

MEMORANDUM

COLIN BAENZIGER & ASSOCIATES

TO: Mayor and City Council
Cooper City, FL

FROM: Lynelle Klein and Colin Baenziger

DATE: March 10, 2023

RE: City Manager Search Update: Candidates Under Review

Below are the eight candidates that we are reviewing (from the approximately 31 who applied) to be considered as the next City Manager for Cooper City. Brief summaries of their credentials follow, as well as a summary of the next steps.

The Candidates

- **Ray Bossert:** Mr. Bossert has been the Village Administrator for Port Edwards, WI (population 1,825) since 2020. Previously, he served in the United States Army Corps of Engineers for thirty-six years and achieved the rank of Colonel. A highly adaptive and motivational management style has been the hallmark of his career. His greatest strength is collaboration and consensus building. An example, and one of his greatest achievements, was a recent project involving a water quality assessment of the regional water sources. The effort involved the challenge of laying the groundwork to lease from the thirty-five separate municipalities and municipal, residential, and commercial water sources while also seeking external grants to help with scientific data collection and the creation of a water quality dashboard that could be exportable to other cities, counties, and states. The significant number of stakeholder groups, state organizations, the explanation of the product, and not assigning blame for bad water quality, all presented unique challenges, and they were successful. Mr. Bossert has a bachelor's degree in political science from the University of North Georgia, a master's degree in strategic studies from the U.S. Army War College, and a master's degree in public administration from Shippensburg University.
- **Howard Brown:** Mr. Brown was most recently the Village Manager for Indiantown, FL (population 6,646) for four years. Previously, he was the City Manager for Bell, CA (population 35,864) for two years, the City Manager for Muskogee, OK (population 38,352) for two years, and he worked for the City of Opa-locka, FL (population 16,463) for seven years, with four as the Assistant City Manager. Mr. Brown has a collaborative and team approach management style. Critical policy decisions can only be made with a high-performing staff and a very supportive Council. His greatest achievement has been to create a newly incorporated city. That involved hiring staff, acquiring private water and sewer company, and developing a strategic plan approved by the council and implemented within three years of incorporation. Mr. Brown has a bachelor's degree in criminology from Florida State University and a master's degree in public administration from the University of West Florida. He is an ICMA Credentialed Manager and a Certified Urban

Planner.

- **Ryan Eggleston:** Mr. Eggleston has been the Chief ARP Officer for the North Carolina League of Municipalities since 2022. Previously, he was the City Manager for Morehead City, NC (population 9,826) for four years, the Township Manager for South Fayette, PA (population 18,358) for six years, the City Manager for Oil City, PA (population 10,557) for three years, and the Borough Manager for Greenville, PA (population 5,919) for three years. Mr. Eggleston is a collaborative manager who enjoys building consensus. As he works with his employees to accomplish tasks, he encourages a sense of engagement. He firmly believes in empowering his team and in creating a culture that celebrates and rewards effort and honesty. Mr. Eggleston is proud of using his financial expertise and leadership role in significantly increasing non-residential property values from 2012 to 2016 in South Fayette. During the four-year period, the value of commercial property on the tax roll increased by more than during the entire decade prior to 2012. In fact, the city added three new commercial taxpayers to its top ten taxpayers. This result was achieved through promotion of what the city had to offer, collaboration, and creation of a developer-friendly environment while still holding true to the values and vision of what South Fayette’s leadership wanted it to become. Two examples of specific projects were the construction of a new four-story, 60,000 square foot Children’s Hospital (affiliated with the University of Pittsburgh), and the redevelopment of a former vacant industrial site into a significant commercial project including 4 restaurants, a grocery store, a bank, and several other retail spaces. Mr. Eggleston has a bachelor’s degree in history and political science from Syracuse University and a master’s degree in public administration from Bannon University. He is an ICMA Credentialed Manager.
- **Rob Hernandez:** Mr. Hernandez was most recently the City Manager for Cape Coral, FL (population 204,510). Previously, he was a Deputy City Manager for Fort Lauderdale, FL (population 182,595) for one year, the City Manager of Savannah, GA (population 145,862) for three years, a Deputy County Administrator for Broward County, FL (population 1.9 million) for three years, a Deputy City Manager for Coral Springs, FL (population 127,296) for two years, and a Deputy County Administrator for Fulton County, GA (population 925,000) for three years. Mr. Hernandez considers his leadership style to be situational and flexible. When time, resources, and skills permit, he prefers to be participatory and collaborative. In other circumstances, he coaches and mentors. In still others, he is decisive. The achievement that he is most proud of was the revitalization of the Fulton Industrial District (FID) in metro-Atlanta. At one time, with over 52 million square feet of industrial space, the area had been one the largest industrial, warehousing, and logistics centers in the eastern United States. In the fall of 2008, when he first toured FID as Fulton County’s new deputy county manager, he found this once great hub of economic activity, to be rife with prostitution, open drug sales, shuttered buildings, neglect, and decay. He and his team attacked the issues using every possible angle – from health and human services to public safety. Over the course of a few years, they accomplished a remarkable turnaround that included: the adoption of the Fulton Industrial Redevelopment Framework; the designation of the area by the State as an “Opportunity Zone,” which provided needed economic incentives; the establishment of the Fulton Industrial

Community Improvement District (a self-taxing entity that could make area-wide improvements); and the establishment of the South Fulton Service Center which brought the offices of two county commissioners, police, fire, and all other unincorporated area services to FID. The result is the District is now healthy and vibrant. It is a place in which businesses invest and thrive, rather than flee. Further, the area has incorporated as its own municipality, the City of South Fulton. Mr. Hernandez has his bachelor's degree in public administration from Florida International University and his master's degree in public administration from Nova Southeastern University. He is an ICMA Credentialed Manager.

