



— **Deadline Extended** —

Looking for a Few More Great Candidates

CITY MANAGER

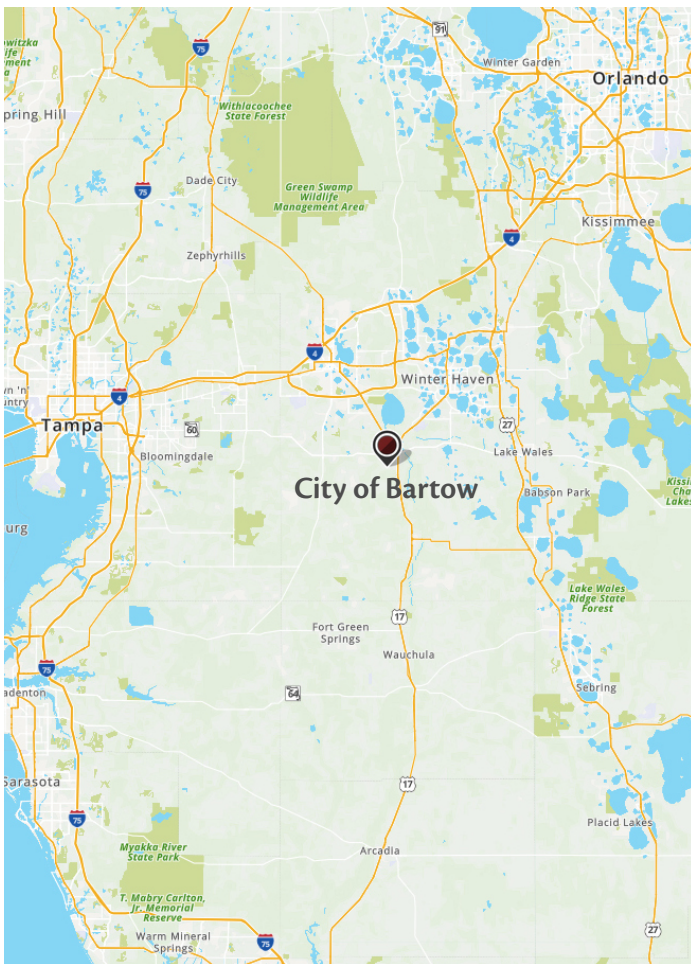
Apply by August 19, 2022

Locally known as the “City of Oaks and Azaleas,” Bartow is the picturesque capital city of Polk County, Florida. The City is a great place to live and thrive, with a Norman Rockwell-esque atmosphere where people care about their neighbors and their community. Indeed, Bartow has a small city feel characterized by its warm and welcoming Southern charm, its compassion, and its desire for inclusivity. It is home to many churches, and is a place where family values still matter. Residents honor their traditions enjoy the fact that Bartow is a bit off the beaten path while being about an hour from the big-city amenities of Orlando and Tampa. That said, it is primed for the right kind of growth.

Beyond its towering oaks, Bartow is has a lengthy history and is the second oldest city in the County. Notable and historic buildings dot the community, and the Polk County Historical Museum presents local and regional history to visitors. Another treasure is Oak Hill Cemetery. Having been put on the National Registry of Historic



Figure I: Location of Bartow



Places in 2003, it marks the final resting place of both veterans from many of the nation's earliest wars and families integral to Bartow's history.

Besides its history, the City offers much to its residents and visitors. It hosts a number of annual events that draw regional attention. Favorites include the King/Gause Heritage Celebration, the Bloomin' Arts Festival, the Adult Concert Band, Syfy Bartow, Juneteenth Parade, July 4th Band Concert, the Barlow, the Chalk Walk, the Downtown Bartow Craft Fair, the Honey Bee Festival, the L.B. Brown Festival, Christmas tree bonfire, the Summer Music Series, and two regional off road scenic cycling events—the Bloomin' Bike Ride and the Tour de Tow. Eighteen parks are spread across Bartow. Mary Holland Park is a well liked destination due to its 119 acres of a playground, a camping area, and three lakes. Another popular choice is Bartow Park, which covers 95 acres and is primarily used for youth and adult athletic activities.

