

— POSITION AVAILABLE —

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR | Apply by February 12, 2021



## Welcome to the Cape Fear Public Utility Authority

Cape Fear Public Utility Authority (CFPUA) provides water and wastewater services to approximately 200,000 residents in Wilmington/New Hanover County in coastal southeastern North Carolina. CFPUA has a talented, committed staff and engaged Board leadership and is seeking a forward-thinking, effective leader to be its next Executive Director.

New Hanover County and Wilmington offer world-class beaches, rich history, a variety of sophisticated arts and cultural attractions, sports and recreational facilities, a diverse and growing economy, warm weather, and a welcoming community of people who cherish where they live.

Water has long defined New Hanover County, bound as it is by the iconic Cape Fear River on the west and the warm waters of the Atlantic Ocean on the east. Access to navigable waterways has guided much of the area's storied history, beginning with the first settlement by Europeans in the early

1700s and through many decades as a center for trade, culture, and politics and in pivotal roles in the Civil War and World War II.

Today, water continues to play a defining role in shaping the area's character. Wilmington remains home to a busy port, but the area is better known for fishing, boating, surfing, and other water-related activities afforded by easy access to beautiful beaches, the Intracoastal Waterway, and the Atlantic Ocean, along with the Cape Fear River. Pristine public beaches can be found from Fort Fisher State Recreation Area in the southernmost tip of New Hanover County to Wrightsville Beach farther north, hosting beachgoers, anglers, kite fliers, and some of the best surfing conditions on the U.S. East Coast.

Nestled against the Cape Fear River, Wilmington's vibrant downtown is a showcase of history and culture, with several blocks of meticulously restored 18th and 19th century homes in its nationally registered Historic District. Downtown also features fine restaurants and entertainment venues such as Thalian Hall (built in 1858) and the recently built Wilson Center (a state-of-the-art performance hall attracting major acts). A few blocks to the west is the Riverwalk, where visitors may stroll beside the Cape Fear River past blocks of shops and restaurants and, during most of the year, shop and visit with friends and neighbors at the bustling Saturday farmers' market. The northern end of downtown, known to locals as the Brooklyn Arts District, has seen significant retail and residential development in recent years.

Cultural offerings are plentiful in Wilmington, particularly the performing arts. Historic Thalian Hall hosts 450 plays and other events each year and is one of several places offering live theater performances. Major films and television shows (from Ironman 3 to One Tree Hill and Dawson's Creek) have been and continue to be produced in Wilmington, home of EUE Screen Gems Studios, the largest domestic television and movie production facility outside of California. Several festivals are held in

Wilmington, including the Azalea Festival in April and the North Carolina Jazz Festival in late January.

Many well-maintained and -equipped parks are spread throughout Wilmington and New Hanover County, offering walking and bike-riding trails, playgrounds, baseball and softball fields, tennis courts, dog parks, and more. The Gary Shell Cross City Trail is a still-expanding path dedicated to bicycles and pedestrians that is turning cycling into an increasingly popular pastime – and even a practical mode of transportation. Golfers will find a wealth of public and private courses in New Hanover County and neighboring Brunswick and Pender counties. Shopping is abundant and convenient, with merchants ranging from

