

# Welcome to the City of Fort Pierce

City Attorney Position Open - Apply by January 22, 2016



Population 41,590

Often called the "Sunrise City," Fort Pierce has been the center of St. Lucie County for over 100 years. Located on the historic Treasure Coast, it is one of the oldest communities on the east coast of Florida. With approximately 41,600 residents, it encompasses approximately 29 square miles and sits on a peaceful stretch of sand from the St. Lucie Inlet to the Sebastian Inlet.

Fort Pierce retains an old Florida fishing village look and feel, along with a friendly, welcoming atmosphere. Wander along the downtown riverfront or grab a bite at a waterfront restaurant where you'll be impressed by the sight of blue-green water while watching the seabirds alight nearby. Or sit near a fountain in a park underneath swaying palms and gaze at the boats catching the breeze in their colorful sails. Enjoy one of the best-loved city marinas in all of Florida with shops and restaurants only steps away. Visit the beautifully restored 1,200 seat Sunrise Theatre located in the heart of the historic downtown and enjoy a national touring musical, a comedy act, a ballet or the opera. Or take in the period architecture and look up to see intricate detailing while strolling the welcoming streets of revitalized downtown.

The City takes pride in its diversity and hosts many downtown events such as the farmers' market, Friday Fest (with live music), Bike Night, Classic Car Cruz In, Sandy Shoes Festival, Sights and Sounds on Second and regular jazz concerts along Moore's Creek Linear Park in Lincoln Park (the City's historic and traditional African-American neighborhood).

Fort Pierce is being rediscovered as the treasure it is – the pearl within the oyster. In 2005, it was recognized by the Florida League of Cities with the City of Excellence Award (for overall excellence in city government). In 2011 the Main Street Fort Pierce, Inc. received the Great American Main Street Award from the National Trust for Historic Preservation in its downtown. It was also named Main Street No. 1 on the list of "50 Best Small Town Main Streets in America," by Top Value Reviews which praised its pedestrian sidewalks, unique Spanish Colonial architecture, shopping, museums and location near the Indian River Lagoon. Most recently, in December 2015, it was designated the Florida Main Street Community of the Month.

Fort Pierce relishes its pristine waterways and eco-assets. You can see the coast on a kayak trip, dive and snorkel through the reefs and see several old Spanish shipwrecks at the Fort Pierce Inlet State Park all in one day. Or, if surfing is your thing, bring your board as this is one of the best places in the state to catch a wave! For more water adventures, the Indian River Lagoon provides a haven for more than 4,000 plant and animal species, and is the nation's most biologically diverse estuary. There you can enjoy the natural beauty of the area on an airboat excursion, kayak, or guided boat tour, all the while watching dolphin, manatee, wildlife and hundreds of species of birds. You may also charter your own boat for the day, or jump aboard a deep sea fishing boat. The possibilities are endless and the fishing is spectacular! Other activities include touring an historic citrus packinghouse, visit Florida Ranch Adventures for tours of a working cattle ranch, eco-safaris and guided horseback rides.

Housing prices in the area are quite reasonable, with the benefit of good schools as well as research facilities. In, or near the city, you will find the top-ranked Indian River State



College, the Smithsonian Marine Station, the Manatee Observation and Education Center and the Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institution at Florida Atlantic University.

If you want to venture beyond this wonderful, tropical, peaceful community, the major metropolitan areas of Palm Beach, Fort Lauderdale and Orlando are within an easy drive. Miami, the Florida Keys and Tampa are just a bit further away. Both Interstate-95 and Florida’s Turnpike with exits nearby and State Route 68 and 70 serve as gateways from Central Florida. Five major airports and four major cruise ports lie within a few hours drive.

So, if you are an experienced City Attorney and want to live the good life, come to Fort Pierce and delight in our combination of rich history, small town charm, local flavor and endless scenic and outdoor discoveries.

## History

The area was originally inhabited by the Ais tribe, a hunter-gatherer culture whose territory extended from south of the St. John’s river to the St. Lucie Inlet. Spanish explorers frequently encountered the fierce tribe. In 1715 the fabled Spanish treasure fleet sank off the coast leading to the regional naming of the area as the Treasure Coast.

During the early 19th century, the Spanish government issued several land grants in the area and in the mid-1800s, Seminoles and runaway slaves sought refuge in the virtually uninhabited area. When in 1837 the Second Seminole war had broken out in Florida, a group of soldiers under the command of Lt. Colonel Benjamin K. Pierce sailed down the Indian River and established a fort, naming it after their commander.

From that point on, the area became gradually more populated as settlers ventured down for health and economic reasons. The Flagler railroad reached the area in the 1890s. Major industries at the end of the 19th century included pineapple, fishing and seafood canning, and cattle. Citrus would not become a major crop until the early 1900s. The City of Fort Pierce was incorporated in 1901.

The 1920s saw increased land speculation and planned developments such as Indrio and San Lucie that never came to fruition due to the bust in 1929.

