

— Position Re-opened —

Looking for a Few More Great Candidates

CITY MANAGER | Apply by Aug 4, 2023

Update: The Belle Isle Council selected five finalists. At the last minute, one dropped out for personal reasons and two accepted other positions. The Council interviewed both remaining candidates and was very impressed. Still, they felt they would be doing their citizens a disservice if they did not look at a few more candidates. Hence, they requested we re-open the recruitment. Please apply as soon as possible as we will be screening candidates as they apply.

Belle Isle is a friendly Central Florida community where peaceful, lakefront living provides a permanent vacation from the surrounding metropolitan area. Originally established to protect Lake Conway and Little Lake Conway (which the City surrounds, see Figure 1), Belle Isle's local government works diligently to preserve the environment that residents call home and to provide these residents with outstanding services. Indeed, the City is a safe, serene community where families want to live and raise a family. Many thoroughly enjoy the beautiful natural surroundings, excellent schools, and quiet way of life.



The two lakes provide various recreational activities for nature lovers and outdoor enthusiasts. Popular activities include waterskiing and swimming. Another popular pastime is largemouth bass fishing, which is nothing short of world-class.

Belle Isle has many small parks within its limits. Warren Park is one of the most frequently visited areas due to its convenience, especially for families. The park offers easy lake access, paved walking paths, and a playground for little ones. It also includes plenty of covered seating areas for Florida's hot, sunny days.

In addition to the recreational options within Belle Isle, various options are found in nearby urban and rural areas. A person can easily visit several state and national parks and select from various cultural, historical, and entertainment opportunities. These include the Lake Baldwin Trail, Harry P. Leu Gardens, and the Tibet-Butler Nature Preserve.

Belle Isle is a perfect location for those who love theme parks. Disneyworld, Seaworld, Gatorland, and Universal Studios are around 25 minutes from Belle Isle, and LEGOLAND in Winter Haven is just over an hour away. If you prefer wandering through shops and restaurants instead of riding roller coasters, you can visit The Florida Mall, Universal City Walk, and Disney Springs (previously called the Lake Buena Vista Shopping Village).

The big city lights are not far off for a night on the town. Downtown Orlando is only 20 minutes north, with many hotspots and cultural events. A favorite option is to start with the Dr. Phillips Center for the Performing Arts. For more live theater, visit the Ritz Theater/Wayne Densch Performing Arts Center, Bob Carr Theater, Mad Cow Theater, Garden Theater, and the Annie Russell Theater.

If that is not enough, visit the Charles Hosmer Morse Museum of American Art, Orlando Science Center, Dezerland Auto Museum & Collection, Ripley's Believe It or Not!, and Titanic: The Artifact Exhibition. Another must-see attraction is ICON Park, which includes a huge Ferris wheel, the SEA LIFE Aquarium, Madame Tussauds Wax Museum, the Museum of Illusions, and numerous other attractions and dining establishments.

Sports fans will relish watching professional sports teams like the NBA's Orlando Magic and minor league ice hockey Orlando Solar Bears. Major league professional soccer can be found at the Orlando City Stadium, where Orlando City (men's) and the Pride (women's) play their home games. Furthermore, collegiate sports fans have many chances to cheer on their favorite teams. Nearby, the annual college football classic Citrus Bowl is at Camping World Stadium. Just two-and-a-half hours north are the famed University of Florida Gators.

Belle Isle has a small town, neighborly feel, and is primarily composed of three and four-bedroom homes. About 80% of these are owner-occupied, leading to a true sense of community where neighbors know their neighbors and help one another. Crime is low (38% below the national average) and decreasing.

If you are in the market, Realtor.com suggests the current median listing home price is \$625,000, while the median sales price is \$527,200. Only ten single-family detached homes are currently on the market, with listing prices from \$456,000 to \$3,995,000. Half the listings are between \$456,000 and \$600,000, and not on the water.

Orange County Schools are highly rated, with a student-teacher ratio of 15 to 1. According to state test scores, 82% of students are at least proficient in math and 78% in reading. While Cornerstone Charter is the only school actually in Belle Isle, Shenandoah Elementary, Winegard Elementary, Conway Middle, Walker Middle, and Oak Ridge High all are very, very close. Further, Winegard Elementary and Oak Ridge High both received the Five Star School Award.

When your children are ready for higher education, you will find twenty-four colleges within a fifty-mile radius of Belle Isle. The most notable institutions are the University of Central Florida (UCF), the UCF College of Medicine, the Florida A&M University College of Law, Valencia College, Seminole State College of Florida, Keiser University, and Le Cordon Bleu College of Culinary Arts. UCF is a public research university and is the largest university in the United States, with students from all fifty states and more than 150 countries. Eastern Florida State



College ranks high in affordability and is about an hour away in Cocoa Beach.