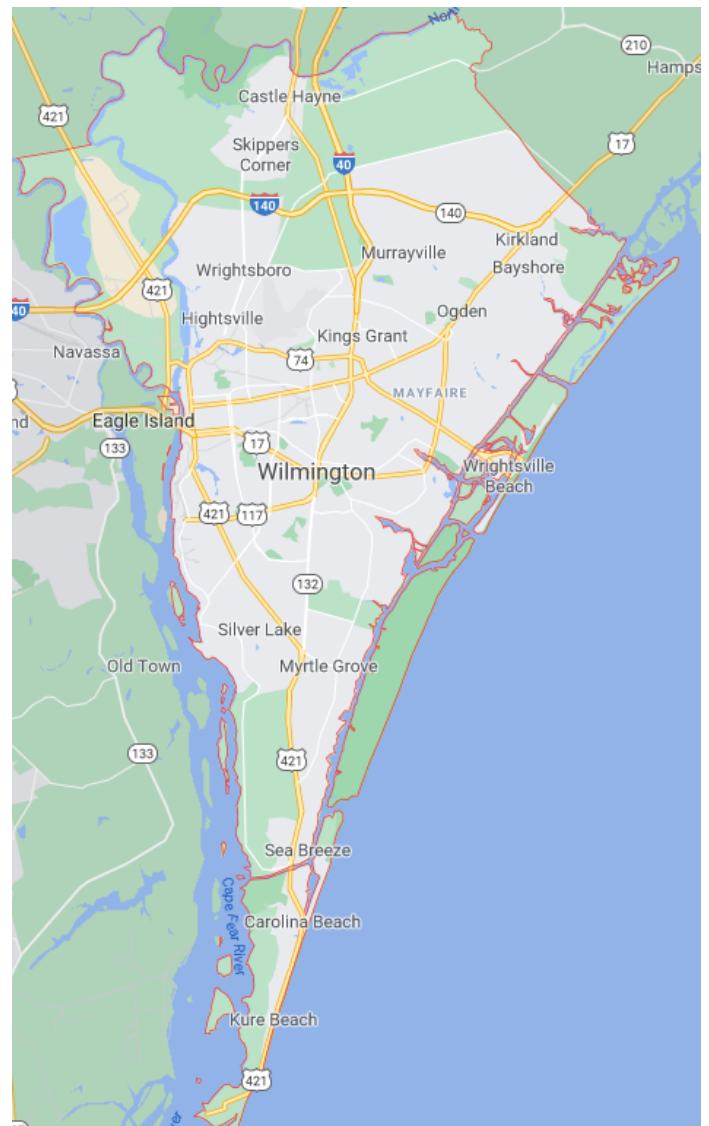


Figure 1: New Hanover County/Wilmington, NC Location

local shops offering unique wares to major high-end retailers.

The area is affordable and offers a variety of neighborhoods with charming Victorians in the Historic District, urban-style condominiums overlooking the river downtown, modern suburban homes, and beach houses with views of the sunrise over the Atlantic. As of November 2020, the median price of a single-family home was \$305,000. Families will find public, charter, and private schools, and the University of North Carolina Wilmington (named one of the Top 100 Public National Universities for 2021 by U.S. News & World Report) and Cape Fear Community College offer opportunities for higher education. Duke University (Durham, N.C.), Fayetteville State University, N.C. State University (Raleigh, N.C.), North Carolina A&T State University (Greensboro), and the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill are all within a few hours’ drive.

At Wilmington International Airport, American, Delta, and United airlines have direct flights to Atlanta, Charlotte, Chicago (ORD), Dallas (DFW), New York City (LGA), Philadelphia, and Washington, DC (DCA and IAD).

If you are an outstanding utility professional and manager, you will not find a better place to work, play, and raise a family.

## DEMOGRAPHICS

While geographically New Hanover County is the second smallest county in North Carolina, it is the third highest in terms of population density. See table 1 for New Hanover County demographics.

## CLIMATE

Wilmington/New Hanover County have a humid, subtropical climate. Winters are typically mild, with highs in the mid-50s and lows in the mid-30s in January. Snowfall is unusual and, when it does occur, is generally light. Spring is

lengthy, beginning in late February and lasting to early May. Summer brings high temperatures in the upper 80s to lower 90s and low temperatures from 70 to 75. Autumns are pleasant, with mild temperatures. The area is subject to tropical storm activity, mainly from August to early October.

## GEOGRAPHY

New Hanover County covers a total area of 220 square miles, 179 square miles of which are land. It is located on the Cape Fear Peninsula of North Carolina between the Cape Fear River and the Atlantic Ocean. Its elevation varies between 0 and 75 feet above sea level and is considered especially vulnerable to sea level rise. The County’s beaches

Table 1: New Hanover County Demographics

Distribution by Race		Distribution by Age	
White	81.1%	0 to 15	15.1%
Black	13.7%	15 to 25	15.7%
Asian	1.3%	25 to 45	26.1%
Two or More Races	3.6%	45 to 65	25.0%
Total	100%	65 to 85	16.1%
Hispanic Ethnicity (all races)	5.8%	85 +	2.0%
<b>Estimated Population: 227,938</b>			
Educational Achievement (Over Age 25)			
High School or Higher		93.2%	
Bachelor's Degree or Higher		40.6%	
Other Statistics			
Median Age—New Hanover County		40.1	
Median Age—U.S.		37.8	
Median Household Income		\$54,891	
Median Household Income—U.S.		\$61,937	
Poverty Rate		16.0%	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

provide miles of unspoiled natural beauty and are the area's most popular tourist attractions. It is approximately 200 miles southeast of Charlotte, 400 miles east of Atlanta, and 430 miles northwest of Jacksonville, FL.

