in that last fiscal year, which would cover 2 1/2 years of my salary). The city is no longer on the State Watch List for Cities in Financial Distress, and the council has received excellent audit reports the past three years of which I was responsible for the budget. We have lowered taxes and look to do so again in October 2015. We are lowering the residential Fire Assessment Fee and exploring options to lower the residential sanitation fee. Unlike some other governmental entities, we are moving in the right direction as we slowly recover from the downturn in the economy and previous mismanagement of the city.

In 22-plus years of public service, I have never been sued and have never had an employee file a complaint against me. I do not like what has happened over the past two years regarding the suits, and I am not immune to the criticism printed by the press. Honestly, I am embarrassed that we have these claims, but I also know I cannot control the actions of the plaintiffs who have filed. Suing has become the American Way. I know who I am, what I have or have not done and feel confident when these suits are brought to resolution the facts will bear neither the city, the chief of police nor I did anything wrong. There are many motives people have in filing a suit, but the one thing suits have in common is someone is looking for money. If you check Orange County Court Records, Lake County Court Records and Walton County Court Records you may find some hint of the timing and reason why one of the plaintiffs might be seeking a monetary reward.

I am not perfect and do not claim to be, and I make my share of mistakes, but accusations of being a racist will not prevail. Again, you are entitled and have the right to print your opinions, but not once have I seen a newspaper article used as evidence in the judicial process. Why? Because you are a private, for-profit business selling papers. You make your money from your advertisers and nowhere in that business model does truth or facts play a role.

**Jim Gleason-MPA, ICMA-CM**, is the city manager of Mascotte. **Jim Gleason-MPA, ICMA-CM**, is the city manager of Mascotte.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**James Patrick Gleason**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Daily Commercial, The (Leesburg, FL)  
February 18, 2015

**City employee sues Mascotte in federal court**

Author: Roxanne Brown

Four months after the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission issued a determination that the city of Mascotte discriminated against an accountant in its Utility Department, she's filed a federal lawsuit. The suit seeks action for "declaratory, injunctive and equitable relief, as well as monetary damages, to redress the city's harassment against (Alana) Wilson...", who is black and Pacific Islander. The suit also seeks damages to compensate Wilson for compensatory harm, "including, but not limited to, emotional distress, embarrassment, humiliation, stress, anxiety and loss of enjoyment of life."

Eustis attorney Derek Schroth, who is representing Wilson, wants a jury trial. He said the EEOC's findings are admissible in court and are considered evidence since they have already been subjected to Federal scrutiny. "Under federal law, the court and jury will consider the EEOC's determination as evidence of the city's discrimination against Ms. Wilson. We look forward to presenting this evidence to the court and jury," Schroth said.

In her original EEOC complaint, Wilson claimed **Gleason** told her she should change her computer log-in name to "token black person" and used the terms "pickaninny" and "nappy headed" in statements made in her presence. She also alleges the city manager related a story about white people putting jam on a black person — a "Jam Boy" — as a mosquito lure during social events. Randy Brown Jr., a Flagler Beach attorney representing the city, contends Wilson took many of **Gleason's** statements out of context and that she failed to complain to anyone at city hall about being racially harassed, as outlined in the city's personnel policies.

In the EEOC's determination letter on Oct. 2, however, District Director Malcolm S. Medley wrote: "The commission has determined that the evidence obtained in the investigation establishes reasonable cause to believe that discrimination on the basis of race occurred, in violation of TITLE VII (Civil Rights Act)..." About a week after that EEOC ruling, Wilson filed another complaint with that agency, alleging the city had retaliated against her for the first complaint. "On April 30, I was written up by Ms. Dolly Miller, Finance Director, for incorrect data entry, even though, this was a minor issue. On May 14, 2014, Ms. Miller and Mr. **Jim Gleason**, City Manager, changed my lunch hours. Similarly situated employees were not subjected to the same treatment. I remain an employee of the City of Mascotte, and the work environment remains hostile," Wilson's second EEOC complaint reads.

Schroth said the city did not stop there. "The city recently installed video cameras focused on Alana to record her," the attorney said. In an email Tuesday, **Gleason** contends no retaliation has occurred on his or the city's part, let alone harassment or racial discrimination. As for the cameras, **Gleason** said they were installed at various locations throughout the city for the safety and protection of staff and customers. "Ms. Wilson was not retaliated against as in her second

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches  
James Patrick Gleason**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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EEOC complaint just as Ms. Wilson was not discriminated against as claimed in her first EEOC complaint,” **Gleason** wrote. Counseling an employee after he or she has made a mistake is not retaliation, the city manager said. “That is management working with an employee to ensure they are fully trained and eliminating errors in their work and the work environment,” he said.

**Gleason** said he is confident that when the entire matter is resolved through the court system, Wilson’s allegations will be proved unfounded. “I am deeply concerned if an employee feels that they have been discriminated against or work under a hostile work environment as we do not tolerate that at the city,” he said. “I can be called or accused of a lot of things, but racist is not one of them.”

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**James Patrick Gleason**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Daily Commercial (FL)  
October 12, 2014

**EEOC Rules Against Mascotte in Racial Discrimination Case**  
Author: Roxanne Brown

The city of Mascotte, already facing a half-dozen lawsuits and other legal complaints of discrimination or harassment, could be hit with another shortly. Eustis attorney Derek Schroth said the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) has substantiated claims by his client, Alana Wilson, that City Manager **Jim Gleason** discriminated against her on the basis of race, in a determination the agency released on Oct. 2. Schroth said if Wilson cannot reach a settlement with the city, he will sue under the Civil Rights Act since EEOC determinations like this one are admissible in federal court. Schroth said the EEOC's determination means there must have been a substantial amount of evidence to back Wilson's claim.

“Discrimination rulings from the EEOC are very rare,” the attorney said. “In some years, it's only 4 percent of the cases the EEOC finds to be credible. Some years, it's reached about 10 percent, but still, it's not a high percentage. Regardless, I think it's incredible that things like this (racial discrimination claim) are happening, being that it's the year 2014.” In her original EEOC complaint, filed in May, Wilson, who is black and Pacific Islander, claimed **Gleason** told her she should change her computer log-in name to “token black person” and used the terms “pickaninny” and “nappy headed” in statements made in her presence. She also alleges the city manager related a story about white people putting jam on a black person — a “Jam Boy” — as a mosquito lure during social events.

Randy Brown Jr., a Flagler Beach attorney representing the city, contends Wilson took many of **Gleason's** statements out of context and that she failed to complain to anyone at city hall about being racially harassed, as outlined in the city's personnel policies. In the EEOC's determination letter, however, District Director Malcolm S. Medley wrote: “The commission has determined that the evidence obtained in the investigation establishes reasonable cause to believe that discrimination on the basis of race occurred, in violation of TITLE VII (Civil Rights Act). Records of the internal investigation conducted by the Respondent demonstrated that the Charging Party was subjected to harassment in the form of racial comments made by management officials. The EEOC found that “members of management heard the derogatory comments and did nothing to correct and prevent their recurrence. Respondent (**Gleason**) failed to show that it took reasonable care to prevent and correct the harassment promptly ...”

The EEOC in the letter also suggests informal methods of conciliation, inviting both parties to meet to resolve the matter. Neither **Gleason** nor Brown, who received a copy of the EEOC determination, could be reached for comment. The EEOC has given the city 15 days to respond and warns against any type of retaliation against Wilson, who still works at City Hall. On Friday, Mayor Tony Rosado, after catching wind of the EEOC's determination against **Gleason**, said he thinks the matter should be addressed by the city council and that “something should be done.” “Whether they (**Gleason's** comments) were made in fun or in vain, or whether it was just a

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches  
James Patrick Gleason**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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stupid thing he said, it's not tolerable. Never has been, never will be," Rosado said. "I don't put up with racial epithets. There's no room for anything like that in these current times, especially when Mascotte just implemented a domestic partnership registry to show that we accept and welcome people from all walks of life into our city." Meanwhile, Wilson still works as a utilities accountant, but it's difficult, she said in her EEOC complaint. "I continue to work for the city of Mascotte and the work environment remains hostile," she wrote.

The city conducted its own internal investigation, led by Police Chief Ronaldo Banasco and Fire Chief Randy Brasher, and found no wrong doing by **Gleason**. The city manager also apologized if he offended anyone and contends his remarks were taken out of context. Beginning in the fall of 2013, other complaints and lawsuits began surfacing, including from a pair of former police officers — both white — who filed a suit against Banasco. The officers claimed Banasco, who is Hispanic, discriminated against them. Gregg Woodworth and Scott Thompson hired a Lake Mary law firm to sue the city over the allegations, which **Gleason** said are untrue. Then, police officer David Grice, who'd been with the city's police department for more than 17 years, complained to the Lake County Sheriff's Office, the State Attorney's Office and the Florida Department of Law Enforcement that Banasco was secretly videotaping police officers.

Grice also complained that he was the subject of age discrimination by Banasco because the chief made Grice work a night shift. Grice eventually was fired for allegedly not cooperating with an internal investigation and filed a suit against the city in May. He also sued the city for what he said was an unwarranted amount of fees charged for public records. Another complaint has been filed with the EEOC by Toni Hart, a police officer with the Mascotte Police Department, who claims she was discriminated against by Banasco and fired by **Gleason** because she was female and black. She said in her complaint that she was made to do secretarial work that no other officer had to, that she was referred to as a black (expletive) and that she had to ask permission to use the bathroom.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**James Patrick Gleason**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Daily Commercial (FL)  
January 9, 2014

**Mascotte Manager was Ready to Resign**

Author: Livi Stanford

City Manager **Jim Gleason** was prepared to resign Monday if council members believed it was the right move for Mascotte. In a Dec. 30 letter to the mayor and council, which was included in the agenda packet for Monday’s meeting, **Gleason** wrote: “If the council does not believe I am doing the job you expect as city manager, then I will step down without cause Monday and you can seek a new manager. I have handled customer concerns and complaints, and with all issues, there are at least two sides if not more, and in the end you cannot please everybody.” In a follow-up interview on Tuesday, **Gleason** confirmed he did not resign, and it all boiled down to a miscommunication between him and Mayor Tony Rosado. It was concerning “some emails he received that he thought I had gotten,” **Gleason** said. “We have worked together great for three years, and in any relationship, you have moments you miscommunicate. Sometimes, something may get more blown out of proportion than it needs to be.”

The emails concerned a complaint brought forward to the city regarding Police Chief Rolando Banasco’s response to a call, which the resident described in a letter as “antagonistic and unprofessional.” “I thought he had not gotten the email and had not responded to the problem,” said Rosado. “I wanted to make sure it was handled correctly. We are in the service industry. Our residents are our customers. Anytime there is a service issue, we want to make sure everything is done correctly. I thought he may have been withholding information based on misinformation.” Both Rosado and **Gleason** confirmed Tuesday that the police chief handled the incident appropriately and that there had been no further complaints on the call.

The police department has had some issues in the past few months that have resulted in negative publicity for the city. In October, two former police officers — both white — claimed Banasco discriminated against them. Gregg Woodworth and Scott Thompson hired a Lake Mary law firm to sue the city over the allegations, which **Gleason** said were untrue. In December, another police officer, Sgt. David Grice, claimed he was being discriminated against by Banasco because of the officer’s age. Grice also claimed the chief bugged the officer’s patrol car. The city hired a labor attorney who found no proof of discrimination and no hard evidence of bugging. Banasco has denied the officers’ claims.

In his letter, **Gleason** said he took issue with the mayor going to the city attorney regarding the latest police issue before coming to him. “I am not aware in our policy where elected officials are to go to the city attorney and expend tax dollars on matters that do not directly deal with the city manager without council approval,” he wrote. And even though they had addressed the misunderstanding, **Gleason** said he was “disappointed” the mayor had taken up the matter with the city attorney when almost any other issue he would have called him. “The mayor misunderstood,” he said. “When I said (the issue) was taken care of, he thought I had brushed it under the carpet and hadn’t paid attention to it. If he truly had an issue involving my



**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches  
James Patrick Gleason**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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performance, he should have brought it before the board in a public meeting.” **Gleason** said before the issue was addressed in the agenda, the mayor abruptly adjourned the meeting. Asked when the mayor spoke with him about the misunderstanding, **Gleason** said it was prior to the meeting. The mayor did not return repeated phone calls Wednesday for clarification on why he abruptly ended the meeting.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**James Patrick Gleason**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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South Lake Press (FL)  
August 10, 2012

**Gleason Gets Great Review After First Year**

Author: Roxanne Brown

Mascotte council members gave city Manager **Jim Gleason** good marks this week when discussing his first annual review since taking over the city's top spot effective July 20 last year. Overall, **Gleason** earned a 96.4 average score -- based on scores from the five members of council -- out of a possible 120. The categories were divided as follows: Administration Skills, Fiscal Management, Personal Skills, Community Relations, Grants and Long Range Planning. "I'm very happy with what he's done based on the circumstances of the city and what he had to work with," Mayor Tony Rosado said. "He (**Gleason**) found ways to bring in business, including a major corporation (Family Dollar)."

Additionally, Rosado said this year's annual audit of the city, conducted by an outside consultant, concluded that the city showed improvement with its finances. "We're not out of the woods, but we're moving in the right direction. **Mr. Gleason** has something to do with that. He's walking us toward a new era in Mascotte," Rosado said, adding that **Gleason**, in addition to his city manager role, also works as economic development director after that position became vacant earlier this year and a decision was made not to fill it in order to save money. Rosado's final score on **Gleason's** evaluation was "exceeds expectation."

Mayor Pro Tem Barbara Krull gave **Gleason** high marks with an overall "outstanding," as did Councilwoman Louise Thompson. Councilwoman Brenda Brasher's overall assessment of **Gleason** was somewhere "between exceed expectation and outstanding." "I feel city Manager **Gleason** has proven he is dedicated to the city by accepting the challenge of the position. He genuinely cares for the city and its future," Brasher wrote. Brasher said she believes **Gleason** excels at fiscal management, the most important role of a city manager in her opinion, and promotes positively for the city's sake. "City Manager **Gleason** projects a positive image of the city to the best of his ability when others continue to attempt to drag him and the city down," she said.