Outside the City, Polk County has a national reputation for largemouth bass fishing and contains over 550 lakes, 88 of which are open to the public via boat ramp access. Just north of Bartow is a nature lover's highlight: Circle B Bar Reserve. This area consists of protected lands in Polk County that offer an incredible natural and educational experience. Covering 1,267 acres, the marsh area is home to alligators, bobcats, snakes, squirrels, river otters, wild hogs, and numerous bird species. The Reserve is also known for its Discovery Center, which features interactive displays about the plants, animals, and ecosystems. Beach lovers can find ample opportunities by traveling east or west on the "coast-to-coast" corridor via Highway 60, to reach the Atlantic or Gulf Coast beaches.

Bartow is an affordable place to settle. As reported at Realtor.com, the area has recently been a seller's market and has experienced an increased 29% year-over-year trend as of April 2022. The area's median listing home price is \$296,200 with a median sold home price of \$306,600. Depending on the neighborhood, a nice three-bedroom, two-bathroom house with approximately 2,000 square feet costs around \$360,000. The City's crime rate is lower in comparison to the rest of the state.

The Polk County School Board operates the local public schools. Both Bartow High School and Union Academy offer highly sought after challenging International Baccalaureate Programs. Summerlin Academy (located on the Bartow High School campus) offers a military-oriented education and a JROTC program. Elsewhere in the City are several elementary and middle schools. It is expected that the new Clear Springs Development will lead to two more elementary schools and another middle school within the next 20 years.

Universities dot the area. Nearby Lakeland (approximately 12 miles north) hosts Florida Polytechnic University, Florida Southern College, Polk State College, and Southeastern University. Warner University is 20 miles east in Lake Wales, the University of South Florida is less than 45 miles west in Tampa, the University of Central Florida is 80 miles to the northeast, and about 140 miles north lies the University of Florida in Gainesville.

Sports enthusiasts can support a wide selection of nearby teams. Professional league teams representing the Tampa Bay area include the Buccaneers (NFL), the Rays, (MLB), and the Tampa Bay Lightning (NHL). Other popular Florida teams include the Florida Panthers (NHL), Florida Marlins (MLB), the Miami Heat and Orlando Magic (NBA), and the Jacksonville Jaguars. Sports fans can also cheer for numerous minor league and collegiate teams in the area. Or if you are more inclined to participate, the City offers a wide array of facilities from pickle ball courts, to sports fields, and a golf course. Indeed, Bartow is a nexus for sightseeing and traveling. Several popular tourist attractions less than 50 miles away include Disney World, Universal Studios, Busch Gardens, Bok Tower Gardens, Mulberry Phosphate Museum, Polk Museum of Art, and Legoland's Florida campus.

For those who enjoy traveling commercially, Tampa International Airport is an hour to the west while Orlando International lies an hour to the northeast. Low cost carriers, such as Allegiant, fly from Orlando Sanford International, which is a little less than two hours northeast. Additionally, Bartow Executive Airport is a great place to fly and land private planes. It has wonderful facilities, including a nice restaurant. Cruises can be taken from the Port of Tampa, an hour west, or from Port Canaveral (the third busiest cruise port in the world) two hours to the east. Beach lovers can find ample opportunities by going either east or west to visit Atlantic or Gulf Coast beaches, respectively.

Blending history with progress, Bartow is well positioned for the next decade and beyond. The City is a wonderful place to raise a family and to thrive. Simply put, it is a great place to be a City Manager. So please, dust off your resume and apply!

HISTORY

Bartow's known history began with a colony of Black Seminoles in the early 1800's. After a series of wars and the Armed Occupation Act in 1842, the area grew as settlers became more established. The location was officially known as Fort Blount in 1851. Polk County was formed in 1861, and the community was

Table I: City of Bartow Demographics

Distribution by Race		Distribution by Age	
White	59.5%	0 to 15	19.6%
Black	22.5%	15 to 25	12.0%
Asian	1.5%	25 to 45	27.6%
Native American	0.4%	45 to 65	25.8%
Two or More Races	16.1%	65 to 85	13.4%
Total	100%	85 +	1.6%
Hispanic Ethnicity	17.7%	Estimated Population: 19,309	

Educational Achievement (Over Age 25)	
High School or Higher	89.7%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	22.0%

Other Statistics	
Median Age—Bartow	35.3
Median Age—U.S.	38.5
Median Household Income—Bartow	\$48,227
Median Household Income—U.S.	\$61,937
Poverty Rate	17.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

soon renamed Reidsville after voters chose this location to be the county seat. In 1867, the City was renamed Bartow, commemorating General Francis S. Bartow for being the first Confederate officer to die during the Civil War.

