



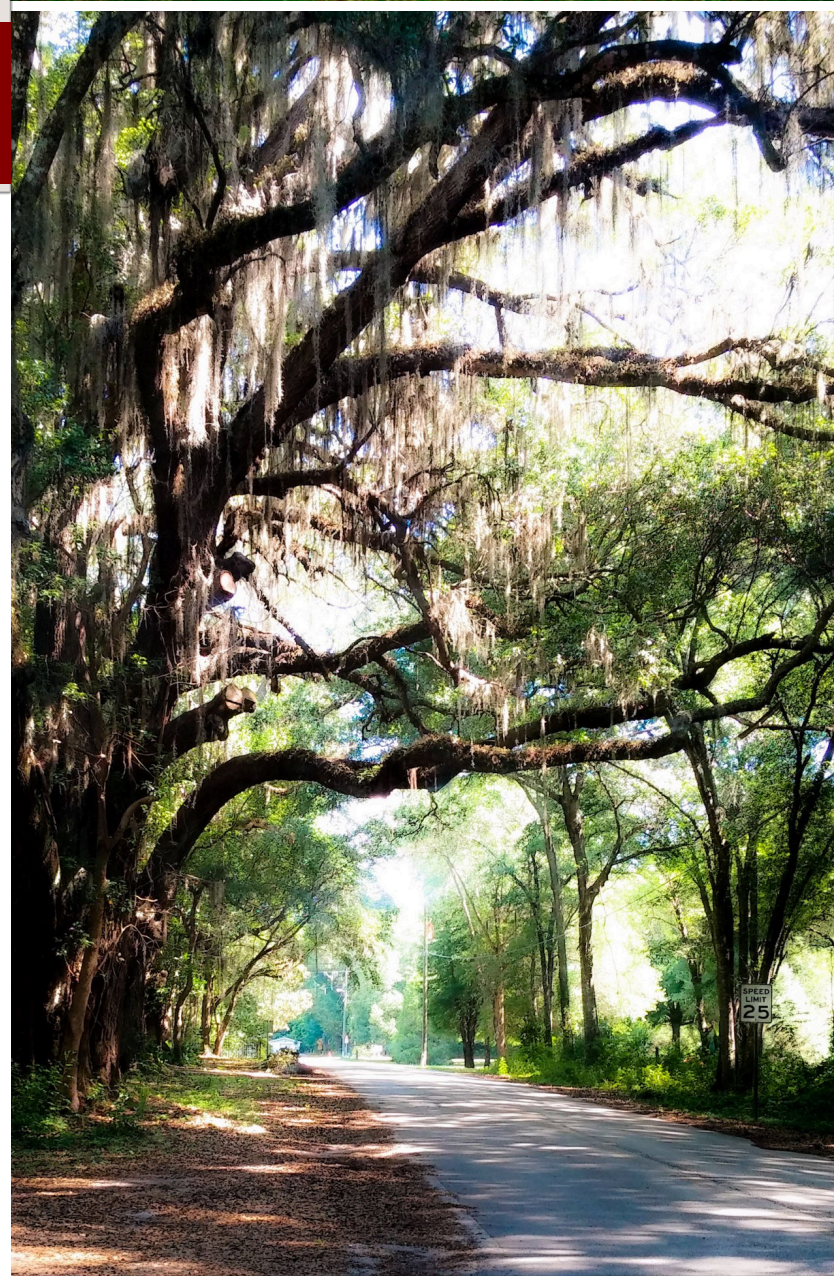
— Position Re-opened —

Looking for a Few More Great Candidates

CITY ADMINISTRATOR

*Apply ASAP but no later than November 10, 2023

Welcome to Lake Helen, one of Florida's best kept secrets—and its residents like it that way. The City is an oasis of tranquility—a beautiful small town that will remind you of the Florida of yesteryear. Many homes are over 100 years old, but so well maintained that only their architectural style gives their age away. While the main roads are paved, many of the others are not. Huge live oak trees abound and line the streets. It is not unusual to spot a family of sandhill cranes walking through your yard. Lake Helen is a place where you can escape the hustle and bustle of city life, while still being near virtually everything. Midway between Orlando and Daytona Beach, drive northeast 30 minutes and you can reach one of the world's most recognized beaches. Drive 30 minutes south and you will reach Orlando's big city lights and several internationally renowned amusement parks. Cape Canaveral is the home of the Kennedy Space Center, the hub of the nation's human space program, as well as SpaceX. Cape Canaveral is about 65 miles from Lake Helen, and residents are close enough to watch the rockets launch from their yards.



The area is known for its beautiful natural landscapes (including forests, lakes, and wetlands) which provide plenty of opportunity for outdoor activities like camping, fishing, boating, and hiking. Florida is well-known for its natural beauty and plentiful water supply, and Central Florida is one of the best places in America for springs. Fourteen miles to the north is De Leon Springs State Park. The spring is the main attraction of the 625-acre park and provides activities for anyone who loves the outdoors. Swimming and snorkeling are favorites with water that is 73-degrees year-round. For those who like the water but wish to stay dry, kayaks, canoes, and paddleboats are available to rent. Opportunities for fishing, bow fishing, hiking and birdwatching are featured park activities. In fact, the park is located on the Great Florida Birding Trail.