Councilman Stephen Elmore had a different opinion of **Gleason**, scoring him at a "below expectation." "It is my sincere hope that **Mr. Gleason** look at this evaluation objectively and use it to better himself professionally. I genuinely like him on a personal level and hope that we can work together to keep Mascotte solvent without putting the entire burden on the people," Elmore wrote. "I know he wants to turn the city around and we have done some positive things in his short time here, but we must do more or we aren't going to make it."

According to evaluation notes, Elmore scored **Gleason** with an "exceeds expectation" when it comes to maintaining an open and informative community on with council, but scored him with a "meets expectation" or lower on everything else -- from the knowledge of state statutes, administrative codes and ordinances for the atmosphere of staff, based on situations he said were

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**James Patrick Gleason**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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brought to his attention by staff members. Elmore also said the "fiscal management" part of the evaluation was lacking. "Albeit, he works at council's direction, however, he is tasked with providing logical action, one would think a reduction in funding would eventually result in a reduction in money spent and possibly services rendered," Elmore wrote, adding that he thinks **Gleason** concentrates too much on how "bad off" Mascotte is and not enough time on what can be done to turn it around. Before taking on the city manager position in July, 2011, he served as the city's interim manager for six months. **Gleason**, who earns just over \$70,000 annually, could not be reached for comment before press time Tuesday.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**James Patrick Gleason**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Daily Commercial, The (Leesburg, FL)  
August 30, 2013

**City on the road to financial recovery**  
Author: Roxanne Brown

An audit of Mascotte’s finances show the city is no longer facing the threat of financial ruin. City Manager **Jim Gleason** attributed the turnaround to selling off surplus city land, keeping a lid on spending, and increases in taxes, fees and service charges. “We were one step away from a real financial emergency or a bankruptcy,” he said. “That’s how close to the edge the city was when I got here (two years ago).”

The city’s problems date back to 2000, when Mascotte invested about \$1.5 million in a new wastewater plant and another \$1.5 million to install water lines. The facility was supposed to serve new homes that never materialized, so it didn’t get built. Mascotte also borrowed another \$2 million for a new city hall, which also didn’t get built. Then property values began dropping and the city — where about 20 percent of the people are below the poverty rate — found itself in a deep financial hole.

Since then, the land sell-off, a freeze on hiring, no raises and asking employees to do more with less, began to right the ship, officials said. Residents have done their part, too, accepting higher property taxes, a 58-percent hike in water rates and a fire service charge that more than doubled. Much like the county, property values in Mascotte have increased for the first time since 2007. “If we stay on the track we’re on, we should be able to re-evaluate the tax rates and water rates and start moving them down from their highs,” **Gleason** said.

Today, the city’s debt is down by about a third, **Gleason** said. “By the end of 2017, we should have that down to \$1.6 million from \$5 million,” he said.

Mayor Tony Rosado helped negotiate a deal that will allow Mascotte to hook into Groveland’s wastewater plant and switch from septic tanks to municipal sewer service in order to pave the way to more businesses coming to town. In January, the city will begin laying pipes down State Road 50 to make the hook-up possible. “We are no longer with the threat of bankruptcy or in danger of receivership, and we have started to build a financial foundation we did not have when I came into office,” Rosado said

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**James Patrick Gleason**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Daily Commercial (FL)  
April 22, 2012

**Gleason Doing the Double Talk**  
Author: William Koch

**Jim Gleason**, Mascotte city manager since July 2011, after serving six months as interim manager. Or **Jim Gleason**, poster child for self-serving politicians who talk out of both sides of their mouths? To persuade council members he was the right man for the job last year, **Gleason** said he had the ideal credentials to save the struggling city from financial ruin. At the time, **Gleason** was being considered for city manager positions in Madeira Beach, Avon Park, High Springs and Boynton Beach. After his promotion to Mascotte's permanent manager, **Gleason** said he would ask any city to which he had sent resumes to pull him from consideration for their city manager jobs. Rest assured. He was committed to the arduous task of helping Mascotte work through its troubles, he said. **Gleason** never sent the emails.

Four months ago, he was still in the running to be Boynton Beach's manager. Puzzled, **Gleason** said he thought for sure he'd withdrawn his name. He called it all a simple misunderstanding. More recently, **Gleason** said his application for the manager's post of North Palm Beach Village was no mistake. He didn't make the final cut there. In explaining his apparent duplicity, **Gleason** said it all has to do with money -- not principles. **Gleason** makes \$87,000 a year at Mascotte. North Palm Beach Villages would have paid him at least \$110,000. "I'm making less today than what I was making in 2001. That's 12 years down the road -- which means 12 more years of experience," he said.

In other words, **Gleason's** pitch last year that he had only Mascotte's best interests in mind was just smoke and mirrors to persuade the council to give him the job. And since then, he's kept looking -- for more money. "I'm just doing what in the business sector is considered assessing my value, my worth," he said. As a public official, **Gleason** has a duty to serve the residents of Mascotte honorably and respectfully. If the conditions of his employment did not meet **Gleason's** high economic standards in July of last year, he should have passed on the job, or at least made it clear in accepting the post that he planned to keep looking. We question how much credibility **Gleason** now has with the citizenry of Mascotte considering the fact he's continuously looking for better opportunities. That's unfortunate because they need a manager that is truly committed to rolling up his shirt sleeves and working hand-in-hand with council to solve the lingering financial concerns the city has.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**James Patrick Gleason**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Orlando Sentinel (FL)  
April 12, 2012

**Cash-Strapped Mascotte Faces \$20M Suit for Rejecting Landfill**

Author: Ludmilla Lelis

This small south Lake County city is so cash-strapped it considered allowing a landfill to reap the revenue it could have brought. But City Council members rejected the proposal in the face of a massive public outcry, and now the financially struggling city faces new expenses: attorney fees and a \$20 million lawsuit claim. The landowner, Flagship Lake County Development Number V, is seeking that amount in damages for the failed project in a lawsuit filed in Circuit Court. Flagship, whose property is already zoned for a residential development, wanted a zoning change to allow a landfill as well as a recycling facility and a facility to convert methane gas from the landfill to energy.

Mayor Tony Rosado said the city will defend its unanimous vote denying the project. "This may be a way for them to pressure us," Rosado said. "They want us to spend taxpayer money and time on a frivolous lawsuit." The company's attorney, Samuel Miller of the firm Akerman Senterfitt, declined to comment on the pending litigation. But in the suit the company claims city officials shouldn't have relied on the opposition from residents. Hundreds of people packed a six-hour meeting in October and complained about the potential odors, rats and garbage truck traffic. Instead, Flagship thinks council members should have only relied on evidence and data offered by the company that odors would be controlled and that similar facilities don't have an increase in rodents and other animals. The council vote caused the company to lose more than \$20 million in revenue if the land had been developed by Waste Management into a landfill, according to the lawsuit.

Money is the one thing that the city of 5,101 lacks. The city has been on the verge of financial ruin, saddled with \$5 million in debt and unable to raise property taxes since residents already pay nearly the maximum allowable rate, City Manager **Jim Gleason** said. Tax revenue has plummeted because property values declined 19 percent in 2010 and 12.6 percent last year. Property Appraiser Ed Havill said there could be a 5- to 8-percent drop this year, though figures won't be firm until June. The lawsuit adds a looming expense for the city, starting with attorneys fees. Mascotte has turned to the Florida League of Cities for legal services, since the city has insurance with the league covering some of the costs. "The lawyers know better whether this decision made in public will stand. We thought we did democracy the way it was supposed to be done," **Gleason** said. "As a citizen, I'm not sure it's the court's job to overrule duly elected officials who make decisions on land use and zoning issues for their communities." YES

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**James Patrick Gleason**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Orlando Sentinel (FL)  
July 26, 2011

**Gleason Takes Job as Mascotte's New City Manager**

Author: Martin E. Comas

**Jim Gleason** knows he signed on for a challenge when he agreed to become this city's new manager. Mascotte, a south Lake community of about 5,100 residents, is saddled with a debt of just less than \$5 million and struggling to make ends meet after the housing collapse has caused a sharp decline in property values. But it's a challenge **Gleason** says he is looking forward to. "If I can take this city and be able to fix it, I just believe that it could be a heck of a professional accomplishment," said **Gleason**, 53, who last week agreed to an \$87,100-a-year contract with Mascotte. "Maybe in four or five years this might bode well for me personally, and I'll be able to look back and say: 'See where they were when I came here and look at where they are now.' That's the goal."

**Gleason** became Mascotte's interim city manager Feb. 14, just weeks after City Council members fired Marge Strausbaugh. He was on the short list for similar positions in other Florida communities, and also interviewed for a position with Windermere in south Orange County. But **Gleason**, an Ocoee resident, decided to stay with Mascotte. **Gleason's** biggest challenge so far has been reducing the city's debt and replenishing its reserves. The city owes nearly \$3.1 million from plans to build a new wastewater-treatment plant. That includes about \$1.5 million Mascotte shelled out in 2006 to buy a 6-acre site — an old clay pit — at State Road 50 and Tuscanoga Road to hold treated wastewater from the proposed plant. The city also paid for a water-line expansion and design studies for the new plant.

To help continue making the loan payments, along with replenishing the city's reserve funds, council members — at **Gleason's** urging — agreed to raise water rates by more than double. Council member Tony Rosado, who was elected in November, praised **Gleason's** initiative in leading Mascotte's "new beginning." "He's rolled up his sleeves. He's looked at things and how they were being done and he was very tough and honest from the get go," Rosado said. "He said, 'we're in a bad way.'...I've been very impressed."

**Gleason** certainly has the experience in managing a city, including a stint as Ocoee manager from 2001 to 2004. From 2008 until last year, **Gleason** was city manager of Chamblee, Ga. He also served as a city-county adviser with the U.S. State Department in Kirkuk, Iraq, in 2007 and 2008. And before that he was city manager of Woodstock, Ga. **Gleason's** Mascotte contract also allows him use of a city car — a 2005 Ford Taurus — and five month's severance pay if he is fired without cause. **Gleason's** wife, Cheryl, is a teacher at Wekiva High School in Apopka. One of his two adult sons, coincidentally, works for Ocoee's recreation department, which **Gleason** calls "ironic." When he's not at work, **Gleason** enjoys watching football and being outdoors. "Give me some water and some sun and I'm great," he said.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**James Patrick Gleason**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Orlando Sentinel (FL)  
June 12, 2011

**After Wave of Incidents at Meetings, Central Florida Cities Pass 'Civility' Ordinances**  
Author: Martin E. Comas

In the rural town of Mascotte, it's not unusual for City Council meetings to turn into raucous affairs with dozens of residents venting their opinions on a particular issue. So in an effort to quell the vitriol and avoid having meetings turning into bedlam, council members this week passed a resolution that urges civility and decorum. Anyone attending a meeting had better behave or he'll be escorted out by a police officer.

It's not just Mascotte, a city of barely more than 5,000. Governments across Central Florida also have passed similar civility resolutions in recent years, including Ocoee, Orlando and Winter Park. "The level of anger that we have reached in public meetings, not just in Mascotte but everywhere, it's just gone out of control," Mascotte City Manager **Jim Gleason** said. "To me, it's gotten scary. But, my God, we're all Americans. What happened to the ability to have a good public debate and healthy debate without all this anger and incivility?"

In support of the resolution, Mascotte officials pointed to recent meetings elsewhere that have turned chaotic. In Windermere, the town manager's husband and the mayor had a confrontation March 22 that ended with the mayor flat on his back and unconscious. In Orlando, an April 26 town-hall meeting hosted by U.S. Rep. Dan Webster, R-Winter Garden, devolved into a shouting match, leading a police officer to scold some in the crowd to act "like grown people." In two extreme incidents, a 56-year-old ex-convict in December opened fire at a Bay County School Board meeting before killing himself, and in January a shooting spree at a constituents meeting in Arizona left six people dead and 13 injured, including U.S. Rep. Gabrielle Giffords.

'Heated debates'

Some say the recent rise in anger and rudeness is encouraged by Internet message boards, cable-television shows and talk-radio programs. "I do think that is fueling some of this," said Jay Corzine, chairman of University of Central Florida's sociology department. "Compared to the '80s and '90s, U.S. politics is becoming more contentious and more polarized." Corzine pointed out that American politics has a long history of hot-headed rowdiness at public meetings and rallies. In recent years, several Central Florida governments hoping to prevent public meetings from degenerating into unruliness have passed civility ordinances after heated incidents with protesters.

Ocoee adopted a civility code in 2003 that prohibits "clapping, whistling, heckling, gesturing, loud conversations or other disruptive behavior." Anyone whose "behavior is disruptive and violates the City of Ocoee Civility Code is subject to removal from the Board meetings by an officer and such other action as may be appropriate," according to the resolution. The Orlando City Council in 2006 adopted rules of order and decorum that prohibit "demonstrations of approval or disapproval from the audience" during meetings. City officials say it was passed



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after several protesters began attending council meetings. Deltona has rules that restrict the public from addressing individual city commissioners during meetings. Instead, a resident speaking at the podium has to address the entire board. The policy was adopted to shield commissioners from personal attacks. "We've had development proposals that have sparked heated debates," Deltona City Manager Faith Miller said. Winter Park in 2007 passed a resolution stating that anyone attending a city meeting must demonstrate "propriety, decorum and good conduct." The city did not necessarily pass the resolution because meetings were becoming boisterous, city spokeswoman Clarissa Howard said. "It was basically to streamline the meetings and make them move more smoothly," Howard said.

'Be professional'

Generally, city and county government bodies have to open meetings to the public, under Florida's Government in the Sunshine Law. But it doesn't mean the public has a right to speak, according to a Florida district-court ruling last year. Even so, governments across the state routinely give residents a chance to make comments, although time limits are often imposed and speakers cannot raise the same issue twice. Sanford recently passed an ordinance that supports allowing the public to speak at meetings. "We believe in open government and that all citizens should have the opportunity to express themselves at our meetings," City Manager Thomas George said.

Mascotte doesn't plan to stop people from speaking at its public meetings — residents are just asked to be cordial. "A couple of them [meetings] have come to the point where I get a little nervous," council member Barbara Krull said. "Occasionally they can get out of hand." **Gleason** hopes those days are past. "If you don't agree, be professional about it," **Gleason** said. "You don't have to cuss at people and disparage people."