Belle Isle shares a border with Orlando and is adjacent to Orlando International, the 41st busiest airport in the world. Hence, in 20 minutes or less, a resident can get a plane to anywhere in the world (assuming you do not mind a connection of two). Orlando Sanford International Airport, a 45-minute drive to the northeast, offers flights by low-cost carriers to points within the United States, Mexico, the Caribbean, and Europe. The City also enjoys convenient access to Port Canaveral, about a one-hour drive to the east and the second busiest cruise port in the world by passenger volume. A few hours further away are the first and third most active –the Port of Miami and Port Everglades in Fort Lauderdale, respectively.

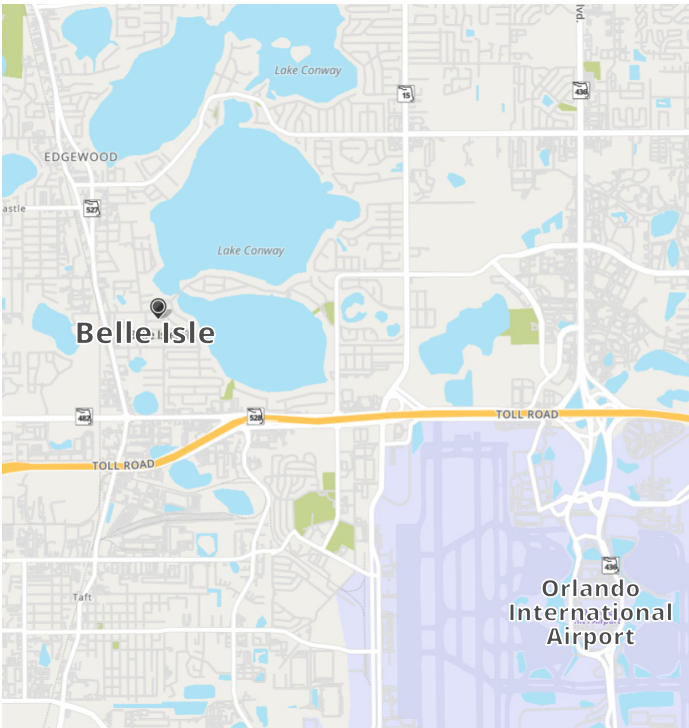
With access to the lakes and a much lower tax rate than Orlando, Belle Isle is a beautiful place to live, work, and raise a family. So, if you want to live in a place with a strong sense of community and wonderful recreational activities, please dust off your resume and apply.

HISTORY

The Timucua people first inhabited the Belle Isle area. Once a Native American oasis, the first city was founded in 1924 to protect Lake Conway and Little Lake Conway. Town supporters were concerned about Orange County’s plan to use the lakes for drainage and, as a result, formed their municipality. They quickly settled on the name of Belle Isle, which resembles the French phrase for “beautiful island.”

In 1928, Belle Isle was annexed back into Orange County and ceased to exist. However, threatened again in 1954 by another attempt by the County

Figure I: Location of Belle Isle, FL



to use the lakes for drainage, residents resisted and resurrected their local government. The State of Florida later recognized the City of Belle Isle’s charter in 1972.

In the early 2000s, a council-manager form of government was adopted. Since that time, the City has flourished. Annexations, the establishment of a Belle Isle Police Department, and an agreement to open Cornerstone Charter Academy mark the City’s most significant achievements in recent years.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Belle Isle has a housing affordability index of over 100, representing the balance where a resident with a median household income can typically qualify to purchase a median-price home. Please see Table I for more information concerning the City’s demographics.

CLIMATE

Belle Isle enjoys a humid subtropical climate with two primary seasons: hot and rainy from May to September and mild and dry from October to April. High temperatures are typically in the 90s

Table I: Belle Isle Demographics

Distribution by Race		Distribution by Age	
White	78.9%	0 to 14	19.0%
Black	3.2%	15 to 24	9.2%
Asian	4.1%	25 to 44	25.1%
Native American	0.0%	45 to 64	26.8%
Two or More Races	18.7%	65 to 84	17.5%
Total	100%	Over 85	2.4%
Hispanic Ethnicity	14.3%	Estimated Population: 7,344	

Educational Achievement (Over Age 25)	
High School or Higher	95.0%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	37.0%

Other Statistics	
Median Age–Belle Isle, FL	43.0
Median Age–U.S.	38.8
Median Household Income–Belle Isle, FL	\$113,309
Median Household Income–U.S.	\$70,181
Poverty Rate	10.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

and rarely fall below the mid-70s. Afternoons often bring short bursts of rain and thunder. During the winter months, the average temperatures are in the 60’s, with lows in the 40’s. The average annual rainfall is fifty-two inches, and snow is rare here. The City has 240 sunny days per year on average.