The famous Blue Spring can be found west of Lake Helen and is the centerpiece of the popular Blue Spring State Park. Here you will find interactive water activities such as fishing, boating and scuba diving through underwater caves. One of Blue Spring's most extraordinary attractions is the manatees that congregate here from November through March. While no water activities are allowed while the manatees occupy the Spring, the "sea cows" make for a beautiful sight from the water's edge.

Lake Helen is home to six parks, with two that include lakes and offer plenty of opportunities to enjoy the outdoors. Blake Park is a five-acre park where you will find the farmer's market every Saturday morning. Many annual community events are held starting with the March Strawberry Fest with live music, a dog frisbee show, monster truck rides, axe throwing, kids' events, and, of course, strawberry shortcake. Other events include the Easter Egg Hunt and Spring Carnival, the Lake Helen Car Show, the July 4th Celebration, and the Art Festival and Health Fair. Blake Park offers basketball, shuffleboard, and tennis courts along with a community center, playground, pavilion, and picnic areas.

The Lake Helen Equestrian Center is approximately five acres and boasts a professional outdoor rodeo arena, spacious horse stalls, practice arena, public picnic area, exercise trail, and playground. Better yet, the facilities and exercise trail connect to the Florida trail system.

The Mitchell Brothers Sports Complex encompasses three baseball/softball fields and a practice field, viewing stands, concessions, and playground area. The independent Lake Helen Little League and surrounding city leagues use the fields on a continuous basis during the baseball season. On the east end of the complex is a wooded trail extending from Ohio Avenue to Kicklighter Road that is used by Volusia Pines Elementary school children, bicyclists and avid community trail walkers and hikers. Other activities in and around Lake Helen include a host of parks, golf courses and fairground events.

Historians can meander through more than a century of history at the Lake Helen Museum which shares the building with City Hall and was once an active school. In fact, many current residents attended there. The Lake Helen Historic District consists of 71 historic buildings. Adjacent DeLand has several museums as well, including the African American Museum of the Arts, the West Volusia Historical Society, the Henry A. DeLand House Museum, the Museum of Art, and more.

Those who love the theater will enjoy the local Shoestring Theater in Lake Helen as well as many other performing arts venues in the area. These include the historic Athens Theater in DeLand, the Wayne Densch Performing Arts Center in Sanford, the Spotlight Theatre of Central Florida in Geneva, the Seaside Music Theater in Daytona Beach, the Winter Park Playhouse, the Orlando Shakespeare Theater, Central Florida Performing Arts in Orlando, and the Dr. Phillips Center also in Orlando. Disney World, Universal Studios and SeaWorld all lie about 45 minutes' drive to the southwest. Daytona Beach with its world-renowned beaches and Speedway are about a 30-minute drive to the northeast.

For those who like to travel, Orlando International Airport is approximately an hour south and a jumping off point to anywhere in the world. More limited service can be found about 30 minutes away at Daytona Beach International Airport (to the northeast) and Orlando-Sanford International Airport (to the southwest). The latter offers some excellent domestic fares for those with flexible travel plans. If you like to cruise, Port Canaveral is 70 minutes southeast and is the busiest multi-day cruise port in the world.



Lake Helen is primarily a residential community. Most residents own their home, and lots tend to be large. Recent sales of nice three-bedroom/two bath homes have ranged between \$450,000 and \$550,000, though newly constructed homes will run higher. Lake Helen is a safe community and crime rates are about a third of the national average.

Public schools in Lake Helen are above average. The City has two elementary schools, Volusia Pines Elementary School and The Ivy Hawn Charter School of the Arts which is a high performing, tuition-free public charter school. Local middle and high schools lie outside the city limits. Numerous vocational, college and university opportunities are nearby in the Orlando/Daytona Beach metroplex. One of the better known is Stetson University in adjacent DeLand.

Known for its laid-back lifestyle, Lake Helen is a place to walk or ride your bike on lazy, sun dappled lanes. Stop a few minutes and chat with your neighbors. You'll always get a friendly wave and a smile. So, if you are a seasoned manager looking for a relaxed environment, please dust off your resume and apply.

HISTORY

Often referred to as the "Gem of Florida," Lake Helen was founded by Henry DeLand in 1888. He was attracted to the beauty of the land's clear lakes and the rolling and spacious longleaf pine forests, once described as "lying like a string of pearls encased in living green." So inspired was DeLand with the natural splendor of the Lake Helen area that he named the town for his daughter.