## COMMERCE

Wilmington hosts a sizable seaport, including private marine terminals and the North Carolina State Ports Authority. The area's industrial base includes electrical, medical, electronic and telecommunications equipment, clothing and apparel, food processing, paper products, nuclear fuel, and pharmaceuticals. Tourism is important to the area. Companies with headquarters in Wilmington include Live Oak Bank, PPD, and HomeInsurance.com. See Table 2 for more information on New Hanover County's Principal Employers.

## CAPE FEAR PUBLIC UTILITY AUTHORITY

Cape Fear Public Utility Authority (CFPUA) was formed in 2007 with the merger of the water and wastewater services operations of New Hanover County and the City of Wilmington. It officially opened its doors in 2008. At the



Figure 2: New Hanover County/Wilmington, NC Location

time, boundaries between the two operations overlapped, facilities needed upgrading, and functions were duplicated. Fast forward to today. CFPUA is widely recognized as a well-run, forward thinking, model utility with largely updated infrastructure.

CFPUA is governed by a Board whose 11 members serve staggered three-year terms. Membership includes two Wilmington City Councilmembers, two New Hanover County Commissioners, three members from the community appointed by the City, three appointed by the County, and one appointed jointly by the City and County. The Board appoints CFPUA's Executive Director to oversee the utility's day-to-day operations. Many issues are addressed and vetted in subcommittees of the Board prior to being considered by the full Board.

One characteristic that distinguishes CFPUA from many other public water systems is that it is not a department within a larger municipal government

Table 2: Principal Employers, New Hanover County, NC

Employer	Industry	Employees
New Hanover Health Network	Healthcare	7,138
New Hanover County Schools	Education	3,776
University of North Carolina (Wilmington)	Education	2,204
General Electric Nuclear Fuel/Aircraft	Fuel	1,788
New Hanover County	Government	1,787
Pharmaceutical Products Development	Pharmaceutics	1,500
Verizon Wireless	Retail	1,167
Cape Fear Community College	Education	1,125
City of Wilmington	Government	1,079
Walmart	Retail	1,065

Source: New Hanover County, NC 2019 CAFR

organization. The Board includes elected representatives from the City of Wilmington and New Hanover County, but CFPUA is a separate, standalone agency, with its own departments providing services such as IT and HR and the Executive Director functioning as a CEO.

CFPUA provides water and wastewater services to about 200,000 people in the City of Wilmington and most of unincorporated New Hanover County. For FY 2020-21, CFPUA has an operating budget of \$90 million and capital budget of \$25.5 million. The Utility has a 10-Year Capital Improvement Plan of \$229 million. It holds bond ratings of Aa1 from Moody's and AA+ from Standard and Poor's.

CFPUA has a nonunionized workforce of approximately 320 employees.

## THE WATER SYSTEM

CFPUA operates one surface-water system and two groundwater systems:

**Sweeney Water Treatment Plant:** Sweeney is CFPUA's largest plant, treating water sourced from the Cape Fear River to provide approximately 80 percent of the drinking water CFPUA distributes. Raw water intakes are at Kings Bluff, about 25 miles upriver from the plant. CFPUA receives raw water from its own pump station and has an allocation from the regional Lower Cape Fear Water and Sewer Authority (LCFWASA), which also has a pump station and intake. A new 54-inch raw water transmission line to be operated by LCFWASA is under construction and is jointly funded by CFPUA and Brunswick County. Completion is expected in early 2022.

Sweeney's treatment process includes super-pulsators, biological filters, ozonation, and UV. Its current rated capacity is 35 million gallons per day (MGD). Average production during FY2020 was 15.3 MGD, with peak production of 23.2 MGD. The plant's distribution system includes 16 million gallons of covered finished water

storage and 5.5 million gallons of storage in four elevated tanks. Construction began in November 2019 to add eight additional deep-bed granular activated carbon contactors and increase treatment capacity to 44 MGD. Completion is expected in early 2022.