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**James Patrick Gleason**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Daily Commercial (FL)  
May 6, 2011

**Email Scandal Deletes Trust in Officials**

Mascotte's interim City Manager **Jim Gleason** overstepped his bounds. **Gleason** sent an email to City Councilman Tony Rosado about Rosado's water bill. **Gleason** said he cannot prevent the city's water department from cutting off Rosado's water for lack of payment. **Gleason** then urged Rosado to delete the email, which he said he sent as a courtesy. **Gleason** said he deleted the email he sent to Rosado.

In his defense, **Gleason** said the email was a "of a personal nature. It wasn't policy discussion. I took it upon myself, knowing Tony was new in the council business." **Gleason's** lame defense misses the point. His email was public record -- as stated in the disclaimer at the bottom of the email. It is a violation of law -- and a major breach of political ethics -- to tamper with public communications. **Gleason's** actions also establish a precarious precedent. As the city's top official, **Gleason** suggests it is permissible to destroy certain public records if the sender arbitrarily deems them insignificant or harmless.

**Gleason's** communication may indeed have been harmless -- but only incidentally. The question **Gleason**, the council and the public must now ask is where will **Gleason** draw the line in the future. If **Gleason** deletes a public communication over what's arguably such a minor matter and urges a councilman to do the same, how will **Gleason** resist the temptation when faced with weightier issues with potentially deeper consequences? Essentially, can **Gleason** be trusted? **Gleason's** handling of the email speaks to his character. Parents may give their children the benefit of the doubt. But after catching their children reaching into the cookie jar one too many times, that trust begins to wear thin.

Public officials are held to higher ethical standards. It's the nature of the job. Those who choose to work in the public sector have authority over the lives and livelihoods of many people. **Gleason's** lack of diligence and foresight is an embarrassment to the residents of Mascotte. In the wake of Fruitland Park's scandal over its police chief, **Gleason's** misstep is one more mark on Lake County as a whole.

The public should remember that it's not the email that caused this stir. It's the principle -- and in public life the slightest deviation from the strict rule of law leaves the unsavory perception that all politicians are self serving. **Gleason's** task now is to find a way to reassure the public that this aberration was the exception to the rule, and not business as usual. The public deserves as much.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**James Patrick Gleason**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Daily Commercial (FL)  
March 08, 2011

**Interim Working to Leave His Mark**  
Author: Roxanne Brown

After two full weeks on the job, **James Patrick Gleason** is just getting settled in as Mascotte's interim city manager. **Gleason** said he has been striving to get a grasp on the city's happenings, to get to know the city staff, and to get a good sense of what he can do to make a difference in the short time he's got. "'I'm trying to put a plan together to help the mayor and the council work though 2011 and into 2012 and beyond," **Gleason** said. "But so far, I can see that Mascotte is suffering from the absolute lack of growth. It is a city that a few years ago, was planning on residential growth," "It's a good microcosm as to what's happening in this state and in this country." The City hired **Gleason** as its interim city manager for 6 months after they terminated seven-year tenured Marge Strausbaugh as city manager for no cause in January. Meanwhile the council is preparing to begin a search for a permanent replacement, a job which **Gleason** can also apply for should he wish to.

As of now however, **Gleason** -- Former City manager of Chamblee, GA and former City Manager of Ocoee -- signed on for about \$57,000 and a six-month stint through August 31. A clause in the contract stipulates that either party can put an end to the gig with a two-week notice.

Officials were also warned in advance of **Gleason's** pending job interviews for open city manager positions in both Holly Hill and Sunny Isle Beach. Mascotte Mayor Jeff Krull said so far, he and the council are happy with **Gleason's** performance and would try to make a counter offer should he get a hit on one of the other cities' openings. Krull said the only problem with that plan is their own budget. "It's getting someone good in here to work for what we can pay them," Krull said. "But as times get better, perhaps the pay will get better too. That's what we're hoping the right person will be able to recognize."

Of **Gleason**, Krull said "We handed him an omelet and expected him to make an egg of it." "He knows the basic ropes regarding what goes on in city government but he's still learning the in's and out's of Mascotte in particular," Krull said. "What I like (about **Gleason**) is that in spite of the fact he's an interim at this point, he seems to be sincerely attempting to find out what Mascotte's problems are and be effective in correcting past mistakes and effecting positive change." **Gleason** said for the past two weeks he's felt like a doctor, investigating the symptoms of a tight budget in relation to the root causes and trying to find a solution. He's going through lists and prioritizing what needs to be done immediately and what can wait. **Gleason** is also noticing some of the things he needs to do to strengthen Mascotte's budget, including refinancing loans and finding ways to generate income to get ahead of the debt while keeping the levels of service and tax rates that residents have come to expect in Mascotte.

**Gleason** said his vast experience in dealing with past cities in similar situations will help him, adding that he'll do whatever he can to make a difference for Mascotte. **Gleason** is also counting

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**James Patrick Gleason**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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on past contacts he believes can help him formulate a good plan for the city emergency services. All that, and on his off days, he's a substitute teacher in Ocoee where he and his wife live. "I told the council that I'd come in here and act like I'm going to be here for years. I wasn't gonna treat it (the job) with a one-day mentality," **Gleason** said. **Gleason** said he will consider all his options carefully before deciding on any job or deciding to apply with Mascotte permanently. **Gleason** will have an idea regarding the outcome of his other interviews by month's end. In the end, whether he leaves or stays, **Gleason** said he wants his pride to be evident to the residents of Mascotte. "If it should come to that, I would want to feel proud that I've left this city with a blueprint and a plan that if they follow through with, will continue moving them forward," **Gleason** said "We'll have to just wait and see what happens."

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**James Patrick Gleason**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Atlanta Journal-Constitution (GA)  
November 2, 2010

**Chamblee City Manager Stepping Down Nov. 19**

Author: April Hunt

**Jim Gleason**, Chamblee's city manager for more than two years, is stepping down just as the city could grow in size. **Gleason's** last day is Nov. 19, just days after the city is set to finalize its budget for the coming year. The spending plan will be about \$15.8 million or \$17.4 million, with the larger budget needed if up to 7,000 people vote to annex themselves into the city today.

Mayor Eric Clarkson said all of the plans to handle annexation and the upcoming budget have been completed. The city expects to appoint an interim manager during a national search for a new manager. **Gleason**, who has led the city since late 2008, is following his wife to Florida for a job. He replaced Kathy Brannon, who was city manager for 14 years.

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**James Patrick Gleason**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Atlanta Journal-Constitution (GA)  
December 9, 2009

**Chamblee Launches Economic Committee**  
Author: April Hunt

The Chamblee City Council recently approved a public-private economic development advisory committee to recommend initiatives to the city. The committee's first task will be to promote business activity in the city, including recruiting and retaining businesses and helping with site planning. City Councilman Tom Hogan will serve as chairman of the committee. Also on the board are Councilman Scott Taylor; Laurice Tatum and Marion Yoder of the Chamblee Business Association; Jim Loser of the Chamblee Arts Alliance; and Dan Schultz, the city's development director. The committee's board of directors includes representatives from DeKalb-Peachtree Airport, MARTA, DeKalb Public Schools, the CDC, the Mid-City Business District and the International Village.

Mayor Eric Clarkson and City Manager **Jim Gleason** will sit on the board as nonvoting members.

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**James Patrick Gleason**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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[https://icma.org/sites/default/files/79\\_DECEMBER%202009%20%20C2%B7%20VOLUME%2091%20%20C2%B7%20NUMBER%2011.pdf](https://icma.org/sites/default/files/79_DECEMBER%202009%20%20C2%B7%20VOLUME%2091%20%20C2%B7%20NUMBER%2011.pdf)

ICMA.org  
December 2009

**Local Management Experience Benefits Iraq!**

Author: **Jim Gleason**

PM conducted an online Q&A with **Jim Gleason**, city manager, Chamblee, Georgia, on his year long work detail in Iraq during 2008. Here is what he had to say about the work he did in conjunction with ICMA’s Iraq Local Governance Program, which was funded by RTI International, Research Triangle Park, North Carolina.

**WHERE WERE YOU LOCATED IN IRAQ, AND WHAT DID YOU DO THERE?**

I was located in Kirkuk, and I worked with the district and sub-district councils (city and county) on local governance and capital budgeting. I assisted in teaching the basic principles of how we run municipal government and the need to prioritize and manage capital budgets.

**WHAT WAS THE OUTCOME?**

I would love to think I made a difference. Some councils did better than others but overall I believe exposing the Iraqis to the concept of local self-government will go a long way to stabilizing the country and establishing local democracy. Their system has been dictated from Baghdad for so long that it will take time for them to learn the art of local control.

**WERE YOU EVER IN DANGER AND, IF NOT, WAS THERE A SPECIFIC REASON (EXTRA SECURITY, LOCATION)?**

Yes, a few times! The first was around Thanksgiving when I was in Baghdad and the Green Zone where I was doing my training. The area came under attack. While the compound did not take a direct hit that time, we did have to run and take cover in the bunkers. The other time was when I was in our convoy returning to the base in Kirkuk from the local Iraqi government offices and an IED [improvised explosive device] went off just after we passed. There were a few times at night when on the base we had to go to the bunkers because a few rockets had been launched toward the base. It was a little reminder that we were working in a war zone. I was able to travel four to five days a week from the base to the Iraqi government office in Kirkuk. I had to wear body armor and head gear while in the convoy, but I did have full faith and confidence in the men and women of the military who served as my security and escorts!

**WHAT WAS THE MOST SURPRISING THING TO OCCUR DURING YOUR WORK IN IRAQ?**

How quickly I bonded with and became friends with the Iraqis who worked with me. I found the Iraqi people want the same things we all do. They want a safe environment to live, work, and play; good jobs; and educational opportunities for their children. The same basics we all want in

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**James Patrick Gleason**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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life. Those basics are the ingredients for stability, civility, and having a future vs. only an existence.

**WERE ANY OF THE ASSUMPTIONS YOU HELD GOING INTO THIS ASSIGNMENT TURNED UPSIDE DOWN AND INSIDE OUT? HOW?**

Yes: that the Iraqi people did not hate the USA or the American people, nor were they our enemy. Every Iraqi I met would tell me to thank America for the help and assistance and sacrifice we made to ensure their freedom. But they also would say they had to stand on their own feet and take responsibility in running their country.

**IF YOU WERE TEACHING A LESSONS-LEARNED-FROM-THIS-EXPERIENCE CLASS TO STUDENTS OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION, WHAT WOULD YOUR TOP FIVE LESSONS BE? ARE THESE THE SAME FIVE LESSONS YOU'D DESCRIBE TO SEASONED MANAGERS?**

Let's see if I can come up with five:

1. You cannot have preconceived ideas or opinions about any group (in this case the Iraqi people).
2. One must be aware I was there to assist, provide information, and share professional experiences, but I was not there to dictate how they should do something. I was a guest in their country, not an occupier.
3. Maintain respect for their religion and culture, and understand there are unique differences.
4. Realize democracy and governance can come in many forms. Although we believe our system is the proper model, there are variations that can and do work in different societies.
5. Respect who you are working with and for at all times. Without that mutual respect you can not be successful.

**THINKING OF YOURSELF AS THE STUDENT IN YOUR IRAQ ASSIGNMENT, WHAT DID THE IRAQIS TEACH YOU?**

Patience—the Iraqi senses of time and deadlines are different than in our culture. As a city manager, I am used to tight deadlines for myself and staff, and our elected officials expect answers and results in a very short time frame. The Iraqis did not operate under the same sense of deadlines. Not that they did not meet goals and objectives, but they were not as tied to the clock as we are. They had a statement when you would ask about the deadline—“Inshallah”—which can be translated into something like “If Allah wills it” or “God willing.” The other lesson was humility. I take great pride in being a proud American and the good our country stands for, but I learned Iraqis too take great pride in their country, culture, and religion. Although we may want them to be a model of American democracy, we have to understand their version will be different from ours. I was also humbled by their sense of history and place compared with our country's founding on July 4, 1776. Some of the oldest records of civilization in the world can be found in Iraq.

**WHAT CULTURAL DIFFERENCES IMPACTED HOW YOU WENT ABOUT YOUR JOB?**

The biggest was the Muslim religion, as I had not had a lot of experience with Muslim friends in the United States. I had to educate myself on the basic values and beliefs and also the differences between the Sunni and Shia. I did this by talking with the Iraqis I worked with; I would have



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them tell me about their religion. I have a greater respect for Islam today than I had before going to Iraq. I found Islam is not a violent religion but, like all religions, a few extremists can take teachings out of context to justify violent actions. The other difference was working with female Iraqis. I have always believed in equality between the sexes, but I learned I had to be more guarded in how I spoke to Iraqi women compared with the men. Also I had to be very careful about any physical contact; sometimes just shaking a hand was a little awkward. Also in any social settings the men and women were separated.

**HAS THE EXPERIENCE CHANGED YOUR THINKING ABOUT LEADERSHIP, PASSION, ETHICS, DEMOCRACY, ETC.? IF YES, IN WHAT WAY?**

I am as passionate about democracy and leadership as I was before I went to Iraq but I have realized our form of democracy may not fit with every culture. One can have civil liberties and social freedoms, but the government model may not follow our model. I realize the goal is for people to have a legitimate free vote and a right to self determination, but we have to respect that in that process some societies may choose different types of leaders than we might or a different model of government. As long as the election and choice is by a legitimate vote of the people, we have to respect that it may be different from the outcome we would have liked.

**HOW DID THIS KIND OF ASSIGNMENT IMPACT YOUR PERSONAL LIFE? ANY UNEXPECTED SIDE EFFECTS?**

I am honored I was selected by ICMA to work on this assignment, but it was a greater challenge being away from family and friends than I thought. While the Internet and e-mail helped me stay connected, it was not the same as being there. Being away for holidays and birthdays was the toughest part. I have always admired those who choose to serve our country in the armed forces, but I now understand the challenge they go through when being deployed. They and their families go through this multiple times.

