

November 3, 2025

City of Westlake

I am replying in reference to the advertisement for the City Manager/Chief Administrative Officer position. I have been a proud Palm Beach County resident and have resided just South of Westlake for many years now- back when Seminole Pratt was two lanes and there were no streetlights. We are very happy to see the development.

While the incorporation was successful due to the Seminole Improvement District (SID) and Mintos support, I believe Westlake needs to establish its own identity going forward and applaud your efforts to start that process and hope that I can help with those efforts. From the local newspaper, I read that Lynne Ladner was selected as the new SID Manager. That is terrific news as Lynne has been an officer in the Palm Beach County Chapter of the FCCMA as well as the Town Manager at Ocean Ridge and several other locations so she brings a lot of City experience and insight to the process.

Local government experience in Florida includes Palm Beach County, several Cities, and special districts so I am very familiar with local government operations both small and large. Virtually every state has different laws, development regulations, processes, conditions, etc. so Florida experience would be extremely helpful to hit the ground running. **I am a current member of FCCMA, member of the Palm Beach County FCCMA Chapter, and eligible for ICMA membership and the credentialing program. I am also a Retired Air Force Officer with both a Bachelor's and a Master's degree in business administration.**

As you are looking for your first City Manager, I would like to point out that I am the first appointed City Manager for the City of Moore Haven. The City's Charter states both the City Clerk and City Manager are charter officers and are appointed and report directly to the City Council. The City only operated with a City Clerk for over 35 years, however when the City Clerk left on short notice the City was left in quite a jam. From a look at the records, everything had been on autopilot for some time. They hired a new City Clerk that did not have any government experience, and I was recruited to come over to get things going. We have made tremendous progress basically building everything, updating systems, processes, Code, Zoning, Economic Development, legislative and grant requests, Utility upgrades, etc.

Westlake's incorporation was certainly a unique situation and I would like to point out a unique experience I had with standing up a new organization. Palm Tran Inc. was formed as a 501c to become the transit department for the County to replace a previous contract operation (COTRAN). Operating as the transit department, Palm Tran Inc. also reports directly to the Board of County Commissioners much like the Solid Waste Authority. Palm Tran was formed to provide a grid connecting system to replace the point-to-point system under the previous contract operation. To handle this expansion required increasing staff from 200 to over 500 almost overnight, new union

representation, constructing a new Main Facility and a South County location, new buses, an explosion in new paratransit operations and services that occurred almost overnight. Was able to get multiple grants from the FTA for the expansion efforts.

The “government light” concept is crucial to many different types of operations and functions. You are paying for just what you need, not for additional overhead you do not need. From what I have seen from Westlake’s experience, the experienced and professional contract workers from SID helped the incorporation go smoothly and saved funding in the long run. Currently we have a contract Planner, Building Official, Engineer, Magistrate (Code), and contract with Glades County for police and fire services. In addition, this includes several organizations that employed professional contract personnel. I have worked with the Palm Beach County Sheriff’s contract at several locations and was instrumental in Greenacres moving to a contract with the Sheriff as the most cost effective and efficient services. At home we receive Fire and EMS services under the County’s Fire MSTU just as Westlake does.

I have been responsible for developing financial statements that were submitted and maintained yearly for the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting (COA) Program and responsible for developing and maintaining budgets awarded under the GFOA’s Distinguished Budget Presentation Award Program. **I would also recommend that for Westlake we look at the GFOA’s Popular Annual Financial Report (PAFR) as it is a concise, user-friendly summary of the City’s financial activities and health over the last year with year-to-date analysis. It can provide residents with a transparent view of where their tax dollars are going and the resulting impact.**

At Moore Haven, through both legislative delegation requests and grant portals, we have been successful in getting \$35 million in funding from the State for septic to sewer conversions, \$15 million for Lift Station upgrades, and over \$15 million for expansion and upgrades to the Water and Wastewater Treatment Plants. For needed economic development, City enacted new Zoning and Future Land Use Changes creating a new Downtown Marina District to help promote and develop the City’s Marina. From that Zoning change, the City was able to get an Economic Development Grant of \$5 million to do street reconstruction, drainage upgrades along with pavers and City’s logo at the intersections that give a distinctive streetscape theme. Due to the zoning changes, a developer recently purchased a 9-acre parcel in the Marina with a focus on a creating a “Recreation Destination” around the many opportunities that are available.

While with the City of Belle Glade we received upwards of \$30 million through the legislative and grant process for road resurfacing, drainage, and related projects from FDOT, FDEP, Florida Inland Navigational District and others. Since the City did not have an in-house Engineer, I served as the Project Manager for these projects. **With State’s approval of the new lease for the Belle Glade State Municipal Airport it has received or projected to receive more than \$40 million for projects from the Florida Department of Airports.** During this time, I was part of the team that put the

City in the best financial position ever with 100% of the annual budget in the Fund Balance reserves (rainy day fund).

I arrived at the City of Palm Bay during the housing boom with the City issuing over 500 single family permits a month as the City was doing major annexation to the South. **Building permits were recorded in the General Fund and since the building permit funds are restricted to use, we created an Enterprise Fund so allowable costs could be allocated, helping offset the impact on the General Fund. Also, fleet purchases were being budgeted through the annual budget process. We created a Fleet Services (Internal Service) Fund, went through all departments to determine where all vehicles were in their useful life and determined an annual lease charge. To fund the startup for immediate needs, restricted cash balances in some Utilities accounts were reclassified to unrestricted status with a loan to Fleet Services. Debt service schedules were developed to pay the loan with a market interest rate to the Utilities so there was not a negative impact to the Utilities.**

Another unique experience was with the Lehigh Acres Fire Control and Rescue District. Through a highly contested but successful voter referendum, the District completed the full transfer from an ad valorem tax base to a 100 percent Non-Ad Valorem Assessment base. This was the first for an Independent Fire District in Florida. The Special Fire Assessment allocates charges based on use- Residential, Commercial, Industrial, vacant land etc. not millage based on property values that can vary tremendously. Was awarded two SAFER (Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response) grants of \$25M from FEMA during this time. **Palm Beach County Fire has floated the idea through several organizations like the PBCLOC to look at moving from the current MSTU to Fire Special Assessments although it will take political support for it to happen.**

To expand on my Air Force experience, my last two assignments were to two Major Air Commands- Military Airlift Command and later Tactical Air Command. These would be similar to a Corporate Headquarters. The biggest responsibility was the transfer to contract operations wherever possible and keeping the public aware of funding needs, current programs, in addition to upcoming programs and projects. Required contact with other Commands, Air Staff, and as needed. Completed several overseas tours including Southeast Asia (3), the Azores, and served in Texas, California, South Dakota, Florida and South Carolina.

In closing, have all required FEMA certifications and personal experience with Hurricanes Hugo, Frances, Jean, Wilma, Irma, Ian, Milton, and many others along with numerous tropical storms. There are many Florida initiatives in process now: the Basin Management Action Plan (BMAP), Resiliency Planning, Mitigation, etc. Florida experience is extremely helpful with these programs and associated funding.

Sincerely,

Larry Tibbs