**Richardson Water Treatment Plant:** Richardson is a 6 MGD low-pressure reverse osmosis plant that pulls raw water from 25 wells drawing from two aquifers. The plant softens the groundwater and removes organic and inorganic contaminants to produce blended groundwater that is followed by disinfection, pH adjustment, fluoridation, and corrosion control treatment. Richardson had an average production in FY2020 of 3 MGD, with peak production of 4.8 MGD. The Richardson distribution system provides water service to customers in Northeastern New Hanover County and includes 2.8 million gallons of covered ground storage at the plant and 2.1 million gallons of elevated storage in four elevated tanks in the distribution system. The plant's capacity is currently being increased to 7 MGD, and design is underway to further increase the plant and well system to 9 MGD.

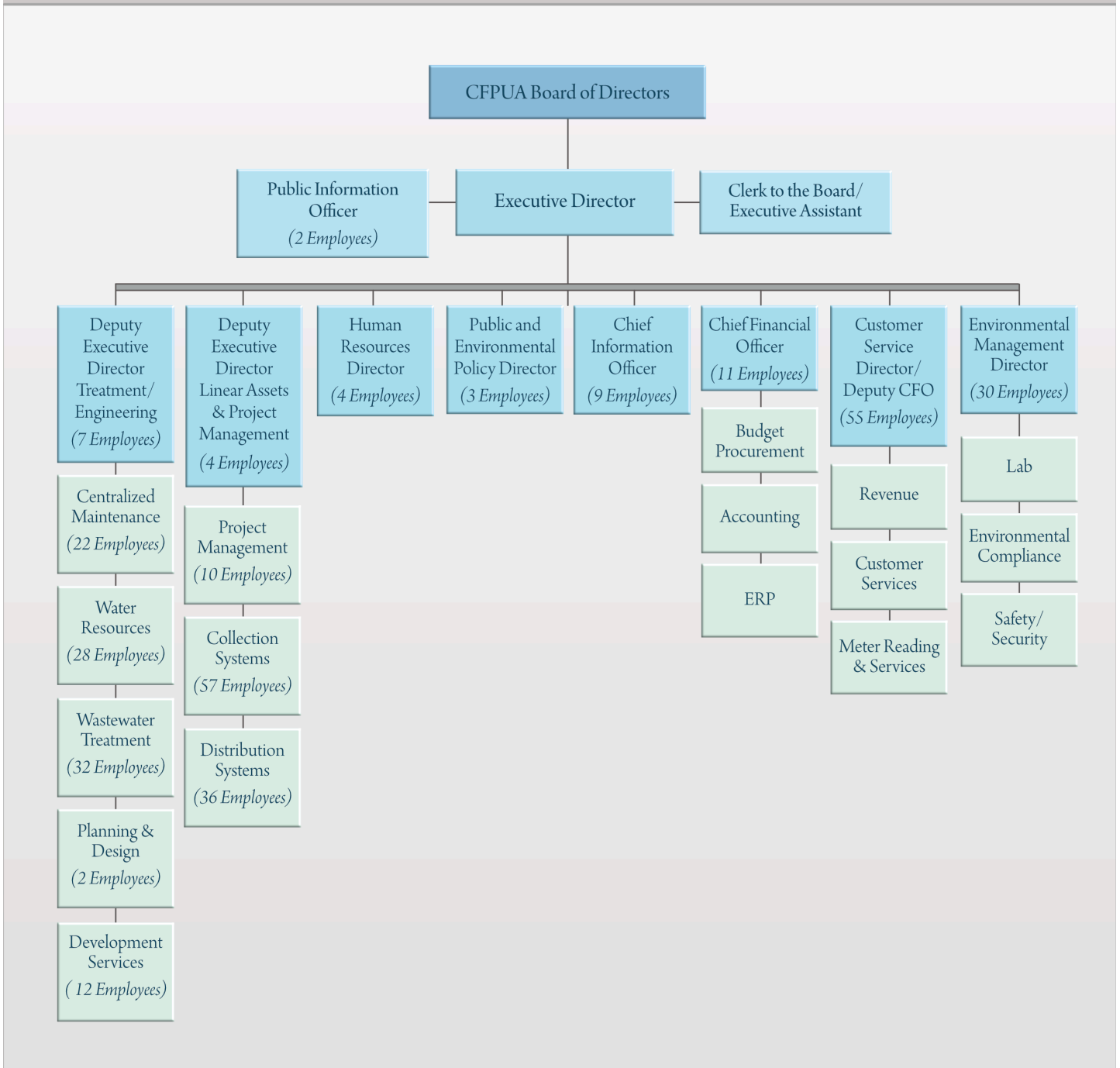
**Monterey Heights:** Monterey Heights is a small system providing groundwater directly to customers from five wells and a single 0.5-million-gallon elevated storage tank. Groundwater receives disinfection at each well site before being pumped to the distribution system and the storage tanks. Two additional wells are currently under construction with on-site water softening equipment. Average production in FY2020 was 0.9 MGD, peaking at 1.8 MGD.