Hurricanes strike Florida from time to time, though they are relatively uncommon here. Additionally, their impact on Belle Isle is limited. For the most part, hurricanes have spent their most damaging winds by the time they reach the City.

GEOGRAPHY

Belle Isle is the location of Lake Conway (one of Greater Orlando’s largest lakes) and its sister, Little Lake Conway. The City covers 5.1 square miles, of which 2.3 square miles is land and

Table II: Principal Employers, Belle Isle, FL

Employer	Industry	Employees
Regal Marine Industries	Manufacturing	794
Cornerstone Charter Academy	Education	161
McCoy Federal Credit Union	Banking	83
Crunch Fitness	Fitness	35
City of Belle Isle, FL	Government	32
Wawa	Retail	31
Wendy's	Retail	30
Advanced Auto Parts	Retail	30
Growing Together Pediatrics	Healthcare	18
Quality Inn	Hospitality	15

Source: Belle Isle, FL 2021 CAFR

2.8 square miles (54%) is water. It is part of the Orlando–Kissimmee–Sanford Metropolitan Statistical Area and is about five miles (on a straight line) southeast of downtown Orlando (the Orange County seat). From the City’s southeast corner, it is a walking distance of Orlando International Airport’s northwest corner.

COMMERCE

Belle Isle is home to approximately seventy-five businesses, and residents are typically employed and do most of their shopping in nearby communities.

THE GOVERNMENT

Belle Isle operates under a council-city manager form of government. The City Council consists of a mayor (ceremonial) and seven district representatives who serve three-year terms without compensation. Two district seats are up for election in 2023, another two in 2024, and the remaining three in 2025. Councilmembers tend to have lengthy tenures if they decide to stay and frequently run unopposed. The longest-serving member has been on the Council for nine years, and two current Councilmembers are filling out the terms of individuals who resigned. The Council tends to work well together.

As one would expect, the Council establishes policies and programs and appropriates funds for each city service function. It also approves all ordinances, resolutions, and contracts, reviews proposals for community needs, initiates actions for new programs, and determines the level of funding for services and facilities. The General Fund budget is \$13,000,000, and the Total Budget is \$15,000,000.

The Council appoints the City Manager and the City Attorney. The Manager oversees Administration, Building Department, City Clerk, Code Enforcement, Finance, Planning and