**HAS THE EXPERIENCE UNCOVERED OR GIVEN RISE TO NEW GOALS OR PURSUITS? HAS THE EXPERIENCE CHANGED YOU IN ANY WAY?**

I have always been passionate about good governance and leadership, but this experience strengthened my belief that all of us must work together to make our system better. We can have different opinions—be conservative or liberal, Christian or Muslim—but unless we find the common ground to work out our differences, we will not be as successful as we can be. The level of anger and discord we have in politics today really saddens me. We all have more in common that we do differences, but it seems our system is now about making the other guy look bad or take the blame. I hope we return soon to the time when leaders become statesmen and can communicate and reach across the aisle to find solutions and compromise that works for all Americans, not just for one's party or political ideology.

**OF THE THINGS YOU DIDN'T HAVE ACCESS TO IN IRAQ BUT TAKE FOR GRANTED IN THE UNITED STATES, WHAT DID YOU MOST MISS WHILE ON THIS ASSIGNMENT?**

**FOOTBALL!** I missed tailgating at the Florida Gator games with family and friends and watching my Minnesota Vikings on the NFL Ticket!

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**WHAT'S YOUR MOST VIVID MEMORY OF BEING IN IRAQ?**

The first time I got to go among the Iraqi people without wearing body armor or having an armed soldier by my side. The Iraqi people and shopkeepers I met in the market were so friendly. Those who spoke English would engage me in conversation and ask about America. I will never forget the smiles and laughs of the children who came up and greeted me and wanted me to take a picture. It also did not hurt that I was giving out candy; it just proves kids are kids no matter the country or culture. Candy is the universal language. It can bring a smile to a child's face.

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Public Management Magazine (a publication of the ICMA)  
March 2008 · Volume 90 · Number 2

**Managers Strengthen Iraq’s Representative Government**

Author: Margaret Rogers

In a country where most news coverage has been of bombings and deaths or, more recently, of the decline in murders of innocent civilians, it is easy to overlook everyday heroes making a difference in Iraq’s provinces. City managers and ICMA members Jerry Calhoun, Paul Sharon, and **Jim Gleason** are classic examples of these unsung heroes. Although the managers’ lives vary greatly, they have several things in common. Each accepted a one-year contract to provide technical assistance to local Iraqi government officials. Each left behind family, friends, and a comfortable home in the United States. And each sees his contract as an opportunity to serve his country as well as Iraq’s nascent representative government.

Jerry Calhoun, city manager, Port Richey, Florida, thinks of his work in Iraq as a chance to teach Iraqis “to be their own masters.” Working with the Iraqis helps him serve his own country. “I love my country. I’m proud to be an American and hadn’t had a chance to serve. I decided this was it! I want to give back.” Based at Al-Asad Air Base in western Iraq, Calhoun trains leaders in five districts and their subdistricts, which are the “equivalent of counties and cities in the United States. Sometimes the results are evident immediately. This work is so exciting to me because I have seen firsthand the light turn on when the Iraqis learn something. They want more and more training; they are so eager to learn from us.”

Paul Sharon accepted his contract after retiring from a 35-year career in city management and serving as an ICMA Range Rider. He is assigned to Salahaddin Province. “To other ICMA members in the U.S., I say there are a lot of newly elected Iraqi officials whose skills we can enhance, teaching them processes to organize government, develop policies, and deal with the mundane day-to-day issues. What we deal with every day in the U.S. cities we serve uniquely qualifies us to teach Iraqis.” “We need to empower the Iraqis to govern themselves,” said **Jim Gleason**, former city manager, Woodstock, Georgia, who felt a personal calling to help Iraqis attain self-sufficiency after serving his local community as an elected official and city manager.

**Iraqis Learn to Build Strong Local and Provincial Governments**

These three ICMA members work with Iraq Strengthening Local and Provincial Governance (LGP), a project funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) through a contract with the Research Triangle Institute (RTI International) and subcontracted partners that include the International City/County Management Association (ICMA). The mission of the project is to assist the people of Iraq by building the capacity of local and provincial governments and increasing citizen participation during Iraq’s transition to a democratic system. LGP began in 2003 and was expanded in 2005. From its headquarters in Baghdad, LGP oversees operations of regional offices in Erbil, Hillah, Basra, and Baghdad, which serve all 18 Iraqi provinces. The program currently has a staff of 120 international employees representing 28 nationalities as well as more than 450 Iraqi national employees working throughout Iraq. LGP

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staff members are currently assigned to provincial reconstruction teams (PRTs) in the provinces of Ninewa, Tamim, Babylon, Anbar, Diyala, Salahaddin, Thi-Qar, Basra and in the city of Baghdad. Thanks to LGP, Iraqi municipal leaders are learning from practiced city managers from the United States. Manager advisers are especially critical now in Iraq. The U.S. government is increasingly focused on building capacity from the ground up, making local and provincial governments work in light of the challenges the central government in Baghdad is having being effective.

**ICMA Members Make a Difference in Iraq**

ICMA members who help strengthen local governance in Iraq help elected leaders improve governmental management and administration, understand the roles and functions of government officials and agencies, increase the efficiency and effectiveness of public services, and train civil servants. Why do they do it? “To be a part of history. To make a difference in the lives of the Iraqi people.” —Jerry Calhoun, city manager, Port Richey, Florida “To enable. The opportunity to help teach the Iraqis to govern themselves and to make their lives better was irresistible.” — Paul Sharon, ICMA-CM, former local government administrator and ICMA Range Rider, Jacksonville, Florida

“I felt a personal calling. I think I can make a difference as a city manager helping empower Iraqis to make decisions.” —**Jim Gleason**, ICMA-CM, ICMA-RTI Advisor Iraq and former city manager, Woodstock, Georgia ICMA members Calhoun, Sharon, and **Gleason** are indispensable to Iraqi officials learning how to serve their local populations. Under Saddam Hussein’s Baathist regime, the central government controlled all decisions. Now, under the burgeoning new representative system, local leaders are gaining a voice in the decision-making system. But they have little experience of their own on which to build.

**LGP and PRTs Improve Iraq’s Stability**

LGP supports the PRTs’ and embedded PRTs’ efforts across Iraq by providing technical advisers who work alongside the military in governance, electrical utilities, public finance, agriculture, urban planning, water engineering, policy reform, economic development, and geographical information systems. PRTs are joint civilian-military units that support local leaders and empower provincial authorities by working closely with the communities they serve. They are the primary interface between U.S. and coalition partners and provincial and local governments throughout Iraq.

Under the president’s “New Way Forward in Iraq” announced in January 2007, the PRT program has expanded from the initial 10 PRTs established in 2006 to 25 PRTs now. Ten of the new PRTs are embedded with U.S. brigade combat teams. These civilian-led teams work hand in glove with brigade combat teams or regiments (of the U.S. Marine Corps) to support the military surge in Anbar Province and the greater Baghdad area. These teams include U.S. diplomats, military officers, development experts, and other specialists in local government management, law, engineering, industrial development, urban planning, and agribusiness. The individuals come from many U.S. government departments and the private sector. The Office of Provincial

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Affairs within the U.S. embassy in Baghdad provides policy guidance and support to the PRT program.

The overarching goal of LGP and the PRTs is to empower Iraqi citizens and local and provincial authorities by helping them:

- Develop a transparent and sustained capability to govern.
- Increase security and the rule of law.
- Promote political and economic development.
- Provide the administration needed to meet the population’s basic needs.

Managers are uniquely qualified to fulfill the mission. Their experience in organizing public meetings, operating city and county budgets, obtaining federal funds, and running essential services is invaluable to newly elected Iraqi leaders. To his fellow ICMA members, Jerry Calhoun says, “These skills will carry on for future generations and the value in that is incalculable. How can one put a price on the value of teaching local government officials how to hold public meetings? The importance of public participation? Transparency in all levels of government? And how to lobby and work to compromise with the national government to achieve funding for local projects?” The advice managers provide at the local level is especially crucial now, given the difficulties the central government in Baghdad is having serving its public. “City management is most important now in Iraq because the central government is not functioning optimally,” Calhoun said. “We need to create capacity in the Iraqis to run effective local governments and sustain them over the long run. As a result of the efforts of the LGP program, we are starting to see local governments work.” City management requires skills in communication and conflict management. Paul Sharon learned both from his father, a former city manager who taught him the occupation is a “noble calling.” It’s better to improve the lives of others than seek personal gain, Sharon said. “My father told his sons ‘if you ever have a chance to step in and change the lives of others, take it!’”

#### New Guide Outlines Iraq Government Structures, Responsibilities

A two-volume handbook published in December 2007 provides the first comprehensive overview of the organization and workings of Iraq’s government systems. The Republic of Iraq District Government Field Manual describes Iraq’s federal and local government structures in simple language, including information on Iraq’s constitution, the roles and functions of various government structures, and information on public finance and economic development.

The handbook was developed by the U.S. Agency for International Development’s (USAID) Iraq Local Governance Program (LGP), which has supported efforts to strengthen government in Iraq at the local, municipal, and provincial levels since 2003. LGP is being implemented by RTI International, with assistance from ICMA and several other organizations. The 48-page first volume and the 100-page second volume of the manual are available for free download in both English and Arabic on the “Reports and Publications” page of LGP’s Web site at <http://www.lgp-iraq.org>. For more information, contact the RTI International Office of Communications at 919/316-3596 or [news@rti.org](mailto:news@rti.org). It was that motto and a line from a Bonnie Raitt song—“Life gets mighty precious when there’s less of it to waste”—that led Sharon to

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*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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work in Iraq after retirement. “Even though I am still young, I don’t have as much time as I did 50 years ago. Anything one can do to enhance that precious time is going to be fulfilling and rewarding.”

**Personal Sacrifice, Universal Rewards**

With the U.S. government’s increasing focus on building capacity in Iraq from the ground up, the work that technical advisers like Sharon, Calhoun, and **Gleason** provide is even more important. The rewards of strengthening a democracy, however, don’t come without costs. When **Gleason** departed for Iraq, he left behind friends, colleagues, and a wife of 27 years. At first, his friends didn’t understand why he would go to work in a war zone. They responded with the typical “Are you crazy?” “Once I explained my reasoning and that this is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, they understood,” **Gleason** said. “The irony is that if it were anywhere other than Iraq, say Paris, they wouldn’t have hesitated in their support. But non-challenging places are not where our expertise is needed.”

His long overseas assignment would mark the first time he and his wife would be apart for more than a couple of weeks. It would mean missing anniversaries, holidays, and birthdays. But perhaps it was the strength of the marriage that gave **Gleason** the courage to take on a challenge that would enrich both lives. “If your marriage has lasted this long and withstood all the usual trials and tribulations, it will survive this year.” **Jim** added with a laugh, “This might make our marriage last longer, giving my wife a break from me. I’m pretty intense to live with!”

Aside from a few trips to his wife’s native country of Colombia and a short trip to Brazil, Iraq is Calhoun’s first international experience. Now he regularly travels by helicopter between the Al-Asad Air Base, where he is assigned, to LGP headquarters in Baghdad. He is used to wearing the necessary body armor, a helmet, and a fire-resistant jumpsuit each time he travels. Back home, Calhoun’s family understands and supports his mission. “Without my wife’s 100 percent support, I wouldn’t be here,” Calhoun said. “Lupe is Colombian and a naturalized citizen. She loves the U.S. and believes in serving her country, in giving back. As Americans, we take for granted everything we have.” Sharon’s wife and children were sad to see him leave for Iraq, but they support his decision. “My wife said, ‘I know you can make a difference. I don’t want you to go, I’ll worry every day, but I am proud of you!’ My children are proud of me even though they are unhappy with the U.S. approach toward Iraq,” he said.

Working in Iraq gives **Gleason** the opportunity to advise Iraqis how to build foundations for managing local representation and to learn from U.S. mistakes. “To my colleagues in the U.S., I would say we all work in challenging environments, even if we take our democratic form of government for granted. If they come to Iraq they could have an opportunity and unique challenge to actually advise Iraqis how to create city management that would work efficiently and avoid some of our mistakes made over the past 250 years. We can teach them best practices and use the many ICMA resources in our work here.” “My goal is to leave the leave a city a better place than when I arrived,” **Gleason** said. “You need to be a bit of a risk taker; think outside the box rather than have the don’t-rock-the-boat attitude or be someone who doesn’t want to get out of their comfort zone. You have to be willing to fail; you won’t like it but we

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learn so much from our failures. Life is full of lessons; we learn more from setbacks than successes.”

**How to Serve in Iraq**

The work being performed by ICMA members Jerry Calhoun, Paul Sharon, and **Jim Gleason** is helping to create efficient and responsive local government in Iraq and is furthering the country’s slowly emerging stability. If you want to serve in Iraq and experience firsthand this unique opportunity to teach Iraqis to build the foundation of strong local governments, contact ICMA’s Ross Mallory for more information at [rmallory@icma.org](mailto:rmallory@icma.org). Margaret Rogers is governance adviser, public affairs, Iraq Strengthening Local and Provincial Governance (LGP), Baghdad, Iraq ([lroger01@lgp-iraq.org](mailto:lroger01@lgp-iraq.org)).

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Cherokee Tribune (GA)  
October 11, 2007

**Gleason to Resign as Woodstock's City Manager**  
Author: Kristal Dixon

Woodstock soon will begin the search for a new city manager. **Jim Gleason** has informed the mayor and city council that he will resign as city manager, effective Nov. 8. **Gleason**, who has been the city manager for three years, accepted a consulting position with the International City-County Managers Association (ICMA). As a consultant, **Gleason** will travel overseas to help emerging democracies form local governments. "It won't be a luxury assignment, but it will give me the opportunity to do something on the international level that'll make a difference," **Gleason**, 49, of Canton, said of the ICMA position. The position also will allow **Gleason** and his wife, Cheryl, who teaches English at Etowah High School, to move to Orlando, Fla., in June 2008. The **Gleasons** have two adult sons who live in Orlando, Fla.

News of **Gleason's** resignation was not a surprise to city officials. "It wasn't a shock," Woodstock Mayor Donnie Henriques said. "We knew he wanted to return to Florida, so we were prepared mentally." Henriques said the city government has not yet started searching for a replacement. He has asked Human Resources Director Tracie Barnes to come up with "alternative ways to gather information on candidates." "We want to broaden our horizons," Henriques said. The mayor, as well as city council members, said **Gleason's** work ethic and professionalism really turned Woodstock around. "He's put in the best city staff," Henriques said.