Bartow initially grew slowly before rapidly developing between 1880 and 1900 when the City quintupled its population from less than 400 to almost 2,000. The reason had much to do with the arrival of the Florida South Railroad and Bartow's South Florida Railroad. Citrus was the area's primary crop.

Phosphate drove the City's economy in the early 1900's, and Bartow became the center of the largest phosphate industry in the nation. This development both enabled and limited the City's

expansion. Though the industry was quite prosperous, residential growth was initially obstructed due to much of the land around the City being owned by the phosphate mining companies. Once the phosphate industry moved further south, the land became available for development.

DEMOGRAPHICS

The City of Bartow’s demographics can be seen in Table I on top of page 3.

CLIMATE

Bartow is in a humid subtropical zone. Winters are comfortable, with average low and high temperatures of 51° F and 73° F, respectively. Summers can be quite hot and markedly humid, with average temperatures ranging from 72° F and 93° F. Average annual rainfall is 52 inches, most of which falls during the months from June through September. Snowfall is exceptionally rare.

Hurricanes strike Polk County but are infrequent as the area is within a low risk zone. For example, Hurricane Donna struck the area in 1960, and the next hurricane incident to hit Bartow occurred in 2004. More importantly, being inland, Bartow does not suffer anywhere near the impact that storms have on the coast.

GEOGRAPHY

The City of Bartow is the capital city of Polk County and is located in central Florida, about 39 miles east of Tampa and 51 miles southwest of Orlando. Bartow encompasses 52.78 square miles, of which 46.42 square miles consist of land and the rest being water. The average elevation is 125 feet above sea level. Part of the City’s northern section hugs the south and lower western borders of Lake Hancock. Several major roadways intersect Bartow. For example, Florida East State Road-60 cuts

horizontally through the City. U.S. Routes 17 and 98 run north/south through it.

COMMERCE

Having roots in agriculture and the phosphate industry, the Bartow has since grown economically to include government, tourism, and retail. As of the 2020 U.S. Census, the top three industries for the civilian employment were (1) educational services and health care; (2) retail trade; and (3) arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services. The top three categories of employment are: (1) management, business, science, and art occupations; (2) service occupations; and (3) sales and office occupations.

The principal employers of Polk County are listed in Table II (below).

THE GOVERNMENT

Bartow runs on a Commission-Manager form of government. The city commission is composed of five members. Two Commissioners can reside anywhere in the City and are elected at large. The other three Commissioners must live in specific

Table II: Principal Employers, Polk County, FL

Employer	Industry	Percentage of Total County Employment
Polk County School Board	Education	4.29%
Publix Super Markets	Retail	4.05%
Lakeland Regional Medical Center	Healthcare	1.81%
Polk County Government	Government	1.5%
Walmart	Retail	1.38%
Geico	Auto Insurance	1.20%
City of Lakeland	Government	0.91%
Winter Haven Hospital	Medical	0.71%
Watson Clinic	Healthcare	0.6%
Advent Health	Healthcare	0.5%