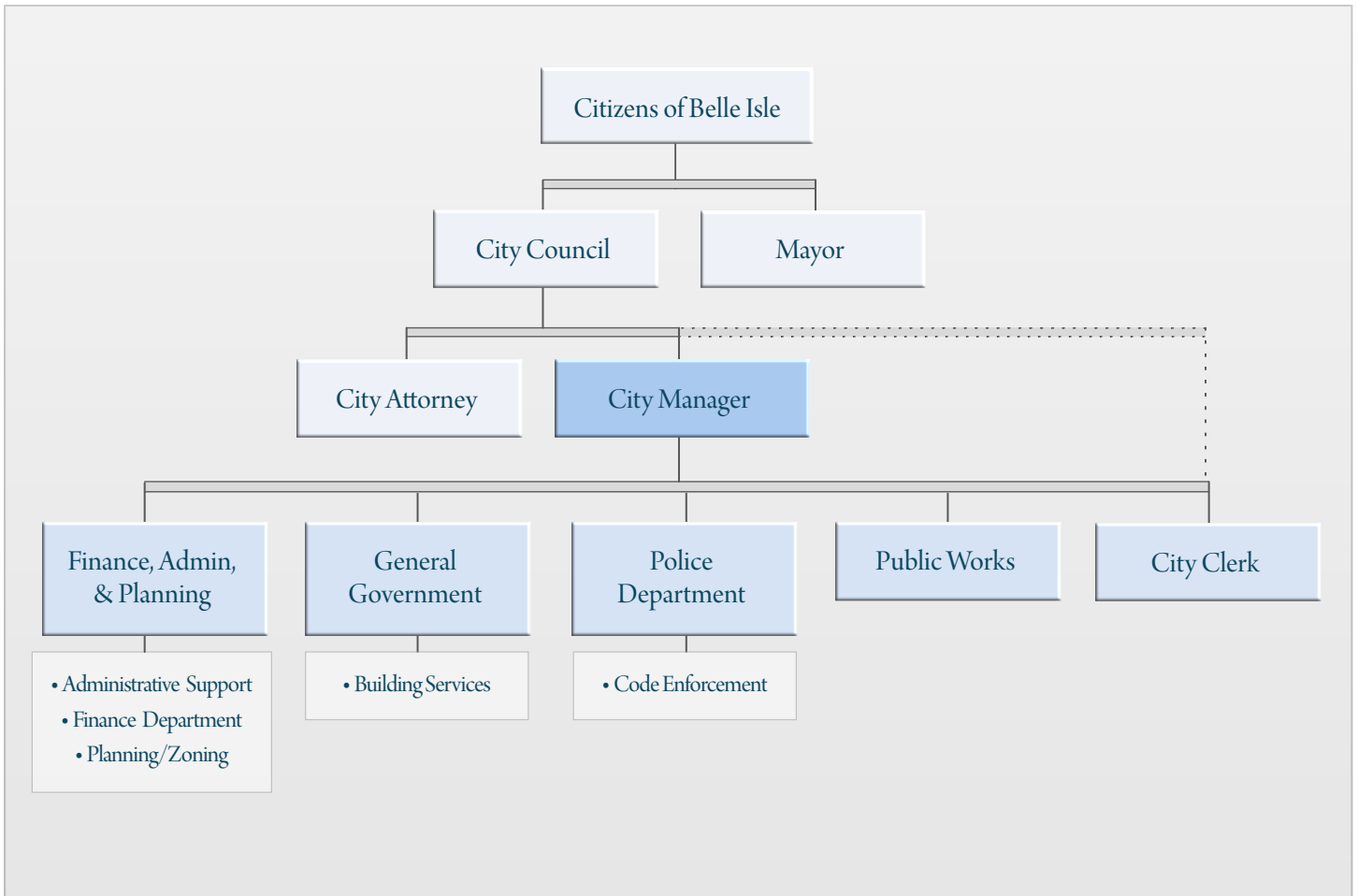
Zoning, Police Department, and Public Works. Belle Isle is a small, lean organization (only forty-two positions overall—30 of those in the Police Department) where the employees are competent and work well together. See Figure 2 for the City’s organization chart.

The City employs several citizen’s boards and committees to assist in analysis and provide advice. These are the Budget Advisory Committee, the Planning and Zoning Board, the Police Advisory Committee, the Solid Waste Committee, the Special Events Committee, and the Tree Committee.

THE CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

Belle Isle has been well-run and is financially stable. Thus, its primary challenges are not financial. First, it would like to grow—which means annexing to adjacent properties. Its opportunities, however, are limited. The land to its north, west, and south is primarily developed and difficult to annex. However, the land to its immediate east is mainly open space. To annex, Belle Isle needs the support of the County. Unfortunately, this support has not been forthcoming.

CITY OF BELLE ISLE—ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



The second challenge is to improve its facilities. The City is currently using a remodeled home for its City Hall and another for the Police Station. The latter is bursting at the seams and does not have adequate parking. A new City Hall and Police Station need to be built. However, finding a location will be difficult as the City is primarily developed, and developers quickly purchase the lots that become available. Of course, once that challenge is overcome, the next step will be to fund the construction of the facilities.

Another concern is, Belle Isle is a small community and is often overlooked by the more prominent entities around it. Thus, it needs to collaborate with regional actors to resolve issues. For example, due to the large area of the City taken up by the lakes, only two roads pass through the City (Nela and Hoffner Avenues). Both run east to west. That means anyone cutting

through the City has only two routes, and residents view traffic on these roads as a problem. Another issue is the City's proximity to the airport. While many see such accessibility as a plus, flight patterns frequently bring air traffic over the City's eastern portion, causing residents to complain about the noise. Still another example is the City's lakes. They are managed and controlled by the Lake Conway Water and Navigation Control District (whose board is the County Commission) and the State. While water quality and access are sometimes an issue, finances also come into play. The police department has a marine patrol which is supposed to be a 50/50 shared cost. Instead residents pay 80% of the expense. That should be corrected. Although the City generally has good relations with the District, Orange County, the Airport, and the City of Orlando, it simply cannot directly control many of the factors that impact its resident's quality of life.

Additionally, much of the City's crime has stemmed from those passing through or has taken place near its southern border—that is, in the section of town closest to the airport. The next Manager will need to work with the police department, elected officials, and outside entities to find solutions that encourage criminals to avoid the City.