Councilwoman Liz Baxter said **Gleason's** tenure was an asset to the city. "He's done a lot of cleaning up," she said. "He is very professional." Councilman Bud Leonard, who took office in January 2006, said the time he's worked with **Gleason** has been "very positive." "I hate to see him leave, but I'm really excited for him," he said. Councilman Randy Brewer said **Gleason's** efforts to streamline the city have paid off. "Since my seven years on the council, the city has been running more smoothly," he said. "Woodstock has become a customer-friendly city."

**Gleason** said he is proud of the relationship he's had with the mayor and council members, both past and present. "It's been a great pleasure working with them all," he said. **Gleason** added he also was satisfied with the work he did on the proposed Interstate 575 interchange at Rope Mill Road as well as in establishing Woodstock's tax allocation district (TAD). "It was a collaborative effort with (the Georgia Department of Transportation), the landowners and the mayor and the council," he said of the interchange. "I hope to get the loose ends tied up before I go."



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*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Cherokee Tribune (GA)  
January 18, 2007

**National Group Honors Woodstock Manager**  
Author: Staff Reports

Woodstock City Manager **Jim Gleason** was recognized by the National League of Cities for reaching the silver level in its certificate of achievement in leadership program. Sponsored by the organization's Leadership Training Institute, the award was presented in Reno, Nev. at the Congress of Cities Congress. The silver certificate level is achieved by local city officials when they earn 36 credits in all five of the core competency areas of municipal leadership. **Gleason** is one of only 135 NLC members to reach this level.

The areas include personal leadership growth and development, effective governance, effective communications and media relations, skills in developing and promoting partnerships and promoting and managing change. The organization that included 19,000 cities is the nation's oldest and largest group devoted to strengthening and promoting cities.

**Lutz moves practice to new location**

Dr. John Roman Lutz has moved his practice to a new location in Woodstock. The office is at 240 Creekstone Ridge and he will host an open house from 2 to 6 p.m. Friday. Lutz specializes in providing psychotherapy to adults and couples and has been practicing for more than 20 years.

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Cherokee Tribune (Canton, GA)  
August 31, 2006

**Suit blocks trash-hauler franchise**

Author: From staff reports

The commercial franchise established for a trash hauler in Woodstock will not go into effect next week as planned due to a pending lawsuit. Trash-hauling companies and local businesses have expressed concerns about the city government's contract with Advanced Disposal that has established a commercial franchise in the city. "What will happen is everything will be on hold until we have a determination from the court," City Manager **Jim Gleason** said. "That way nobody is impacted, pro or con."

On July 13, Georgia Waste Systems Inc., also known as Waste Management, and North Metro Waste Inc., filed a lawsuit in Cherokee County Superior Court against the Woodstock City Council, mayor and Advanced Disposal Services Atlanta LLC.

In June the council approved an amendment to make Advanced Disposal the citywide hauler for commercial customers. The company already is the citywide hauler for residential customers. JoAnn Birrell, community relations municipal marketing manager for Waste Management, said she could not comment on the specifics of the case. "It's Waste Management's policy to defend ourselves and our rights against illegal contracts," she said.

Mayor Donnie Henriques and Sheryl Collie, owner of North Metro Waste, both said they could not comment since it involves litigation.

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**James Patrick Gleason**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Cherokee Tribune (GA)  
February 25, 2006

**Officials Begin Market Research Woodstock Aims to Attract Visitors, More Businesses**  
Author: Sarah E. Alexander

"Have you been to Woodstock?" It's a question Woodstock city officials hope more people soon will be asking each other. City officials are researching ways to market the city to bring in both more businesses and more visitors. City Manager **Jim Gleason** said since the city is being redeveloped with construction such as Hedgewood Properties' Woodstock Downtown mixed-use project, now is the time to step up marketing. His staff is seeking cost estimates for marketing firms and later this year, the council could vote to hire a marketing firm. **Gleason** said the council could include between \$5,000 and \$10,000 in next year's budget for marketing expenses. "This is not going to look like the same place three to five years from now," **Gleason** said. "It is truly creating a destination where people from not only in the county, but from outside the area would want to come to in the evenings and on the weekends."

On Tuesday the Woodstock City Council will consider approving a contract with CGI Communications for marketing tools, such as a video about the city for the city's Web site and city banners -- at no cost to the city. The council last week asked the state legislature to create a convention and visitors center authority. If the request passes, the city will be able to increase its hotel/motel tax from 3 percent to 6 percent. The revenues would help the Woodstock Downtown Development Authority fund projects, including marketing efforts. **Gleason** said while the city has a visitor center at Dean's Store downtown, nothing is being done by city staff to market Woodstock. "Cities are no different than businesses," he said. "You want outside people to come into your town and spend their money."

**Gleason**, who said the public would be involved in developing marketing ideas for the city, said his staff also is reviewing changing the city logo and seal, which includes the train depot, now being turned into a restaurant. "I don't think you want your city logo to essentially be a private business," he said. **Gleason** said it's important for cities to distinguish themselves because it can determine whether people want to live in or visit the area. "You want your city to be known and have a certain image," he said. "We want a community that when people hear the word 'Woodstock' that it's like, 'Oh man. Have you been to Woodstock?'" **Gleason** said his goal is to see the downtown area "alive with people." "We're not going to be Disney World," he added. "

At the end of the day we recognize that." Council members said they support an increase in city marketing efforts. Councilman Bud Leonard said he thinks marketing could help to make the city a destination. "I think it will attract people who may not know anything about Woodstock," he said, adding he would like to attract both more commercial development and visitors to the city. "I also want to see people in the city want to come to downtown and participate and go out to eat." Councilwoman Liz Baxter said she would like to highlight a special city feature like its mountain biking trails in an effort to bring in more businesses. "What we're looking for are jobs," she said. "If we're doing any advertising at all, we're trying to entice big business and

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**James Patrick Gleason**

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corporations in here that are going to mean some jobs." Councilman Bill Long said he would like to market the city to attract upscale commercial developments, as well as businesses to the city's industrial park. "If you attract them, you get the others. You get your jobs, and you'll attract people who want to come here," he said. "If you're going to change the town, you've got to be prepared to change with it." Councilman Bob Mueller said he thinks funds spent on marketing would be well spent. "It just makes the city grow better," he said. "I think that downtown Woodstock is growing, especially since Hedgewood has come in."

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**James Patrick Gleason**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Cherokee Tribune (Canton, GA)  
January 26, 2006

**Woodstock mulls \$8-a-month fee Money would pay for stormwater improvements**  
Author/Byline: Sarah E. Alexander

Woodstock residents soon could be paying an extra \$8 a month. The Woodstock City Council is considering adding an \$8 stormwater utility monthly fee per household or business to pay for stormwater improvement projects. If approved by the council, the new fee would begin appearing on city water bills July 1. The federal and state governments are mandating local governments address stormwater issues, but do not specify how they should pay for the improvements.

The council on Tuesday night tabled the issue so the public works committee could first review the issue and consider how to raise money for the stormwater projects. The city's first stormwater improvement projects, which include installing curbs and gutters and pipes to help to eliminate standing water in some areas, could cost about \$2 million, according to City Manager **Jim Gleason**. "The fairest and most equitable means seems to be establishing a stormwater utility that is like your water and your wastewater fund. It's an enterprise fund. It stands alone," **Gleason** told the council Tuesday night. "There's only two other ways that I know of to find those funds and that is to raise property taxes or to cut services."

**Gleason** said the city could begin with a lower fee and raise it later, but that way could take the city about three years to raise the money to begin addressing the stormwater issues. "I think, personally, that residents wonder after five years, 'What am I paying this for if I'm not seeing something done?'" he said.

Councilman Steve Faris said he thinks the city should inform and educate residents about the stormwater fee before approving it. "I understand the need," he said of the fee. "People will perceive it as a tax increase." Councilman Randy Brewer said he would like the council to further discuss the issue before voting. "My concern is that we've stood up here and lowered the millage rate, and now we're going to put a very sizable monthly tax on the water bill," he said. "I don't have an answer for it, but it's a very big concern of mine."

Councilman Bob Mueller said he favors having the annual total of the fees -- \$96 -- included in city tax bills instead of on monthly water bills. "It's once a year," he said of including the fee with city taxes. "We don't have a choice. We have been mandated by the federal government."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**James Patrick Gleason**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Cherokee Tribune (Canton, GA)  
August 10, 2005

**Woodstock council lowers millage rate**

Author/Byline: Sarah E. Alexander

Most Woodstock residents will not see much of an increase in property taxes this year. The Woodstock City Council approved lowering the millage rate Tuesday night. No residents spoke at the public hearing.

The council approved a rollback of 6.115 mills, which is revenue neutral and a decrease from the current rate of 6.458 mills. The rollback would prevent most homeowners from seeing a property tax bill increase. A homeowner with a house valued at \$200,000, with the standard \$5,000 homestead exemption, would pay \$458.63 in city property taxes this year based on the new rate. A homeowner with a house of the same value in 2004 paid \$484.35.

Council members said they liked the new millage rate. Councilman Bob Mueller said he is happy about the decrease. "I think we have very good management here with (City Manager) **Jim Gleason**, and everything's working good," he said. "I just think that the people ought to be given back anything we have left over." Mueller added he does not know if the city can continue to lower the millage rate since there eventually could be more costs for storm water management. "We'll try to do the best we can," he said.

Mayor Bill Dewrell said he supported the decrease. "I think any time you can lower the rate of what the citizens pay for a service while raising that level of service, you've got to be doing something right," he said. "We're doing more for less."

Last month the council approved budget cuts such as \$6,200 in advertising in the media and \$4,800 from the concerts and special events fund, to help to lower the millage rate.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**James Patrick Gleason**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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North Port Sun (FL)  
January 5, 2005

**Commissioners Disappointed with Selection**

Author: Elaine Allen-Emrich

All sides of **James Gleason's** story aren't being told about the former city where he was fired last year, he said. As one of the top four candidates on the North Port's city manager short list, City Commissioners Rue Berryman and Dick Lockhart said they would like to see **Gleason's** name removed. "He sued the city commissioners and mayor," said Berryman after reading an incomplete \$10,000 background search provided to the city by a Texas firm last week. "He sued the people he worked with. Do we really want that in our city?" However, **Gleason** said there are elements regarding his tenure in Ocoee, Fla., if given the opportunity to answer questions, he could reveal.

**Gleason** said despite having to sue his former city, he "stood" his ground on alleged Sunshine violations among commissioners and the town's mayor prior to him being fired. "Beyond working for Ocoee, commissioners are still calling the places where I've applied as a city manager and trying to prevent me from getting a job," **Gleason** said. "I think public officials have a higher standard to live up to and I have solid ethical and moral values." An Internet search of **Gleason** reveals the transcript from a special meeting where **Gleason's** employment was discussed in Ocoee, Fla. on Feb. 3, 2004, prior to him being fired in March.

A city of Ocoee commissioner Nancy Parker, who attended the February meeting, said at that meeting that "It's a shame when we (city commissioners) allow rumors, innuendoes, and struggles for personal power, consequences of our own actions and our infighting amongst ourselves to become an embarrassment to this city. And it's undeniable that we, and I include myself in that, have all done that." Parker went on to say "I believe that today, Ocoee's in better shape financially, I believe we have a vision that we are moving toward, and I cannot think of one proper direction that has been given to the City Manager (**Gleason**) -- I cannot think of one consensus direction, one vote direction, that has been given to this City Manager (**Gleason**) that he has not done his best and carried out."

**Gleason** said he filed suit last year against Ocoee Mayor Scott Vandergrift and commissioners Danny Howell and Scott Anderson for allegedly making 57 phone calls to one another before the decision to fire him. **Gleason** claimed the Florida Sunshine Law was violated during those alleged phone calls. He said he had to deal with several interesting obstacles deriving from the commissioners he served, even after leaving Ocoee.

**Gleason** said while North Port City Commissioners might have prejudged him, there are several similarities between here and the city of Ocoee. **Gleason** said he told Ocoee commissioners that they could not continue running the city's wastewater district in a negative balance. He helped privatize and eventually had to raise rates in order to get the district back on track and in compliance with state requirements. "At the end of the day people probably said '**Jim Gleason**'

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**James Patrick Gleason**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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raised our rates," he said. "This allowed the elected officials to dodge a bullet. But ultimately the city became solvent again. You cannot run in a negative fund balance."

North Port had a similar problem as the Solid Waste District borrowing more than \$1 million from the city's general fund to create a positive fund balance this year. Currently, as the city manager for Woodstock, Ga., **Gleason** says he's familiar with growth issues. He said it's the second fastest growing area in Georgia and the seventh in the nation with 30 percent growth each year. North Port is the third-fastest growing city in Florida with more than 3,000 new homes built last year. "I waited for at least a letter from North Port saying the city had hired a city manager since I applied back in July," **Gleason** said. "Then since I didn't hear anything, I took the job on Nov. 1 in Woodstock. They are very fine people here."

**Gleason** said the reason he wants to move back to Florida is because he is well-versed in Florida government. His wife is an Orlando teacher and his son attends college in Fort Myers. "At the end of the day, I have to believe I stood up for what is right," he said. "I went back to being a city manager because that is what I am good at. I am on probation for up to six months at my Woodstock position. I have not signed a contract with the city of Woodstock because that would be violating the code of the International City County Manager's Association. I also did not apply for any jobs after I was hired in Woodstock." **Gleason**, who withdrew his name from the Friday interviews with the North Port City Commission, said he might reconsider flying in on Friday. He said he would talk to his wife and then call City Clerk Helen Raimbeau with his answer.



**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**James Patrick Gleason**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Cherokee Tribune (GA)  
November 3, 2004

**Woodstock's New City Manager Begins First Day on Job**

Author: Sarah E. Alexander

New Woodstock City Manager **Jim Gleason's** first day at City Hall was Tuesday, but he began working off the clock last month. **Gleason**, who started preparing for the job as soon as the City Council appointed him in mid-October, said his main priorities include the proposed interchange plans and improving traffic. He said he plans to get all the facts about the proposed plan to revamp the Interstate 575 exit 8 interchange at Towne Lake Parkway. His fact-finding efforts will include meeting with Georgia Department of Transportation and Federal Highway Administration officials. "One of the key things I'm trying to do is follow up with these agencies," he said. "When (the council members) are making a decision, hopefully they are making it based on the best information."