During World War II the United States Naval Amphibious Training Base was established in Fort Pierce on North and South Hutchinson Island. During its operation over 140,000 troops were processed through the base. It was the

birth place and training ground for the Navy SEALs, and continues keeping their honor alive in the National SEAL Museum.

The post-war years saw a major population boom in the area, some of which were returning sailors and their families that had undergone training at the Navy base. Beginning in the 1960s, age and urban sprawl began to give way to a lethargic malaise as shopping centers and big box retailers opened to the west. The downtown area hit bottom in the early 1980s after two recessions and the close of the Sunrise Theater.

In 1988, Main Street Fort Pierce was formed. Step by step, Main Street, working in conjunction with the City, began to chip away at the deterioration. Buildings were redone and public investment helped spark private enterprise. Residential development followed, the flagship being the five story Renaissance mixed-use development. The Sunrise Theater reopened and only the Great Recession slowed the downtown’s dramatic rebirth.

## Demographics

The 2010 Census found the City’s population to be 41,590 with approximately 21,400 housing units and 15,200 households. The racial makeup of the City was 52% White, 43% African American and other races or those of two or more races composed the remainder. Hispanics of any race

Table 1: Age Distribution

Age Group	Percent
Under 5	8%
5 to 15	14%
15 to 25	15%
25 to 35	13%
35 to 45	12%
45 to 55	13%
55 to 65	10%
65 to 75	8%
75 to 85	6%
85 and over	2%
Median Age	35

composed 22% of the population. Homes, where a language other than English was spoken, composed 25% of the total. The median household income was \$31,600 (the state average was \$47,700) and almost 30% of the City’s population lived below the poverty line.

As can be seen from Table I on page 3, the population spread reasonably evenly over the spectrum with those under 25 being the largest group.

The City had almost 11,000 residents enrolled in school and 55% of those over 25 have completed high school, but no college degree. 9% have a Bachelor and an additional 4% have an advanced degree. 32% have less than a high school diploma.

## Commerce

Most of the area’s employment is in the government and service industries. Table 2 lists the Fort Pierce area’s principal employers.

Table 2: Principal Employers

Employer	Employees	Percent
St. Lucie County School Board <sup>9</sup>	4,946	.50
Lawnwood Regional Medical	1,500	2.88
Indian River State College	1,037	1.99
Walmart Distribution Center	650	1.25
City of Fort Pierce	357	0.69
United States Postal Service	350	0.67
Tropicana Products Inc.	340	0.65
New Horizons / Treasure Coast	300	0.58
Fort Pierce Utilities Authorities	286	0.55
Drawdy Brothers Construction	200	0.38
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,966</b>	<b>19.14</b>

Source: Economic Development Council of St. Lucie County

Table 3: Climate data for Port Saint Lucie, Florida

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Year
Average High °F	74	75	79	82	86	90	92	91	90	86	81	76	83
Average Low °F	51	52	56	61	67	71	72	72	72	67	60	54	63
Rainfall Inches	2.7	2.9	3.3	2.8	4.4	5.8	5.8	6.4	7.8	5.8	3.5	2.3	53.5

Source: Economic Development Council of St. Lucie County

While much of the downtown has been renovated, many opportunities remain. The Redevelopment Agency has actively sought to assemble parcels to prepare the way. The City is also home to Florida’s smallest port and 87 acres of undeveloped land sit immediately adjacent to the downtown and port. Its location and its transportation network (including the Florida Turnpike, Interstate 95, the St. Lucie County International Airport and the Port of Fort Pierce) make it an attractive place to be.

## Geography

Fort Pierce covers 29 square miles and is located on Florida’s east coast 130 miles north of Miami, 120 miles southeast of Orlando, 150 miles southeast of Tampa and 225 miles south of Jacksonville.

## Climate

Fort Pierce features a warm tropical savanna climate. Summers are usually hot, with temperatures averaging low 90s. Winters are usually mild to warm, with average temperatures around 70s°F. The average yearly precipitation is around 53.5 inches. See Table 3 below.

## The Government

The City of Fort Pierce’s choice of government is the Commission/Manager form. The five (5) member Commission consists of a Mayor and four (4) Commissioners. The City is divided into two districts, each with two Commissioners. Mayor is elected at large. All the elected officials serve staggered four year terms. The Commission is charged with the responsibility of establishing policies and enacting ordinances and resolutions. Historically, the City Commission has been quite stable. The elected officials get



along reasonably well although emotions are on display from time to time. They all have a high regard for staff. The City Manager, City Attorney, and City Clerk are appointed by the Commission. The Commission also oversees the work of the Independent Auditor.

Fort Pierce has all the services normally associated with a municipality and then some. These include police, parks maintenance, streets, engineering, sanitation, stormwater, community redevelopment, code enforcement, planning and zoning, and general administration. The City also operates a marina, golf course and the Sunrise Theater. Gas, electric, water and wastewater treatment are provided through the Fort Pierce Utility Authority. It is governed by a separate board which is appointed by the City Commission. A county fire district provides fire/EMS services.