Other challenges include updating the infrastructure, keeping the elected body focused on the big picture, reviewing the charter, and improving communication with residents.

THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

The City seeks an outstanding leader with strong management and excellent consensus-building skills to partner with it to take the City to the next level. The Council values experience and wants someone with a library of solutions. He/she will partner with and trusted advisor to the Council. The individual will run the City's operations in a way that allows the Council to focus on the significant issues that will improve residents' quality of life. He/she will tell the elected officials what they need to hear—not what they want to hear. The individual will not attempt to manipulate Council decisions but will present members with complete, unbiased information backed by thorough analysis and step back. That said, he/she will be comfortable making recommendations and supporting them. The best candidate will thrive on providing Council with timely information so there are no surprises and will treat all eight equally with respect. The best candidate will make the Councilmembers feel their views are being listened to and help bring them to a consensus.

Personally, the next Manager will be intelligent, upbeat, friendly, outgoing, organized, positive, and progressive—someone with a can-do attitude while being visionary yet practical. Further, the Manager will be committed yet flexible, consistent, cheerfully persistent, high energy, and a leader—not a bureaucrat.

The ideal candidate will be an excellent manager. The individual will set goals for the staff, provide resources, delegate, and step back so employees can do their jobs. At the same time, he/she will expect to be kept informed and have deadlines met. That said, he/she should expect to be a working manager. As noted,

the staff is small. There is too much to do for someone to sit behind a desk and direct traffic. The next Manager will be respectful of others, choosing to mentor and encourage an environment where creativity flourishes. He/she should provide staff with growth opportunities. While the individual will take responsibility for errors made on his/her watch and protect staff, he/she will also hold staff accountable. When time allows, the Manager will discuss pending decisions with staff and solicit their input. When prompt decisions are required, he/she will be decisive. A sense of humor and fun will be necessary for success.

The Manager will be open, transparent, approachable, and customer service oriented. Belle Isle is a small town, and the Manager should be comfortable working with residents when they walk into City Hall with their problems. When he/she cannot solve their problem, the Manager will ideally find a solution that helps get the resident to where they want to go.

The best candidate will be an outstanding communicator with strong verbal and written skills who recognizes that listening is often the most important part of a conversation. He/she will spend time in the community, always listening and looking for ways to make the government more responsive.

In terms of specific skills, the individual will have a demonstrated track record of achievement in management, finance, and grant writing. Strong experience collaborating with regional leaders and organizations to promote the organization's agenda will be important. A background in emergency management—particularly natural disasters—and dealing with airports are pluses. The position requires a bachelor's degree in business administration, public administration, public policy, or a related field and at least five years of experience as a City Manager or Assistant (or a comparable position). A master's degree and experience managing in Florida are preferred.

The selected candidate will be expected to commit to Belle Isle. This position should not be viewed as a steppingstone but as a gem in its own right. The City strongly desires a successful manager who will stay a long time.

COMPENSATION

The salary range is \$125,000 to \$175,000. The actual salary will depend on qualifications and experience. The benefits are excellent. The City will contribute 16% of base earnings into a 401a with the Florida Municipal Pension Trust Fund. The City Manager can contribute their funds into a 457b deferred compensation plan.

THE MOST RECENT CITY MANAGER

At the end of this past March, the former Manager accepted another position in the Pacific Northwest and left.

RESIDENCY

Residency in Belle Isle is strongly preferred but not required. The last Manager, for example, did not. That said, it is hard to imagine why anyone would want to live elsewhere.

HOW TO APPLY

E-mail your cover letter and resume to Recruit24@cb-asso.com by August 4, 2023. Apply as soon as possible, we will be screening resumes upon receipt. Questions should be directed to Lynelle Klein at (970) 433-7189 or Colin Baenziger at (561) 707-3537.

INTERNAL CANDIDATES

We do not anticipate any internal candidates.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Under Florida's public records act, once an application is submitted, it is deemed a public record. As a practical matter, we do not expect any media coverage until at least the time the semifinalists are named, and perhaps not even then.

THE PROCESS

Applications will be screened as they arrive until August 5th. Candidate materials will be submitted to Belle Isle on August 18th. Finalists will be chosen the following week and interviews held shortly thereafter with a selection to follow.

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Belle Isle is an Equal Opportunity Employer, encouraging women, minorities, and veterans to apply.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For additional information about the City, visit:

belleislefl.gov

southorlandochamber.com

www.facebook.com/CityofBelleIsleFL