**Gleason** said he thinks the proposed interchange project could help traffic. "What happens with the interchange is going to have a trickle affect on feeder roads," he said. Councilwoman Susan Jones said she is glad the proposed interchange plan is one of **Gleason's** priorities. "The interchange is definitely a priority to me," she said. "We need it." **Gleason** said another goal is to ensure city staff continues to follow policies. "As long as I do that, we should have a very successful and long-term working relationship," he said. **Gleason**, 46, who recently moved to the city, said he began working at home before Tuesday so he could become educated about the city's issues. "I really felt they had made a strong commitment and statement in offering me the position," he said of the council. "Even though the clock hasn't been ticking in reference to the paycheck, there was a reason to jump in." Mrs. Jones said she thinks **Gleason** is going to be good for the city. "He brings a whole new energy to the city," she said. "He means what he says, and he is totally putting himself into the job." Councilman Bob Mueller met with **Gleason** and public works department staff Tuesday morning to discuss an update on the wastewater treatment plant. Mueller said he thinks **Gleason** is going to be an excellent city manager. "He seems to be very informed and right on board already," he said. "He's done his homework."

**Gleason** said while his first day was non-stop, he expected to be busy. "I'm excited to finally get here and to get going," said **Gleason**, who is the former city manager for Ocoee, Fla., where he previously served as a city commissioner for four years. "This is an opportunity to experience a different quality of life in a different environment." **Gleason's** professional background includes working as vice president of governmental and community relations for West Orange Healthcare Governmental District and owning a durable medical equipment company called Compression Therapy Inc. He earned his master's degree in public administration from Webster University in St. Louis, a bachelor's degree in business from Barry University and an associate's degree in business marketing and management from Valencia Community College in Orlando, Fla. **Gleason** and his wife, Cheryl, who is a ninth-grade English teacher, have two grown sons.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**James Patrick Gleason**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Orlando Sentinel (FL)  
May 22, 2004

**Vendetta in Ocoee Revs up with Claims of Extortion**

Author: Jim Stratton

Even in Ocoee, where political feuds sprout like dollar weed, the latest communal drama is tough to ignore. It features a pancake restaurant, sophomoric insults and an alleged assault with a box of leftovers. It has sparked charges of illegal phone calls, favoritism and now, extortion. It would be funny if the feelings behind it weren't so toxic. And now things may get worse. In a claim sure to fuel the fire, former City Manager **Jim Gleason** says Commissioner Danny Howell pressured him to pay Howell's debts, rig a city auction and give Howell preferential treatment when the commissioner failed to pay his water bill.

**Gleason** has contacted the State Attorney's Office, which is investigating. That office would not discuss the case, but city records suggest that **Gleason** repeatedly helped Howell financially. **Gleason** says he did so for fear of losing his job. "He told me: 'You make the big bucks. Find a way to take care of it,'" **Gleason** said. "He said he'd supported me as city manager and that he could just as easily remove that support." Howell, who voted to fire **Gleason** in February, said he has done nothing wrong but would not discuss the allegations or respond to questions sent by e-mail. He said only that he was "getting tired of all these accusations." The commissioner and the former city manager have been bickering for months.

In March, **Gleason** accused Howell and two other elected officials of conspiring to fire him in a series of private phone calls. Such conversations are illegal. State prosecutors also are reviewing that complaint. A month later, **Gleason** tipped the media when police found Howell asleep in his car in a city park with his pants down. With so much bad blood flowing through this small suburban city, the recent confrontation at a Perkins restaurant on State Road 50 was probably inevitable. The sheriff's report says **Gleason** and Howell ran into each other as Howell was on his way out. Their exchange, according to the report, went like this:

Howell to his wife: "Let's go. It stinks in here."

**Gleason** to Howell: "At least I have my pants on."

A scuffle followed, and Howell's wife allegedly whacked **Gleason** with a box of leftovers – or possibly, the report says, a stuffed animal. Like so much else about this small-town slugfest, the facts are fuzzy.

**GLEASON IS EMOTIONAL**

**Jim Gleason**, on the other hand, is not. He can be prickly and emotional and easily baited. After commissioners voted to fire him, he traded words with one of his critics in the lobby of City Hall. That has led to a misdemeanor battery charge, though **Gleason** says he merely touched the woman, a former city employee, on the arm. Last month, he was drawn into an e-mail spitting match with a Howell supporter. The two swapped insults, with **Gleason** mocking the woman's recent appearance on the local government TV channel. "The scary part is seeing your 'Over Weight Behind on TV' with your Pants in the Crack!" he wrote in an e-mail given to the

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****James Patrick Gleason**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Sentinel. “What a laugh we all got out of that one!” **Gleason** admits he needs to hold his tongue. “I have absolutely no defense for that. I was totally wrong,” he said. “That is probably my biggest fault, and I’ve got to control it.” He does not apologize, however, for the floodlight he has thrown on commissioners. They broke the law, **Gleason** maintains, and people should know. His latest charge focuses on Howell, who was first elected in 1997. In his complaint to the State Attorney’s Office, **Gleason** says that during a 15-month period, the commissioner pressured him for financial help at least three times. The first instance, he said, happened in May 2002, when Howell was a year late paying a \$150 campaign fine. The city clerk tried to collect but was unsuccessful, according to a memo she gave **Gleason**. Finally, she contacted **Gleason**, who met with Howell. In his second-floor office overlooking Starke Lake, **Gleason** said he tried to persuade Howell to pay. “His comment was, ‘That’s why we pay you the big bucks,’” **Gleason** said. “‘You find a way to take care of it.’” “Soon after that, according to the memo, **Gleason** showed up with \$150 in cash to pay Howell’s fine.

A few weeks later, the finance department reported that Howell had failed to reimburse the city for more than \$350 in unauthorized charges on his city-issued credit card. **Gleason** said he urged Howell to pay but claims Howell again told him to “take care of it.” So **Gleason** wrote the city a personal check for \$354.18, the amount Howell owed. Later, at a public meeting, a resident asked why the city manager covered a commissioner’s expenses. **Gleason** said he told “some story” about wanting to close out the books for the month. He also said Howell had already reimbursed him. Now **Gleason** says that was a lie. “I covered for him,” **Gleason** said, “because it was clear if I didn’t, I’d have a rough time.”

**Gleason** said the last time he helped Howell financially came more than a year later. In September 2003, the city allowed employees to bid on a handful of surplus personal computers. **Gleason** said Howell instructed him to “make sure” Howell got one. **Gleason** says he spoke with the city’s technology manager, telling him one of the computers had to be set aside for **Gleason** to win for a commissioner. Information Systems Administrator Brian Ross refused, saying that everyone had to make a sealed bid. Ross, however, did say that he and **Gleason** “might have discussed a price” that would likely win a bid. In the end, **Gleason** paid \$130.10 to get one of the computers. He says he delivered it to Howell’s home and later asked about setting up a payment plan for Howell to reimburse him.

About that time, **Gleason** said, he also told Howell he would no longer give the commissioner special treatment when he was late paying his water bill. At least twice, **Gleason** claims, Howell demanded water service be turned back on even though he still owed the city money. “At that point,” **Gleason** said, “the relationship started to deteriorate pretty rapidly.” On the advice of the city attorney, Ocoee’s finance and utility officials would not discuss **Gleason’s** claim that Howell sought special treatment. Today, **Gleason** says he “knew it was wrong” to give in to Howell’s requests, but he said he did so because the commissioner “made it clear” he could jeopardize **Gleason’s** job. **Gleason** concedes that Howell “never explicitly said” he would try to fire **Gleason**. “He was one of my bosses, and I was trying to keep the peace,” **Gleason** said. “I felt pressured for my job.”

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**

**James Patrick Gleason**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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**Gleason**, who is suing the city over his firing, made no formal complaints at the time about Howell's behavior, but he did mention the requests to Ocoee Commissioner Nancy Parker, who later opposed **Gleason's** firing. "I remember **Jim** being very uncomfortable," Parker said. "He was upset. . . . He said it was like he was expected to do it."

**MAY HAVE PROBLEMS**

Even if Howell applied no pressure on **Gleason**, Howell still may have legal problems. Florida law requires that local elected officials report any gifts they receive worth more than \$100. Unpaid loans could be considered gifts, and Howell, according to the Florida Commission on Ethics, has not reported receiving any gifts for at least two years. A carpenter and repairman, Howell has had several run-ins with the law. He has been arrested at least nine times since 1967 on charges that range from drunkenness to carrying a concealed weapon. In 1988, he was found guilty of writing a bad check. That felony conviction almost cost him his commission seat, but Howell appealed to the Governor's Office to win back his voting rights and avoid being removed.

Today, Howell and **Gleason** are stuck in the same uncomfortable boat. All they can do is wait for investigators to determine how much of this fight is fact and how much is just friction. "I'll be glad when it's over," **Gleason** said. "I mean, it's crazy when you reach a point where you have to worry about where you can go out to eat."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**James Patrick Gleason**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Orlando Sentinel (FL)  
May 9, 2004

**Former City Manager Draws Media Attention; Jim Gleason is Threatening to Sue Ocoee Over His Firing in February**

Author: Jim Stratton

Seven years ago, Ocoee voters told **Jim Gleason** they didn't want him to be their mayor. Three months ago, a slim majority of commissioners said they didn't want him to be their city manager. But none of that has pushed **Gleason** to the margins. Like a moth drawn to Ocoee's front porch light, he keeps coming back. He is in the news again for the latest twist in his long-running feud with Ocoee city commissioners. Fired in February on a 3-2 vote, **Gleason** has been busy collecting information for a threatened lawsuit against the city. The paperwork is ready, and his attorney has put the city on notice. But **Gleason**, 46, says he'll settle the issue for a payment of \$280,520. The crux of the lawsuit concerns his firing. **Gleason** says he was dismissed because he reported a possible violation of Florida's "Government in the Sunshine" laws involving Ocoee Mayor Scott Vandergrift and Commissioner Scott Anderson.

**Gleason** says Commissioner Danny Howell told him that Vandergrift and Anderson had approached him and asked whether Howell would support an effort to get rid of **Gleason**. **Gleason** has some evidence, but it has almost been overshadowed by his eagerness to put the squeeze on political opponents. After he spoke with Howell, the former city manager fired off an e-mail describing the conversation to the city attorney and more than 100 city employees. Since then, he has gone to the State Attorney's Office with five months of phone records suggesting the three commissioners who fired him conspired illegally to do so. Most recently, he pounced on the opportunity to make Howell look bad. It was **Gleason** who notified the media when Ocoee police found Howell one night at a city park asleep in his car with his pants down. **Gleason** says he called attention to Howell because voters have a right to know how their elected officials are behaving. But he also admits a less noble motive. "Did I take some personal satisfaction in it?" he asked. "Yeah, I don't deny that."

**Gleason** has been a polarizing figure in Ocoee from the moment he was elected commissioner in 1993. Smart, articulate and ambitious, he served until 1997, when he challenged Vandergrift for the mayor's seat. He lost. After a stint as a hospital administrator, he became Ocoee city manager in 2001. A river of bad blood continues to flow between **Gleason** and Vandergrift. It was the quirky, popular mayor who pushed for his firing. Vandergrift says **Gleason** craves power, and he does little to hide feelings for his former commission colleague: "Did he tell you about the time I called him a name that rhymes with 'glass bowl'?" " he asks. These days, **Gleason** spends his time talking with his lawyer, teaching part time at Barry University and looking for another city manager job. He concedes his habit of popping up in the news will probably make that search harder. "Yeah, it probably doesn't help," he said recently. "I should probably keep my mouth shut." History indicates that probably won't happen.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**James Patrick Gleason**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Orlando Sentinel, The (FL)  
February 4, 2004

**SPLIT COMMISSION FIRES MANAGER**

Author: Unknown

OCOEE - A bitterly divided City Commission voted 3-2 to fire City Manager **Jim Gleason** on Tuesday night.

Mayor Scott Vandergrift and Commissioners Danny Howell and Scott Anderson voted in favor of terminating **Gleason's** contract. **Gleason**, 45, said he will appeal the decision at a public hearing before the City Commission later this month.

More than 100 people packed Ocoee City Hall for the meeting, many in support of **Gleason**. The city appointed its finance director, Wanda Horton, as interim city manager.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**James Patrick Gleason**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Daily News (FL)  
June 30, 2002

**Ocoee Feuding Worsens**

Author: Anthony Colarossi and Sentinel Staff Writers

During the heat of last year's Ocoee City Commission election, Bill Henderson got a telephone call from then-acting City Manager **Jim Gleason**. Henderson, who was running for a commission seat, said **Gleason** gave him the "courtesy call" to let him know someone in city government had run a criminal background check on him. "He said it could be very embarrassing to you and your family," Henderson said. "He kept emphasizing that these kinds of things have a way of leaking to the press. He said, 'Are you sure you don't want to pull out of the race?' "

The background check and other reported attempts to nudge Henderson out of the campaign against incumbent Danny Howell are at the center of a yearlong state Commission on Ethics investigation in Ocoee, according to interviews and a copy of the ethics complaint obtained by the Orlando Sentinel. Commissioner Scott Anderson is accused of trying to influence the race and thus guarantee that **Gleason** would eventually become the permanent city manager, according to the documents and interviews. The City Commission gave **Gleason** the job shortly after the election, which Henderson lost. **Gleason** confirms he called Henderson about the background check as a courtesy but denies he used the information to try to push out Henderson. "That's a lie," **Gleason** said. "We never had that conversation. We never discussed the issue of his being in or out of the race. Either he's lying, or he's got a different recollection than I do." Anderson did not respond to attempts to contact him. Earlier this month, **Gleason** blamed Ocoee Police Chief Richard Mark for running the background check and cited it as one of the reasons that he wanted to fire Mark. The city and the chief negotiated a deal under which Mark would leave his job.