CFPUA's distribution system includes 1,150 miles of water mains. As of June 30, 2020, there were 71,463 water connections, 899 more than the previous fiscal year.

## THE WASTEWATER SYSTEM

CFPUA has two wastewater treatment plants: the Northside Wastewater Treatment Plant (NSWWTP) and Southside

# Chart 1: Cape Fear Public Utility Authority Organizational Chart



Wastewater Treatment Plant (SSWWTP). NSWWTP is permitted to treat as much as 16 MGD, and SSWWTP as much as 12 MGD. The combined average daily flow in FY2020 was 16.9 MGD. Both plants use physical, chemical, and biological treatment processes. Effluent is discharged into the Cape Fear River.

Biosolids management of about 20,000 tons of solids annually consists of on-site dewatering and contract hauling and disposal.

The collection system consists of 907 miles of gravity lines, 154 miles of pressurized sewage force mains, 150 pump

stations, and 22,395 manholes. As of June 30, 2020, 71,675 accounts included wastewater service (including wastewater-only accounts), 1,675 more than the previous fiscal year. The Authority also provides wholesale wastewater treatment services to the Town of Wrightsville Beach and provides wastewater services to a portion of Pender County.

## CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Mid-to long-term issues that rise above management of day-to-day utility operations at CFPUA include:

**Regulation and emerging contaminants:** Like other public water systems, CFPUA will be working to understand and implement EPA's recent revisions to the Lead and Copper Rule. Staff have begun this work and are months into an inventory of service lines and are developing lead service line replacement protocols.

Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are another concern. Chemours (and DuPont, which created Chemours in 2015) have manufactured PFAS at a plant on the Cape Fear River above CFPUA's raw water intakes. CFPUA is spending millions of dollars on PFAS-related efforts, including a \$36 million project underway to add eight new deep-bed granular activated carbon filters at the Sweeney Water Treatment Plant. A federal civil lawsuit has been filed to recover damages from Chemours and DuPont.

CFPUA's customers rely on the Cape Fear River for about 80 percent of their drinking water. Staff pay close attention to developments that may affect water quality and water allocation, participating in stakeholder groups and discussions and regularly submitting formal comments to state and federal regulators when appropriate.

**Managing growth and service demand:** New Hanover County is a popular location, with a population that has grown dramatically in recent decades and continues to

grow. Staff works with the City, the County, and developers to understand and meet demands as growth occurs. Development within the Wilmington city limits has increasingly been higher density.

**Rate affordability:** CFPUA is considering a significant change in its rate structure. Currently, all consumption is billed at a single volumetric rate. The Authority is evaluating an increasing block rate structure for residential water service and all metered irrigation. CFPUA aims to achieve three goals with the new rate structure: increased affordability for average customers, closer alignment between the amount a customer pays with the costs to serve that customer, and incentivizing water conservation.

In addition, account delinquencies have increased in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Outreach efforts are ongoing to encourage delinquent customers to work with Customer Service staff to enter payment plans and begin bringing their accounts current. CFPUA also has established a nonprofit called WATERway NC, which governs a program managed by the New Hanover County Department of Health and Human Services to provide financial assistance to CFPUA customers in need.

**Climate change and resiliency:** CFPUA's approach to climate change encompasses both the impacts climate change may have on infrastructure and operations and measures CFPUA can implement to reduce its impact on the environment and its carbon footprint.

New Hanover County has seen two 500-year storms in the past five years. The organization's experience in weathering hurricanes is documented in extensive, detailed plans that are continually refined to enhance CFPUA's resilience and ability to provide safe, uninterrupted water and sewer service, even in the aftermath of a hurricane as fierce as Florence in 2018. Other related programs include ongoing work to identify key infrastructure that may be susceptible to flooding so steps can be taken to mitigate the risk.



A recently established Board subcommittee focused on sustainability is a testament to an organization-wide attention to CFPUA's role as an environmental steward. Efforts include an expanding electric vehicle pilot program and recently completed greenhouse gas inventory to help quantify progress.

