



# City of Eustis

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TO: Eustis City Commission

FROM: Tom Carrino, City Manager

DATE: March 5, 2026

RE: Resolution Number 2026-27: Interim City Manager's Employment Agreement

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## **Introduction:**

The purpose of this report is to present information regarding a proposed Interim City Manager employment agreement between Rick Gierok and the City of Eustis.

## **Background:**

On February 19, 2026, the City Commission discussed offering the position of Interim City Manager to Mr. Rick Gierok and directed City Attorney Sasha Garcia, city staff, and the Human Resources Director Karen Crouch to negotiate an employment agreement.

The attached employment agreement presented to the City Commission for approval is consistent with Florida Statutes and the City Charter provisions. Compensation includes a temporary Interim Executive Leadership Stipend as well as Mr. Gierok's current salary to result in total annualized compensation equal to \$220,437.21 and the use of a city vehicle and a city-provided cell phone. Other provisions include the following:

1. **Transitional Period:** From March 5, 2026, through April 3, 2026, Employee shall serve in a transitional executive capacity to facilitate continuity of operations and coordination of municipal affairs. During this transitional period, nothing herein shall be construed to remove, replace, or otherwise impair the authority or contractual rights of the outgoing City Manager.
2. **Full Charter Authority Effective April 4, 2026:** Effective April 4, 2026, upon the resignation of the outgoing City Manager, Employee shall possess and exercise all powers, duties, and authority of the City Manager. Interim status shall not limit or restrict such authority.
3. **Return to Director Position and Limited Post-Return Protection:** Employee is guaranteed the right to return to the position of Director of Engineering & Capital Improvements upon conclusion of the interim assignment, or to a substantially similar executive-level position if the Director position has been lawfully reorganized.

Upon such return:

A. For a period equal to the lesser of:

- Twelve (12) months following the effective date of return; or
- The number of months remaining until the Employee first becomes eligible for normal retirement based upon years of service under the City's applicable retirement plan, the Employee shall not be terminated from City employment except for Cause.

B. During this limited protection period, termination shall require the affirmative vote of a majority of the City Commission at a duly noticed public meeting.

C. This provision shall not prohibit:

- Lawful elimination of the position pursuant to bona fide budgetary action;
- Departmental reorganization applied on a nondiscriminatory basis;
- Reduction-in-force affecting similarly situated employees.

D. This provision does not create tenure or a permanent property interest in employment.

For purposes of this Agreement, "Cause" shall mean:

- Conviction of a felony or crime involving moral turpitude;
- Fraud, misappropriation, or theft of City funds;
- Material violation of Chapter 112, Florida Statutes;
- Willful misconduct or gross negligence;
- Repeated and documented insubordination;
- Material breach of this Agreement.

If termination occurs without Cause during the protected period, Employee's sole remedy shall be payment of base salary for the remainder of the protected period, not to exceed the lesser-of calculation above.

Upon return, the Interim Executive Leadership Stipend shall automatically cease.

**Recommended Action:**

Based on recent City Commission input, staff recommends approval of the agreement.

**Policy Implications:**

N/A

**Alternatives:**

1. Approve Resolution Number 2026-27
2. Deny Resolution Number 2026-27 and provide further direction to staff

**Budget/Staff Impact:**

Funds are available in the current budget to cover the salary of the Interim City Manager.

**Business Impact Estimate:**

N/A

**Prepared By:**

Karen Crouch, Human Resources Director

**Reviewed By:**

Miranda Burrowes, Deputy City Manager