Henderson, 47, said he was charged at age 18 and served a brief probation. The judge sealed the file and then expunged his record, he said, on a felony charge of grand larceny. A Sentinel search of state criminal records last week turned up nothing on Henderson. In earlier interviews, Anderson told the Sentinel he mentioned Henderson's past to **Gleason** and Mark out of concern that his successful election to office might be illegal, if he had a felony conviction. Anderson said he never requested the check, conducted by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement. Later in the 2001 campaign, Henderson said Anderson approached him again and offered positions on charter review and redistricting boards if Henderson backed out of the race. Henderson said Anderson suggested that Danny Howell would not run in the next election and would throw support behind Henderson, if he chose to run then. "I took it as a bribe or a buyout," Henderson said. "I told him I wasn't interested."

Both the background check and the allegation of an offer by Anderson are the heart of a complaint filed with the state Ethics Commission in June 2001 by Denise Lenko, Henderson's treasurer and campaign manager. Lenko, who serves on the Ocoee code-enforcement board, says in her complaint that hiring **Gleason** as the permanent city manager was Anderson's motive.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****James Patrick Gleason**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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"Mr. Anderson's abuse of power by offering this deal would benefit his private agenda where Mr. **Gleason** was concerned, and would benefit Mr. Howell by helping him to get re-elected if Mr. Howell would vote to keep Mr. **Gleason** in exchange," Lenko wrote. During the campaign, Henderson had publicly stated he would not vote for **Gleason** as permanent city manager. "He's a divisive person," Henderson said last week. "It just seems that controversy follows him."

On April 10, 2001, Howell easily defeated Henderson in a runoff. Howell's re-election ensured another 4-1 board majority. The night Howell was sworn in for a new term -- April 17, 2001 -- four commissioners decided not to call 100-plus applicants for city manager. They were going to stick with **Gleason**, who had three months of city management experience. **Gleason** had been handily defeated by Scott Vandergrift in an earlier mayoral election. Despite public opposition to the hiring, commissioners voted to discuss terms of **Gleason's** new contract, according to a tape recording of that meeting. Only Vandergrift voted against it. "The thing is, you're a true leader," Anderson told **Gleason** that night. "I think we need that. I think you're going to be a great city manager."

Howell, who had not voted for **Gleason** as acting city manager, also offered **Gleason** his support that night, and said, "I went through all these resumes, and I found nothing in there that really impressed me." By the next regular meeting, commissioners voted to hire **Gleason**, with Vandergrift again the lone dissenter. The incident with Henderson apparently wasn't the only matter that caught the Ethics Commission's eye. **Gleason** confirmed that he also has been questioned by the commission about possible involvement in Commissioner Rusty Johnson's last election. That questioning, **Gleason** said, concerns allegations that he discouraged a candidate from running against Johnson in the 2001 election in return for **Gleason** getting the acting city manager's job.

**Gleason** supported candidate Dan Matthys in his bid to unseat Johnson, but in early January 2001 Matthys abruptly backed out of the race. **Gleason** said he only advised Matthys that he would "be in for one tough fight" against Johnson. Matthys said **Gleason** had nothing to do with his quitting. "This decision was made solely by me," Matthys wrote in a letter to commissioners at the time, "and had absolutely nothing to do with the appointment of **Jim Gleason** to [the] interim city manager position, or any agreements with any city commissioner, including my opponent at the time." Matthys' letter is dated the same day that **Gleason** started as acting city manager. Howell had not supported that appointment. **Gleason** says the ethics probe does not focus on him, and that he has done nothing wrong. "I was doing a job, and I stayed out of the politics," **Gleason** said. "In politics there are bruised feelings. Whether this is that, I don't know." The state Ethics Commission will not confirm or deny investigations in progress. An ethics violation by a commissioner or city manager could result in their removal, suspension, a reprimand or a civil fine. Last week, Henderson said he didn't think the background check was such a big issue, but is troubled it has resurfaced. "The group running Ocoee, I thought they had the highest ethical standards," Henderson said. "I'm not so sure now."



**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**James Patrick Gleason**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Orlando Sentinel (FL)  
June 1, 2002

**Ocoee Manager Confirms He Plans to Force Chief Out; Jim Gleason Offered Police Chief Robert E. Mark Several Options. Mark's Decision is Due Monday**

Author: Anthony Colarossi

City Manager **Jim Gleason** confirmed Friday that he has plans to force police Chief Robert E. Mark out of his seven-year stint as the city's top cop. **Gleason** is offering Mark several choices: become a consultant for the city, retire, resign or face termination. Mark's decision is expected Monday. Without offering many specifics, **Gleason** said he and Mark have fundamental differences in the vision they have for the future of the department. "There were differences in terms of management styles and philosophies," **Gleason** said. "At the end of the day, Bob Mark will not be police chief for the city of Ocoee."

**Gleason's** statements ended a week's worth of speculation over whether the police chief had already been fired. "To say the chief has been fired, that is inappropriate and inaccurate," **Gleason** said. He refused to comment, however, on whether he has asked for Mark's resignation. An e-mail **Gleason** sent to commissioners Tuesday states that because of the "turmoil" and "hostility in the police department and the lack of effective leadership, I asked Bob to retire or resign." "If Bob does not accept this offer," **Gleason** wrote, "I will start the termination process." The e-mail says **Gleason** offered Mark a severance package with salary and benefits and an "opportunity to be a consultant through this transition." Mark, who makes \$87,260 as chief, was placed on administrative leave from Wednesday through Friday. Lt. Steve Goclon has been serving as acting chief in his absence. Neither Mark nor his attorney was available for comment Friday.

Mayor Scott Vandergrift said he thinks "very poorly" of the city manager's handling of the matter. He wants to know what specific actions prompted **Gleason's** decision. "I have a problem with the way the city manager is handling business at this point," Vandergrift said. "I think he's the one creating the turmoil, not the chief." City administrators are "probably going to have to defend themselves in court over this one," he said. The police chief in Ocoee oversees 85 total employees, including 59 sworn officers.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**James Patrick Gleason**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Orlando Sentinel (FL)  
May 26, 2002

**No One's Laughing at Mascotte Joke**

Author: Jason Garcia with a contribution from Sherri M. Owens

Two weeks ago, Brenda Maxwell, a city of Ocoee clerk, won a special Mascotte election to replace her slain friend Steve Allred on the City Council. Allred was shot to death by police during a Feb. 24 traffic stop. Upon learning of Maxwell's victory, her boss, Ocoee City Manager **Jim Gleason**, sent an e-mail to the city staff, congratulating her. But he couldn't resist taking a jab at her hometown. "I ask the [Ocoee Police Department to] provide her with a vest for driving through [Mascotte] !" the note read.

When the e-mail got around, some people in Mascotte didn't think the quip was funny. Neither did Maxwell, who said she talked with her boss about it, though she didn't want to discuss the matter publicly. **Gleason** didn't return the Pulse's phone calls.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**James Patrick Gleason**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Orlando Sentinel, The (FL)  
February 17, 2002

**WRANGLING OVER COSTS - OCOEE, SEWAGE-SPILL VICTIMS AT ODDS - THE CITY AND TWO OF FOUR FAMILIES ARE FIGHTING OVER THE EXPENSE OF CLEANING UP A SEWAGE SPILL.**

Author/Byline: Martin E. Comas

Two weeks before Christmas, Cecilia Luce walked into her bathroom and saw gallons of raw sewage gushing from her shower drain and toilet. It flowed through her home and seeped into the walls. The stench was "unbearable," said her husband, Dick Luce, recalling the night of Dec. 12. "It was worse than anything you could imagine." Next door, the same thing was happening at the Freemans' house and in two other homes on Olympus Drive. "It was running out the back door like a stream -- it was running out like mad," said David Freeman, who lives with his wife in his son's home at 124 Olympus Drive. The problem began just after 8:30 p.m. when a fuse blew at a lift station, causing the sewage to back up. The blown fuse also disabled the system's alarms that would have warned city officials of a problem. Now, more than two months later, the Luces' house and the three other homes have been mostly restored. The carpeting has been replaced, as well as some tiling and drywall -- most of it at the city's expense. The Luces and the Freemans say city officials are rushing to determine a final restoration cost for their homes. "The city just wants us to come up with some final number so they can pay us and hope we will just go away. But, honestly, we don't know how much it's going to cost and we certainly don't want to guess," Dick Luce said. Last week, city officials met with contractors and Robert and Carol Reid of 122 Olympus Drive and John and Melissa Craig of 130 Olympus Drive to determine a final restoration cost. The damage to the Craigs' home totaled \$11,925, and for the Reids' home the cost came to just more than \$14,000, City Manager **Jim Gleason** said.

**PARTIES DISAGREE ON COST**

Ocoee officials, at first, agreed that the city should pay all the restoration costs. "The next day, I assured all the residents that we would do whatever is possible to restore their homes," City Manager **Jim Gleason** said. "My view was that these people were in the middle of an emotional trauma, and this happened right before the holidays." So far, the city has spent more than \$130,000 in restoring the four homes, and **Gleason** expects to spend about another \$30,000 of the city's money. However, the Luces and Freemans are now asking to be reimbursed far beyond the typical costs of restoration, **Gleason** said. "The objective here was not to upgrade, but to put their homes back to the way they were," he said. "And to be honest, some of the requests seem to be pretty substantial and excessive." For example, he points to estimates from the city's adjuster in restoring the bathroom tile flooring and bedroom furniture in both homes.

Dick Luce disagrees. He said restoration workers ripped out some of the tiles in his master bathroom to survey the damage inside the walls, but the replacement tiles did not match the original tile. "It cost us \$4,500 to replace all the tiles. We gave the city the estimate, and then they said they weren't going to pay. They offered only \$2,500," Luce said. Luce also said the city is stalling in paying for bathroom counter tops and vanity mirrors and in removing dust left over

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches****James Patrick Gleason**

*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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from restoration. **Gleason**, however, said the Luces' bathroom tile was replaced and the \$2,500 the city offered was the cost given by the city's adjuster, who was hired by the city three weeks after the accident. **Gleason** also said the Luces are asking for \$8,000 to replace furniture in their master bedroom. "Our adjuster found their headboard and furniture in a Dumpster and valued it at \$2,500. In fact, we even OK'd it at \$3,000," **Gleason** said. "The shame of it is, this is becoming an issue of personal compensation." In the Freemans' home, **Gleason** said that the city received bills for painting ceilings and replacing kitchen cabinets, which may not be related to the sewage spill. However, David Freeman said that city officials originally said they would pay for the cost of painting the entire home and are now reneging. "They backtracked on us. What's silly is that they started painting our cathedral ceiling and now the city doesn't want to pay for that. The sewage stench goes up and it gets in the paint," Freeman said. He also said the cabinets in his kitchen and lanai need to be replaced because of mildew.

**INSURANCE MAY PAY PART**

Since the accident, the Freemans have been living at the Red Roof Inn on West Colonial Drive on the city's tab. Last week, a representative with Farm Bureau Insurance Co., which insures both the Luces and the Freemans, said the company may pick up part of the cost. Carol Reid said the city erred in not sending an adjuster out to the homes immediately after the accident and in not having a set of guidelines on how to handle such disasters. "The city had no idea what they were dealing with. So once the bills started coming in, they were freaking out," she said. **Gleason** said Reid has a point. "The mistake I made was not bringing in an adjuster from day one," he said. "Because, quite honestly, I made the decision we would take on the bills."

A lift station is like a well that collects sewage from nearby homes and businesses. Once the tank is about two-thirds full, it then pumps the sewage on to a sewer plant. When the system failed that December night, it shut down the mechanism that empties the lift station's tank, and it also shut down the alarms and autodialers that warn city officials of a problem. Because the four homes on Olympia Drive sit lower than the lift station, the sewage flowed back into them. The sewage flow was shut off about an hour later, and a water-damage restoration company was called in to move out furniture, rip out carpeting and tear out damaged walls.

**ALL LIFT STATIONS UPGRADED**

Luce and Freeman said that mold and fungus growing in the walls and cabinets can cause respiratory ailments. "What if there are more health problems down the road after the city has paid us? Then we're the ones left holding the bag," Luce said. In the past 12 years, there has only been one other incident in which an Ocoee lift station malfunctioned and flooded a home with raw sewage, **Gleason** said. He estimated that there are about "40 or so" similar lift stations in the city. Since the accident, **Gleason** said, all the city's lift stations and alarm systems have been upgraded and improved. "This is one issue I feel comfortable, as a resident and city official, that we made the right decision," **Gleason** said.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**James Patrick Gleason**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Orlando Sentinel (FL)  
January 6, 2001

**Gleason is Acting Manager**

Ocoee has hired **Jim Gleason**, a hospital spokesman and former city commissioner, to serve as acting city manager. **Gleason**, 42, replaces Ellis Shapiro, who resigned last month after 12 years as city manager.

A spokesman at Health Central in Ocoee, **Gleason** was elected as a commissioner in 1993. He left office in 1997 in a failed bid for the mayor's post. **Gleason's** annual salary was set at about \$84,000, the same paid to Shapiro. **Gleason**, who is taking a leave of absence from the hospital, will start Jan. 16. No date has been set for choosing a permanent city manager.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**James Patrick Gleason**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Orlando Business Journals (FL)  
August 14, 2000

**Battle Lines Drawn in Local Land Skirmish**

Authors: Noelle Haner-Dorr and Susan Lundine

Can a city take land from a hospital to benefit a retailer? That's the question at the heart of a dispute now brewing in Ocoee, where Health Central, Wal-Mart and City Hall are facing off over the fate of a 10,000-square-foot piece of land on Blackwood Avenue. Blackwood Avenue is the only road leading to busy Health Central's emergency room. It's also the only road leading to a proposed new Wal-Mart SuperCenter. A deal struck with the city calls for Wal-Mart to install a right turn lane, to handle expected traffic once its store opens for business. The hospital owns the property Wal-Mart will have to buy. But now, the city has put Health Central on notice that it is ready to take matters into its own hands -- condemning and seizing the property if the two businesses can't agree on a price.

"We're not out to fight Wal-Mart," says **Jim Gleason**, vice president of community relations for Health Central. "But the city is out to take land from a nonprofit hospital to benefit one of the richest corporations in America." At issue are three years of planning between the city of Ocoee and Wal-Mart to construct its supercenter on 35.9 acres of land, fronting West Colonial Drive. The site -- and the only access road -- sits directly across from Health Central. The developer's agreement, which will go before the City Commission for approval Sept. 5, stipulates that Wal-Mart must have a right turn lane enabling drivers to turn off Blackwood Avenue and into the store's parking lot. The city staff says traffic studies indicate the right turn is necessary to ensure public safety.