Source: Polk County, FL 2020 CAFR

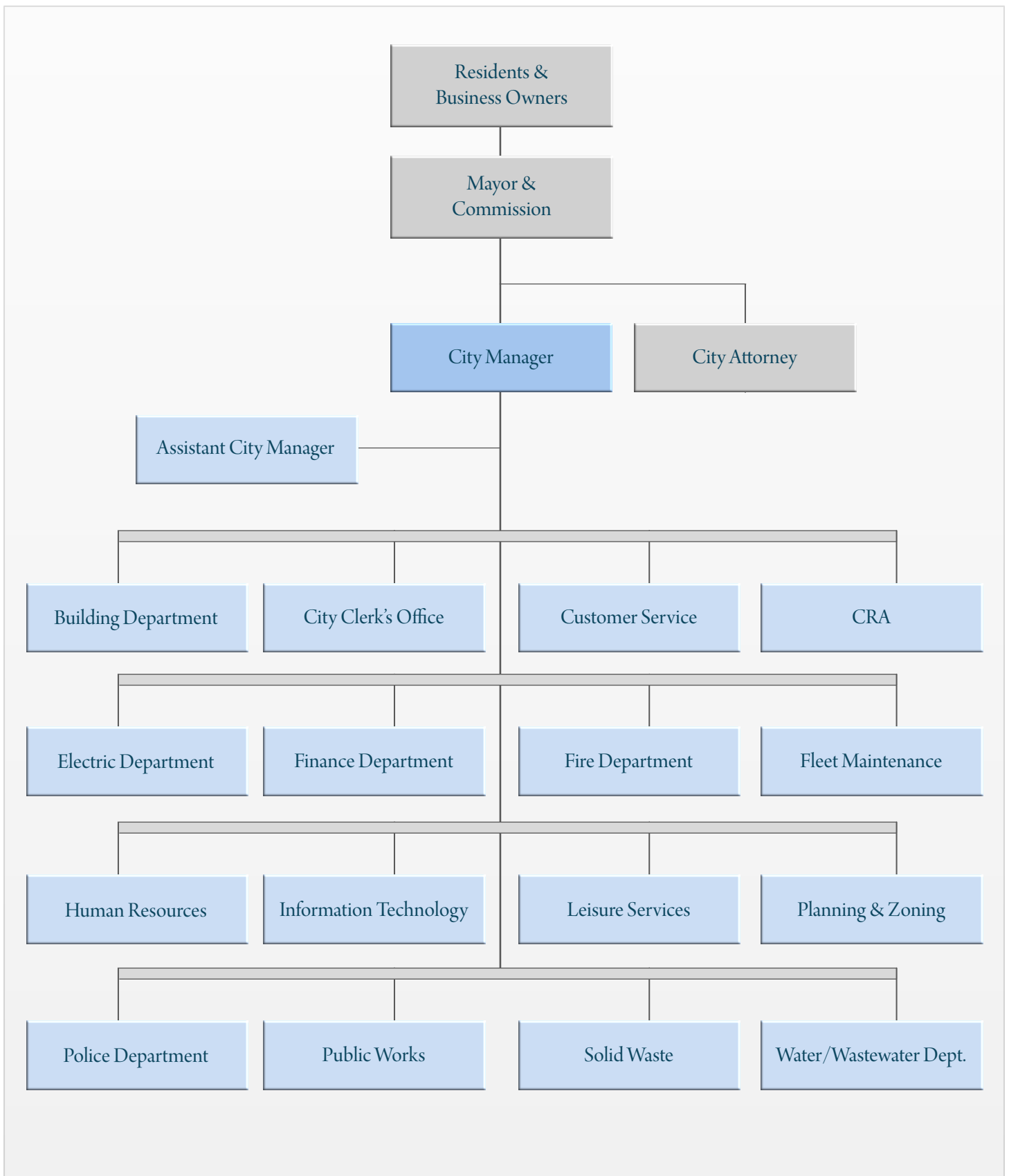


geographic districts (namely, the North, East, and Central Districts). Commissioners serve three-year terms and are elected in April of each year to begin their term in May. Terms are staggered so at least one of the five seats is up for election annually. In the most recent election, one seat was considered. Next April and the April thereafter, two seats will be considered.

The Commissioners select Mayor and Vice Mayor from amongst themselves at the first meeting in May, and these positions generally rotate. While Commission Members are not subject to term limits, the current Commission is relatively new overall. Aside from the Vice Mayor who has served for 26 consecutive years, the Mayor has served two years, another has served 1 year, another was appointed at the beginning of the year due to a resignation, and the newly elected commissioner also served two three year terms previously. All the Commissioners have the best interests of the City at heart. Although they may differ on approach and emphasis, they do work well together, respect one another, and have a great deal of respect for city staff.

The Commission appoints the City Manager to oversee the City's day-to-day operations and the City Attorney to oversee its legal affairs. The City Clerk is appointed by the City Manager. Bartow is a full-service municipality. As such, it provides all the traditional services such as Police, Fire, Public Works, Water, Sewer, and Planning. It also provides several less-common services, such as Electric, Library, the Golf Course, and limited fiber. See Figure 2 for more information. Finally, the City has a general aviation airport, and although the Commission Members serve as its Board, it is a completely independent authority.

Figure 2: City of Bartow Organization Chart



The Adopted General Fund Expenditure Budget for FY 2021-2022 is \$24,598,153 while the Total Budget is \$142,622,125. Of the General Fund Budget, \$2,892.612 will be funded from reserves. This expense was anticipated and done to support one-time capital projects.

Overall, the City has 282 employees. Most are represented by one of three unions: the International Brotherhood of Teamsters Local Union No. 79 which represents the firefighters, The International Union of Painters and Allied Trades District Council 78 which represents the general employees and the West Central Florida Police Benevolent Association which represents sworn police officers.