- **Andy Hyatt:** Mr. Hyatt was most recently the Town Manager for Surfside, FL (population 5,531) for two years. Previously, he was the State Director for K9s for Warriors, the City Manager for Neptune Beach, FL (population 7,297) for four years, the City Manager for East Ridge, TN (population 21,146) for two years, the City Manager for Fairview, TN (population 8,182) for three years, and the City Manager for Etowah, TN (population 3,783) for two years. Mr. Hyatt's management style is best described as participative. He empowers his staff and encourages them to participate in the process. One of his most successful achievements was the implementation of the Tennessee Border Region Tourism Development Act in 2013/14. Under it, the city was approached by Bass Pro and eventually the Council agreed to invest \$4 million for infrastructure improvements to facilitate the new store. The result far exceeded expectations, as others - restaurants, hotels, and retail space – followed. Mr. Hyatt has a bachelor's degree in political science and a master's degree in public administration from the University of Tennessee. He has been an ICMA credentialed manager since 2019.
- **A.J. Krieger:** Mr. Krieger has been the Town Manager for Firestone, CO (population 17,299) since 2018. Previously, he was the Town Manager for Erie, CO (population 27,189) for seven years, the City Manager for Sheridan, CO (population 5,698) for three years, the City Manager for Northglenn, CO (population 33,518) for two years, and the City Manager for Ferguson, MO (population 21,147) for three years. Mr. Krieger's views himself as a team builder who encourages and rewards excellence. He emphasizes continuous improvement and creates a service-oriented and value-added culture. His greatest achievements are his successes in helping / developing people, and the resultant wonderful and enduring relationships. His favorite example occurred in Sheridan when he negotiated with the City and County of Denver to provide fire protection services for Sheridan. When he arrived, the city's Fire Department was underfunded, ill-equipped, and a financial drain. Worse, it was an unacceptable situation for their firefighters who were poorly trained, underpaid, worked with substandard equipment, and had little opportunity for growth and advancement. His initial proposal to negotiate with Denver to provide the service was strongly opposed by almost everyone – even though they knew they needed to be better. He asked the Council and firefighters to trust him, and (somewhat begrudgingly) they did. He was able to negotiate an agreement with Denver that reduced Sheridan's costs while creating opportunities for its firefighters. As part of the agreement, all Sheridan's firefighters were hired by Denver and they benefitted immediately from better salaries, safer working conditions, new training, better career opportunities, and more job security. Almost every Christmas he receives an email from a former Sheridan firefighter telling

him how well “the guys” are doing and expressing thanks for his work on their behalf. It has been one of the more personally rewarding projects of his career. Mr. Krieger has a bachelor’s degree in speech communication from Southern Illinois University and a master’s degree in public administration from Saint Louis University.

- **Alex Rey:** Mr. Rey has been the City Manager for St. Pete Beach, FL (population 8,822) since 2019. Previously, he was the Town Manager for Miami Lakes, FL (population 30,873) from 2002 to 2008 and again from 2010 to 2019. Between stints, he served as the Building Director for Miami Beach, FL (population 88,108) from 2008 to 2010. Mr. Rey’s management style is to run the organization strategically based on the vision and goals established by the Commission. With proper coaching, employees can accomplish a great deal while growing within the organization. One of his most notable achievements was building the Town of Miami Lakes’ organization from the ground up. As its first town Manager, and second employee, he established / staffed all departments and built a permanent government center for Miami Lakes. A more recent notable achievement occurred in St. Pete Beach where they completed all the infrastructure necessary to release the town from an FDEP consent order due to sanitary sewer overflows. Mr. Rey has a bachelor’s degree in industrial engineering and management and has completed all the work, save the thesis, towards a master’s degree in industrial engineering from Oklahoma State University.
- **Chris Russo:** Mr. Russo was most recently the City Manager for Sunny Isles Beach, FL (population 22,064) for a total of fourteen years. Previously he was the Village Administrator for Rye Brook, NY (population 8,616) for thirteen years. The management style he has used for most of his career is management by objective. It is a straightforward process of setting goals and objectives, and then working together to achieve them. His most significant accomplishment was being the first Administrator and Manager for two brand new municipal incorporations - Rye Brook, NY, in 1982 and Sunny Isles Beach FL, in 1996. In Sunny Isles, working with the City Commission, they took a sleepy little seaside community on US A1A with many older, derelict mom and pop motels and turned it into a fully functional and highly desirable city that provides excellent services for its residents. Creating the foundation, hiring the staff, improving aging infrastructure, planning, and leading the construction of government centers, community centers and parks in both communities has been the highlight of his career. Mr. Russo has a bachelor’s and master’s degree in public administration from Pace University.

Next Steps

We plan to reach out to you on Monday to discuss the candidates. If you would like to discuss them sooner, please call me tomorrow on my cell phone at (561) 707-3537. The finalists will come to Cooper City for a tour, public reception, and formal interviews on March 30 and 31st with a decision then or shortly thereafter. In the meantime, if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