**Technology upgrades:** CFPUA is nearing completion of an ERP transition from SunGard to the Itineris UMAX cloud-based system. The Authority also recently replaced all its meters with AMR. AMI is the next step and will occur in the medium term.



In addition, CFPUA is preparing for the retirement of long-tenured employees to ensure invaluable institutional knowledge is preserved through ongoing documentation efforts and proper succession planning.

#### THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

The ideal candidate is a seasoned industry professional who is forward-looking, customer-focused, environmentally aware, and able to connect with the community. Understanding of day-to-day water and wastewater utility operations is foundational, but characteristics that will distinguish a candidate include demonstrated ability to think strategically, anticipate and mitigate risks, recognize and act on opportunities for improvement, and remain open to ideas and input from diverse sources.

CFPUA is fortunate to have an experienced, talented management team composed of



experts and professionals in their fields. The departments they lead are staffed with competent, well-trained, motivated employees who take pride in providing a vital service to the community. As the organization's chief executive, the Executive Director leads collaboratively. The Executive Director will have high expectations for the organization and ensure staff have the support and resources they need to meet the expectations.

Customer service is a bedrock of the organization's guiding principles, and a successful Executive Director demonstrates this by focusing on providing a constantly improving experience for customers. CFPUA places great value in its perception among customers and on providing them dependable, quality services at affordable prices.

The community's relationship with CFPUA is important as well. CFPUA's work touches many aspects of local residents' lives, every day. Remaining open and transparent about operations has helped to build trust. An Executive Director who is an effective communicator—whether speaking on the phone with a customer, at public meeting, or in an interview with local media—will have an advantage in maintaining those relationships.

Focus on customer service and the community is reflected in CFPUA's Board, whose members are engaged and interested. The Executive Director and the management team work closely with the Board, providing information and well-vetted proposals for consideration. Experience working with a similar governing body will be important, as will an ability to communicate with candor and courtesy and provide explanations that are understandable and concise.

Experience in intergovernmental relations is necessary, given the Executive Director deals with agencies at the local, regional, state, and federal levels. The Executive Director will be able to effectively advocate for the best interests of the Authority and its customers.

The ideal candidate will possess a thorough knowledge of the principles and processes of utility operations and administration, best practices, budget preparation, finance, policy formation, strategic planning, and the quality management process. Qualified candidates will have at least 10 years of progressively responsible management and leadership experience of a water and wastewater utility including five years of experience in a senior management capacity with a comparable organization. Those with experience in a solid waste authority, a public works organization, engineering firm, or a closely related business also will be considered. A bachelor's degree in Engineering, Environmental Engineering, Business Management, Public Administration, or closely related field is expected. An MBA is preferred. NIMS certification is a plus.

## COMPENSATION

The salary range is \$175,000 to \$225,000. Compensation will depend on qualifications and experience. Benefits are excellent. The Executive Director's pension is through the North Carolina Local Government Employees Retirement System (the employee contributes 6 percent of his/her salary). A 2-percent contribution and another 2-percent match to the NC 401(k) program are available. The Utility also participates in the State 457 and Roth programs.

## THE MOST RECENT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The current Executive Director is retiring after 27 years with the Utility and the City of Wilmington prior to the creation of CFPUA. He has served as CFPUA's Executive Director since 2013. Overall, the Utility has had a total of two executive directors since its opening in 2008.

## RESIDENCY

Residency within the CFPUA Service Area is strongly preferred.

## HOW TO APPLY

Please email your cover letter and resume to: [Recruit26@cb-asso.com](mailto:Recruit26@cb-asso.com) by February 12, 2021. Questions should be directed to Steve Sorrell at (513) 317-0678 or Colin Baenziger at (561) 707-3537.

## INTERNAL CANDIDATES

There may be one or more internal candidates.

## CONFIDENTIALITY

Under North Carolina law, all candidate names must be held in the strictest of confidence and cannot be released without the permission of the candidate(s).

## THE PROCESS

Applications will be screened between February 12 and March 29, when finalists will be selected for interviews to be held in April. A selection will be made shortly thereafter.

## OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Cape Fear Public Utility Authority is an Equal Opportunity Employer and encourages women, minorities, and veterans to apply.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

About CFPUA and the area:

[CFPUA website](#)

[2020 Annual Report](#)

[2020 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report](#)

[About the area](#)