That set off two alarms for the hospital: First, hospital officials expressed fears that the heavy flow of traffic would impede its own use of the road, the only access to the facility and its emergency room. Further, building the turn lane called for using land owned by the hospital. The two businesses began bargaining. Health Central offered to sell the land to Wal-Mart if the retailer would design and build a new emergency entrance to Health Central from West Colonial Drive. But, unknown to the hospital, the city already had determined the outcome of the negotiations: A developer's agreement between the retailer and the city indicates that, if Wal-Mart and Health Central cannot come to a compromise about the sale of the 600-foot by 15-foot piece of land, then the city will seize the land, using the laws of eminent domain.

According to **Gleason**, the hospital only found out about the agreement when he and Health Central CEO Richard Irwin met with Ocoee City Manager Ellis Shapiro on July 28. There, he says, Shapiro told them that if the hospital failed to come to terms with Wal-Mart, the city would step in, effectively rendering the negotiations between the two businesses moot. After the meeting, he says, Wal-Mart low-balled the amount of money it was willing to pay the hospital for the land and entrance, to \$50,000. Hal Kantor, special counsel for Wal-Mart, confirms that Wal-Mart offered \$50,000 to Health Central for its land. But, he says, it had nothing to do with the city's willingness to simply seize the land. "I was authorized by Wal-Mart to offer only

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**James Patrick Gleason**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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\$50,000 at that time," he says. Later, the company offered another \$125,000 to the hospital to fund construction of a new entrance, but the hospital, which has pegged costs at \$600,000, refused.

Shapiro admits that he did meet with **Gleason** and Irwin in July, but, he says, it was only to make them aware of the developer's agreement "I believe in full disclosure," says the city official. "I wasn't trying to browbeat the hospital. I told them the city could exercise eminent domain, not that we would. We don't want to use it if we don't have to." In fact, there may be a legal question as to whether the city can use its legal clout in this case at all. Attorney Mike McMahon, an eminent domain specialist with Akerman Senterfitt, says the city is within its right to exercise eminent domain if the private property is taken for a public purpose and if the owners receive "just compensation." Transportation improvements and road projects are considered public purposes under the law.

But, he adds, the city's stance does raise some questions. "It could raise some issues in terms of the impact on the hospital and in terms of public uses," he says. "It also raises the question as to whether this is a real public purpose or a private economic purpose." For now, the negotiations between the two businesses will continue -- but now, the city will have a place at the bargaining table. Shapiro has indicated the city will act as an intermediary in the negotiations. But, he points out, that could be financially beneficial. Although he doesn't have formal approval from the City Commission, he has offered to add between \$100,000 and \$125,000 out of Wal-Mart's transportation impact fees to the amount of money Wal-Mart already has offered to Health Central. "Government has a responsibility to mediate or ameliorate these kinds of situations," he says. "We want a situation where everyone walks away happy."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**James Patrick Gleason**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Orlando Sentinel (FL)  
August 6, 1998

**Jim Gleason Stands Out**

Author: Unknown

Three articulate candidates are competing for the Republican nomination to speak for the District 41 seat in the Florida House of Representatives. The three – **Jim Gleason**, Michael Hammond and Randy Johnson – are seeking the seat being vacated by House Speaker Daniel Webster. With no Democrat running to represent the district – which covers the western edge of Orange County and portions of west Lake County and northern Osceola County – the winner of the Republican primary election will get the seat. Of the three candidates, **Jim Gleason**, an administrator at Health Central hospital in Ocoee, stands out.

With two terms on the Ocoee City Commission under his belt, **Mr. Gleason** is well-versed in issues facing local governments. He views as critical the need to strengthen public education and to find long- term solutions to the region’s transportation problems. While holding elective office **Mr. Gleason** demonstrated the courage to take a public stand even on unpopular issues. Such backbone would serve him well in Tallahassee.

Randy Johnson, a former U.S. Navy officer, serves as president and chief executive officer of the Central Florida Sports Authority. He has familiarity with issues concerning education, but he lacks **Mr. Gleason’s** valuable and more broad-based experience as a local- government policymaker. Mr. Johnson stresses his military experience, for which he should be commended. But that experience may not be applicable to what it takes to do a good job in Tallahassee.

Michael Hammond, a lawyer, is the weakest candidate in the race. Though Mr. Hammond is bright and energetic, he is not as familiar with the district as the other two candidates. He does not even live in the district, though he plans to move there this fall. Some of Mr. Hammond’s positions also raise questions. For example, he agrees that the state lawmakers’ failed plan this year to send \$50 to every household with a homestead exemption was not the best way to use state money. But if he had been in the Legislature when that issue arose, he said, he would have voted for it. The Sentinel endorses **Jim Gleason** in the Republican primary for House District 41.



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**James Patrick Gleason**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Orlando Sentinel (FL)  
February 16, 1997

**Glass, Gleason, Howell Efficiency Would Benefit Ocoee**

Author: Unknown

Voters in Ocoee have some especially important decisions to make in this year's municipal election that will carry the city toward the 21st century. The choices are clear in all three races. There is no District 4 contest, because no one challenged Nancy J. Parker. In the mayor's race, Commissioner **Jim Gleason** faces lawyer Ben Griffin and incumbent S. Scott Vandergrift. Mr. Griffin is entertaining but doesn't present a compelling candidacy. Similarly, Mr. Vandergrift's folksy, attention-grabbing style skirts the city's substantive issues. His main proposal - changing to a strong-mayor form of government - would not be in the city's best interests.

**Mr. Gleason**, a master's degree candidate, understands the efficiency that Ocoee's city manager contributes. As a small-business owner, **Mr. Gleason** also has a grasp of financial matters. He takes the time to study key issues and doesn't shy away from hard questions. He aims to attract more businesses to Ocoee and to break down walls between the original and more newly established parts of the city. That's a sensible, shared vision for voters to embrace. The Sentinel's nod goes to **Mr. Gleason** for mayor.

In the District 1 race, three candidates are vying for a seat being vacated by Rusty Johnson: Danny Howell, a contractor; Lance K. Laird, a minister; and John H. Linebarier, an insurance manager. Mr. Linebarier presents an admirable community-service record. But he doesn't have a clear plan for matters such as promoting Ocoee's economic development. He also wants to roll back the tax rate, which would appear to be inappropriate in an environment of rapid change. Mr. Laird concerns himself too much with power shifts on the commission. Vocal, but not predisposed to compromise, he could be counterproductive. Mr. Howell calls for fairness for all Ocoee residents. He wouldn't change the city's tax structure but would be flexible in order to meet future needs. He also promises to consider creative ways to attract new businesses and to expand activities for young people. He's the best candidate.

In the District 3 race, incumbent Commissioner Scott A. Glass faces Alfred Luck. Mr. Glass, an assistant city attorney in Orlando, brings an invaluable perspective. He was a standout when he first ran for the seat. And his tenure on the commission has confirmed his capability. He deserves another term. Mr. Glass provides an informed, moderate and sensible voice on the commission. Mr. Glass is particularly well-informed about land-planning and use, which is the main challenge facing Ocoee. His opponent, Mr. Luck, has had little to say for himself. In the Feb. 25 city of Ocoee election, the Sentinel endorses **Jim Gleason** for mayor, Danny Howell in District 1 and Scott A. Glass in District 3.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**James Patrick Gleason**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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[CB&A Note: Only the information relevant to **James P. Gleason** is listed below.]

Orlando Sentinel, The (FL)  
November 19, 1995

**IT'S FAMILIAR VS. NEW IN OCOEE RUNOFF**

Author/Byline: Jim Stratton

In the District 4 general election two weeks ago, incumbent **Jim Gleason** easily beat challenger Richard Roderick.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**James Patrick Gleason**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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Orlando Sentinel, The (FL)  
October 29, 1995

**GLEASON ON MARCH FOR NEW TERM**

Author/Byline: Don Fernandez

The two years **Jim Gleason** has spent on the City Commission have left him slightly jaded about city government. But with the challenges and changes the city is facing, he doesn't want to quit now. "With all the growth, I almost feel like it would be giving up what we gained," **Gleason** said of his re-election efforts. **Gleason**, 37, is facing off for the District 4 seat against political newcomer Richard Roderick.

Controlling growth, **Gleason** said, must be done by the book, with aesthetics playing a role. "I'd like us to adhere to the growth management regulations, which would limit the amount of (automobile) trips and development," **Gleason** said. "As projects come up, we should also control how these projects look." He also wants to form an architecture review committee to review blueprints before approval. But after torrential rains swept the city this year, flood control is his top concern. "Bleeding streets, defective retention ponds; these have to be the number one priority before we face another summer like this," **Gleason** said.

Since he was elected in 1993, **Gleason**, who sells medical equipment, has been an outspoken commissioner whose views aren't always popular. He and Commissioner Scott Glass encountered heavy criticism when they tried unsuccessfully to revamp the city's Over 65 program, which gives utility and property tax breaks to some senior citizens. **Gleason** has said he was stunned by other commissioners' personal remarks, which often sidetracked decision-making. "Petty bickering and personal attacks are detrimental to the city," he said.

**Gleason** takes pride in the commission's ordinance that required manufacturers of oriented standard board siding (OSB) to inspect siding installed in area homes. The siding had rotted out in more than 500 homes in the area and is no longer used in Ocoee. He also represented Ocoee on the Florida League of Cities Ethics and Personnel Subcommittee. He has been appointed a vice chairman for the committee next year.

**Gleason** says all his experience makes him more qualified for the seat than Roderick. "When (Roderick) gets up in front of people to talk about issues, he lacks knowledge," **Gleason** said. "With our growth you can't say 'Give me the time to learn.' "

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**James Patrick Gleason**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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The Orlando Sentinel (FL)  
April 2, 1995

**Ocoee May Retire Senior Discount the 21-Year-Old Services Break for Residents Over 65 is Costing the City Needed Funds, Some Officials Say**

Author: Don Fernandez

A lucrative discount for senior-citizen homeowners may soon become a thing of the past. City Commissioners **Jim Gleason** and Scott Glass want the commission to consider forming a committee to review the "Over 65" discount, which they contend may cost the city \$500,000 annually in the next decade. **Gleason** said he will raise the issue at Tuesday's commission meeting, which begins at 7:30 p.m. in City Hall. The current program - known as "Over 65" - began in 1974 as a way to reward the pioneers of Ocoee. For residents 65 and older, who have been homeowners for at least 10 years, the city gives up to 10,000 gallons of free water, free garbage service, a utility tax break and a property tax rebate.

Residents who are 62 years of age are eligible if they are on Social Security. "My concern is that the program this year cost us \$150,000," **Gleason** said. "Based on our population growth, that figure could be a half-million (dollars) in 10 years." Not everyone wants to end the program, however. Mayor Scott Vandergrift said he favors keeping the plan in place. "One of the few things we can do for our seniors is offset the rising cost of living," he said. "If you're trying to live on Social Security or a few dollars a month, it's tough."

**Gleason** said this program was begun when Ocoee was expected to grow to about 12,000 residents. The population is currently just shy of 18,000 and is growing at about 6 percent a year. "As the population increases, more and more people can qualify," **Gleason** said. "We have to look at if we can afford a program like this." **Gleason** also questions if the program is fair, or even legal. He said that the program unfairly penalized seniors who are renting. "There is a potential discrimination case here," **Gleason** said. "Not young against old, but senior against senior. To say that it's a program that's taking care of all senior citizens is a hypocrisy."

**Gleason** feels phasing out the program instead of eliminating it outright would be the best solution. He would like to see a committee of young and old residents review the program and make recommendations to the commission. Ideally, he said, he would like to establish a cutoff date that would allow current program members to keep their benefits, but would limit the number of new program participants. With Ocoee's rapid growth, **Gleason** feels the money now used to pay for the program could be put toward projects that benefit everyone in the city, such as road and parks and recreation improvements. "I think the thought behind it was very admirable," **Gleason** said. "But what's the fairest way to spend money for the benefit of everyone in the community?"

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**James Patrick Gleason**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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THE ORLANDO SENTINEL  
October 10, 1993

**GLEASON BACKS A FRESH VIEW**

Author: Diane Sears

**Jim Gleason** says he has just the right perspective to represent residents on "the new side of town." In a district marked by construction sites, modern subdivisions, a new hospital and the promise of a mall, the city needs someone to look out for the interests of people who might be new to Ocoee, **Gleason** said. "It's time that we bring those people into Ocoee government," he said. "Everything's not based on five men who have lived here forever."

**Gleason** has been an outspoken critic of the current City Commission's political battles. And he says the city must move forward - aggressively - to make sure its growth is responsible. Today every municipality needs to market itself to compete for development that brings jobs. "I'm very much in favor of an economic development coordinator," he said. "We need a professional doing it."

One of Ocoee's biggest challenges, **Gleason** said, will be in making sure the city has enough amenities - such as recreation areas, schools and maybe a library - to satisfy residents as well as attract more businesses.

A broad-based core of light industry would help cushion the city against the kind of financial downturn that forced Ocoee to lay off 10 workers two years ago. "If you're a little more diverse," he said, "you're prepared to handle the ups and downs of the economic cycle."

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**  
**James Patrick Gleason**  
*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

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THE ORLANDO SENTINEL  
March 21, 1993

**ALL HE IS ASKING, IS GIVE PEACE A CHANCE**  
Dateline: OCOEE

Saying he had watched ongoing conflicts among city leaders "with amazement and growing anger," a two-year city resident made a public plea for peace last week. In a 10-minute speech before the City Commission, **Jim Gleason** urged Mayor S. Scott Vandergrift to "be very selective in the battles you choose."

The mayor's hands-on style has put him at odds with City Manager Ellis Shapiro - and an increasing number of other city officials - since Vandergrift's election in November.

"Mr. Mayor, as any successful CEO or business owner will attest, you cannot and should not be involved in every issue . . . that is why you have department heads and staff," **Gleason** said. The mayor accepted **Gleason's** speech without comment.

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Research Compiled by:        Shannon Farr and Amanda Dillabough  
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