THE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Bartow has a very strong staff and is sound financially. That is a very different situation from when the retiring City Manager arrived in 2008. At that time, the City was in dire financial straits, and employees, who were paid with paper checks, were advised to cash them quickly while there was still money in the bank. At the same time, the City's electric rates were among the highest in the state. Today, the City is debt free, has the lowest property tax rate (4.000 mills) of any city of any size in Polk County, and its electric rates are among the lowest in the state. All that is quite an accomplishment, particularly given that, as the county seat, Bartow has numerous properties that are occupied by government offices that contribute to the demand for services while not providing any tax revenues. That said, the new manager will have some significant challenges to work on.

Historically, the City has embraced a pay-as-you-go approach and focused on needs, not wants. The streets have been repaved, essential infrastructure improved, and necessary programs and services continued. The first challenge is managing limited resources and residents' requests for improved quality of life. Over a million dollars was recently allocated to renovating the City's soccer fields. The municipal swimming pool has been out of service since the beginning of COVID and needs work. Instead of repairing it, the City Commission is considering replacing it with a new aquatics center. Members of the public are

pushing for four new adult softball fields, and so on. Additionally, some of the City's internal physical infrastructure requires upgrading/renovation. Just one example is the Police Station. Built in 1969 to house a staff of about 20, it is occupied by almost 70 and adding new technology is a very costly. In terms of funding these projects, the City needs to look at new revenue streams, increase taxes, borrow money, or some combination thereof. The new manager will need to work with the Commission to reconcile the residents' desires with available funding.

The second issue is growth. Bartow is about 20 miles south of I-4 and has not been a prime growth area. With the desirability of living in Florida and the current housing shortage, long delayed developments as well as new developments are beginning to take life. For example, Clear Springs is planned with a potential of about 3,000 homes. Stuart Crossing has recently approved 300 market rate apartments with construction starting soon and another 600 to follow, as well as 600 single-family homes. Wind Meadows II is under construction and will total about 800 homes. Further, about 50 vacant lot and "tear down-rebuilds" are being permitted annually. Historically, Bartow has issued 125 to 150 permits per year. While it is not anticipated that number will increase dramatically, the City needs to continually ensure it is prepared for well-anticipated growth.

The third challenge will be communicating the City's story. As noted, much good has been done in the last 15 years, and City residents have much to be proud of. The public needs to be reminded of the City's past, current, and future accomplishments. The City Commission hopes the incoming City Manager will be out in the community meeting with business owners and residents as a positive face of the City. It also hopes the Manager will use social media in addition to the traditional press.

The fourth issue is staffing and diversity. Over the next three to five years, a significant number of long tenured employees will be retiring. While that will result in a loss of institutional knowledge, these changes will allow the new Manager to craft his/her own team. Part of that crafting will need to be bringing more diversity



to the management ranks. While minorities occupy quite a few positions at the lower levels of the government, very few occupy positions upper levels. This situation has resulted in some tension in the community and within the city government. The Commission would like upper levels of the city government to be more reflective of the community's demographics. The new manager will need to actively seek out individuals in underrepresented classes. Additionally, staff management training (which is already underway) and diversity training will play a role.

While Bartow is a wonderful community, its nightlife and dining options are limited. Ideally, the new manager will help the City create a sense of place and become a destination in its own right. As the capital city of Polk County, the Commission would like it to be a beacon to which people are drawn.

Finally, while the current manager has done an outstanding job, the Commission expects the incoming City Manager to do a thorough review of operations. Are the City's resources optimally allocated? Are the City's staff positions the right ones or should there be some realignment? Are the right people in those positions? Can processes be made more efficient? Can technology be better utilized? The next Manager will need to answer those questions.

THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

The City Commission is seeking an achievement-oriented leader and manager. They want someone to work with them as a partner and trusted advisor—someone who will be honest and tell them what they need to

hear, not what they want to hear. He/she will be comfortable in his/her own skin, act professionally, and inspire confidence. The individual will ensure all the officials have the same information at the same time and will focus on counting to five, not three. In other words, everyone will be fully informed, and there will be no surprises.

The ideal candidate will have a "can do" attitude and be visionary yet practical. He/she will think strategically and be able to look over the horizon to anticipate problems and fix them before they become issues. The individual will be a doer with a healthy sense of impatience. Government processes are important, but they cannot be an excuse for inaction. He/she will not be comfortable sitting behind a desk and giving instructions. Rather, the Manager will be in both the community and City's offices, talking to people, listening and learning. A sense of humor will be important as will be patience and a calm bedside manner.