The City's General budget for 2015/2016 is \$35.8 million and its total budget is \$64,455,403. The City has 358 authorized full-time equivalent employees. The largest groups are police (157 employees) and Public Works (62 employees). The City's most significant enterprise funds are the golf course, the Sunrise Theater, the Marina, solid waste and building.

The City Attorney function is presently provided by outside counsel through an arrangement where four attorneys have offices at City Hall. The budget for the Attorney's Office for the current fiscal year is \$605,000. While the City would like to save money by bringing the function in-house, that is not its primary goal.

## The Challenges

The first and foremost challenge will be to hire staff and establish an internal office. That will involve determining resource and staffing needs. The City expects some functions will continue to be handled by outside counsel and hence part of the establishment effort will be to determine an appropriate mix of internal staff and external counsel. Fortunately, the current City Attorney is committed to assisting the new City Attorney in making the transition as smoothly as possible. The second major challenge will be to establish policies and standard operating procedures

for the office. It is anticipated that the new City Attorney will review what is currently being utilized and replace or modify as he/she deems appropriate. The final challenge will be to develop relationships with the elected officials and staff. All are eager to work with the new Attorney and to assist with the transition. Hence, while the magnitude of the effort necessary to establish a new office will be significant, it will have widespread support.

## The Ideal Candidate

The City Commission of Fort Pierce is looking for an individual who will partner with the elected officials and staff to solve problems while also being a supporter and a trusted advisor. The ideal candidate will work diligently to protect the legal interests and assets of the City. At the same time, he/she will find the most effective solution to the problem, even if it involves some risk. The individual will exhibit independent judgment as well as the highest level of professionalism, ethics, and dedication.

The City Attorney will be an outstanding leader and manager. Both characteristics will be critical to the Attorney's success. He/she will supervise an office of three or four people and must understand how to motivate and manage staff. The individual will understand politics, but is not to be involved in them. The ideal candidate will be responsive and well-studied, generally already knowing the answer to questions that are posed. When he/she does not know the answer, he/she will say so and, after appropriate research, provide the correct answer promptly. The City Attorney will give all five members of the Commission same information and keep them all equally and well informed.

The City Attorney will review issues with an open mind and, when applying the law, actively seek ways to "get the City where it wants to go." The emphasis is on being a facilitative attorney rather than a prescriptive attorney - on working with people to accomplish their ends (within the law) and on finding solutions. The individual will tell people how to get things done, not that they cannot be done. If a staff member wants to do something, the answer should not be, "Sorry but that won't work." Rather it will be, "Well, we really can't do X but if we do Y, we can get you to where you want to go." Simply stated, it will be important for the candidate to aggressively seek solutions. If one wants to practice preventive law and operate solely within the confines of past practice and precedent, it would be best to seek a position other than being Fort Pierce's City Attorney. He/she will have an appropriate level of impatience with bureaucracy and be focused on helping move the City forward.

The ideal candidate will be an exceptional manager, someone who is just as comfortable in the City Attorney role overseeing day-to-day operations as practicing the law. He/she will understand and have experience with budgets, staff management and setting priorities. The individual will ensure staff members have the resources needed to effectively perform their job duties. The ideal candidate will be a mentor and focus on developing staff. He/she will recognize the importance of and build a strong, pro-active and dynamic team within the office. The individual will be fair and have a sense of humor.

Communications and interpersonal skills will be very important. The City Attorney will interact with a wide variety of people from different backgrounds and need to communicate with individuals from all levels of the community in a variety of settings. He/she will be very open and approachable. Good listening skills are critical. It will be important that he/she be viewed as cooperative and be able to build consensus both inside and outside the government.

The position requires a Juris Doctor (J.D.) degree and licensure to practice law in Florida. Ten years of increasingly responsible experience in management and the practice of law (preferably municipal), is required. The City also hopes the Attorney to have experience and/or knowledge of private property seizure involving criminal convictions (drug offenses) for the forfeiture of assets.

## Residency

The City Commission has agreed to require the City Attorney to live within the City limits.

## Compensation

The starting salary range for the next City Attorney is \$99,000 to \$184,000 and benefits are excellent. The City anticipates paying at the upper end of the range.

## Reciprocity

Florida does not have reciprocity with any other state. Further, the City Code of Ordinances requires the Attorney currently be a member in good standing of the Florida Bar.

## How to Apply

E-mail your resume and cover letter to [Recruit37@cb-asso.com](mailto:Recruit37@cb-asso.com) by January 22nd. Faxed and mailed resumes will



not be considered. Questions should be directed to Colin Baenziger of Colin Baenziger & Associates at (561) 707-3537 or Kathryn Knutson at (715) 282-3595.

## The Process

Applicants will be screened between January 22nd and February 29th. Finalist interviews are scheduled for March 10th. A selection of the City Attorney will be made shortly thereafter.

## Other Important Information

The City is an Equal Opportunity Employer and encourages women and minorities to apply. Under the Florida Public Records Act, all applications are subject to disclosure upon receipt. Veteran's preference will be awarded under applicable Florida law.

COLIN BAENZIGER  ASSOCIATES

EXECUTIVE RECRUITING