Personally, the next Manager will be a people person—someone who is approachable, receptive, open-minded, progressive, honest, and transparent. While not required, it will be helpful if the individual is an extrovert. He/she will also be organized, intelligent, forward thinking, friendly, dynamic, cheerfully persistent, high-energy, extremely positive, and very proactive without being aggressive or abrasive. He/she will have a bias towards action.

Having strong communications skills will be critical. It is important that the next Manager be comfortable speaking with people from all races, ethnicities, and walks of life—from a corporate executive to someone struggling to get by. The key will be to let people know their concerns are being heard and attended to.

Customer service, along with integrity and transparency, will be core values for the Manager. Bartow expects the Manager to be someone who leads by example and who encourages the staff to find ways to get to "yes." Customers are not always right, but they do deserve to be treated fairly and have an effort made to solve their problems. If a solution is not possible, a proper explanation of why should be given.

The Manager will need to be able to balance competing points of view, find common interests, and bring people to consensus. The ideal candidate will be savvy in the use of both traditional media and social media. He/she will recognize both the good and the harm social media and naysayers can do. When confronted with negativity, the Manager will stand up politely and correct the record.

The ideal candidate will create a culture of positivity, have a vision, set goals, and inspire his/her staff to do their jobs. City employees are competent and well qualified. Hence, the next Manager will not need to micromanage. Instead, he/she will expect to be kept informed and will hold the staff accountable. The individual will encourage creativity and allow staff members take reasonable risks, realizing that not every great idea will be successful. He/she will be a mentor and encourage staff development.

The best candidate will have experience bringing more diversity to an organization and be ready to actively increase the numbers of those from underrepresented classes in the City's management ranks. He/she will recognize that diverse backgrounds and opinions, as well as spirited discussions, lead to better decisions and programs. Building teams and promoting teamwork will be important. Good judgment in hiring will be critical. When the time comes, the individual will make good hiring decisions. Finally, he/she will recognize that fun should be part of the workplace.

The ideal candidate will be a critical thinker who always asks if there is a better way to conduct business and address problems. Analytical skills, as well as a knowledge of how to utilize information technology to optimize processes and inform the public, will be very important. Bartow has limited resources and many wants. The next Manager will be someone who will ensure City funds are spent wisely.

The next Manager will need to have strong skills in management, finance, and smart redevelopment. A track record of success in intergovernmental relations will be important as the City frequently interacts with the County and other nearby local governments, as well as state and federal agencies.

Experience with disaster management, grants acquisition, employee relations and union negotiations, historic preservation, utilities, and succession planning are all pluses. Florida experience is desirable but not mandatory.

The position requires a minimum of a bachelor's degree in business administration, public administration, public policy or related field, and seven to ten years of increasingly responsible experience as a government or private sector executive. A master's degree is preferred. The Commission hopes the selected candidate will recognize Bartow is an incredible opportunity and view the position as a destination, not a steppingstone on their career path.

COMPENSATION

The salary range is \$150,000 to \$190,000. The salary will depend on qualifications and experience. Benefits are excellent. The new City Manager can be part of Bartow's General Pension Plan or elect to have a contribution made to a different plan, such as one through the ICMA.

THE MOST RECENT CITY MANAGER

The current City Manager is retiring after 14 years with the City as its City Manager.

RESIDENCY

The City Charter requires the City Manager to live within the Bartow City limits while serving as the Manager.

HOW TO APPLY

E-mail your resume and cover letter to Recruit24@cb-asso.com by August 19th. Faxed and mailed resumes will not be considered. Questions should be directed to Colin Baenziger at (561) 707-3537 or Rick Conner at (915) 227-7002.

INTERNAL CANDIDATES

We do not anticipate any serious internal candidates applying for the position.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Under Florida's public records act, once an application is submitted, it is deemed a public record. The local press is quite diligent in Bartow, so we expect some coverage, most likely when semi-finalists are named.

THE PROCESS

Applications will be screened as they arrive. Semi-finalists will be named on September 5th, and finalists selected on September 12th. A City tour, a reception, and interviews will be held September 22nd and 23rd. The new City Manager will be selected shortly thereafter.

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

The City of Bartow is an Equal Opportunity Employer. It strongly encourages women, minorities, and veterans to apply. A veteran's preference will be awarded per Florida's law.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For additional information about the City, visit:

[City of Bartow](#)

[Visitflorida.com](#)

[Bartow Chamber](#)

[Bartow Recreation](#)

[Main Street Bartow](#)