Lake Helen was originally a destination spot for New Englanders anxious to retreat from the



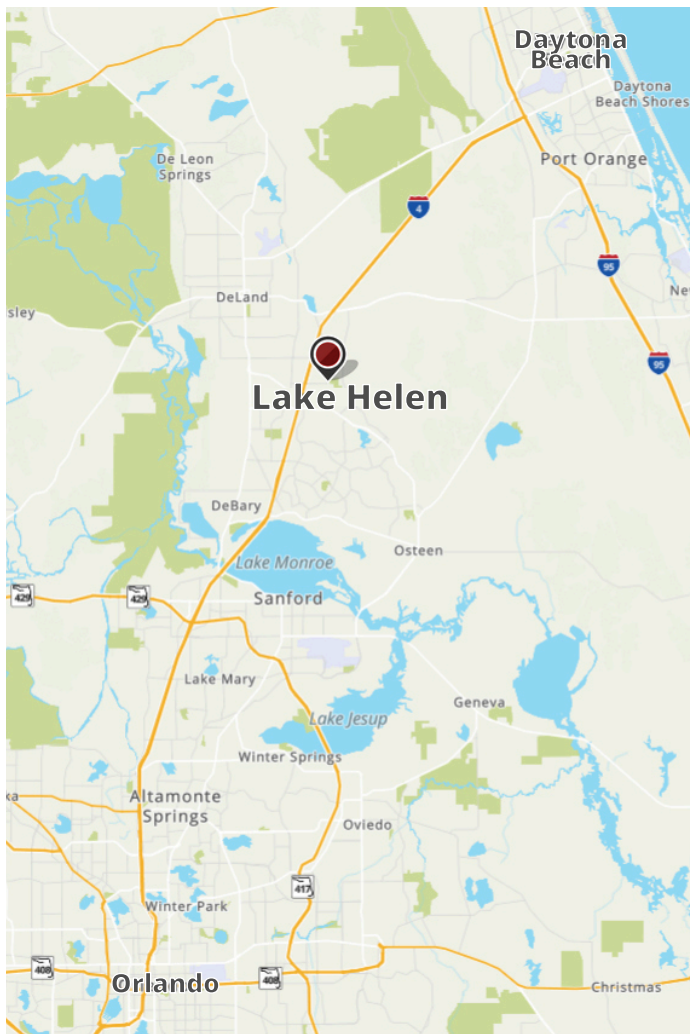


Figure 1: Location of Lake Helen, FL

harsh winters. Citrus groves were planted and thrived, a sawmill and the Bond Brick Company were established.

Lake Helen grew quickly and most of the new homes were built from the local southern yellow pine. Many of these homes still stand today as a tribute to the craftsmanship of the times. Sadly, the “big freeze” struck during the winter of 1894 and 1895, and most of the citrus trees were destroyed. While some replanted, many left and the City was never quite the same.

In many ways, time seems to have passed Lake Helen by. It continues to be a quaint little community off the beaten path, with tree-lined streets and a slow pace that is ever so inviting. As one of the prettiest and most pleasant towns in Florida, residents are proud of the well-preserved historic architecture and small-town atmosphere.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Overall, Lake Helen has a population of 3,136. In many ways, the City’s demographics reflect those of the nation as a whole. For example, the median age of its residents is 38.5 while the median age nationwide is 38.1. What differentiates the City from many Florida communities it is less diverse, and it does not have a disproportionately large retirement population. In fact, most of Lake Helen’s residents are between the ages of 25 and 65.

CLIMATE

Lake Helen's climate is warm and temperate. The weather is quite beautiful with around 232 sunny days per year and an average temperature of 70.2°F. The annual average high temperature falls at 81.2°F and the annual average low temperature is 59.1°F, and the area receives an average of 58.06 inches of rainfall each year. While hurricanes have been known to pass through the area, they reach Lake Helen when the worst of the storm’s energy is spent, and the most serious threat is tree damage and minor flooding.

GEOGRAPHY

Lake Helen is located in Volusia County in East Central Florida. The City is located 25 minutes from Daytona Beach and 50 miles from Disney World. Its total land area is 4.72 miles, of which 4.55 square miles are land and .17 square miles are water. The largest lake in the City is Lake Helen.

Residents are proud that their City is the last remaining community that looks like what Florida was before the I-4 Corridor existed. It has worked tirelessly on developing its old Florida brand and protecting its historic ambience. Even today, while Florida is growing rapidly, there is no traffic light in Lake Helen and many of the City’s roads are unpaved.

COMMERCE

The City is almost exclusively residential. Commerce is very limited and consists primarily of a number of small contractors and one very well-regarded restaurant/sub shop, Papa’s Subs and Pizza.

THE GOVERNMENT

The Mayor and City Commission serve as Lake Helen’s governing body and set policies and rules by which the City is operated. The mayor is elected, presides over City Commission meetings, and serves as the ceremonial head of the government. The other four members of the City Commission represent one of four zones and must reside in the zone they represent. All are elected at large. The term of office for all seats are two years, and there are no term limits. A new Commission will be sworn in on November 9, 2023. The most experienced member of the new Commission will be entering their third term, one will be entering their second term, one will be in the last year of their first two-year term, and one Commissioner and the Mayor will be new. The Commission appoints the City Attorney and the City Administrator.

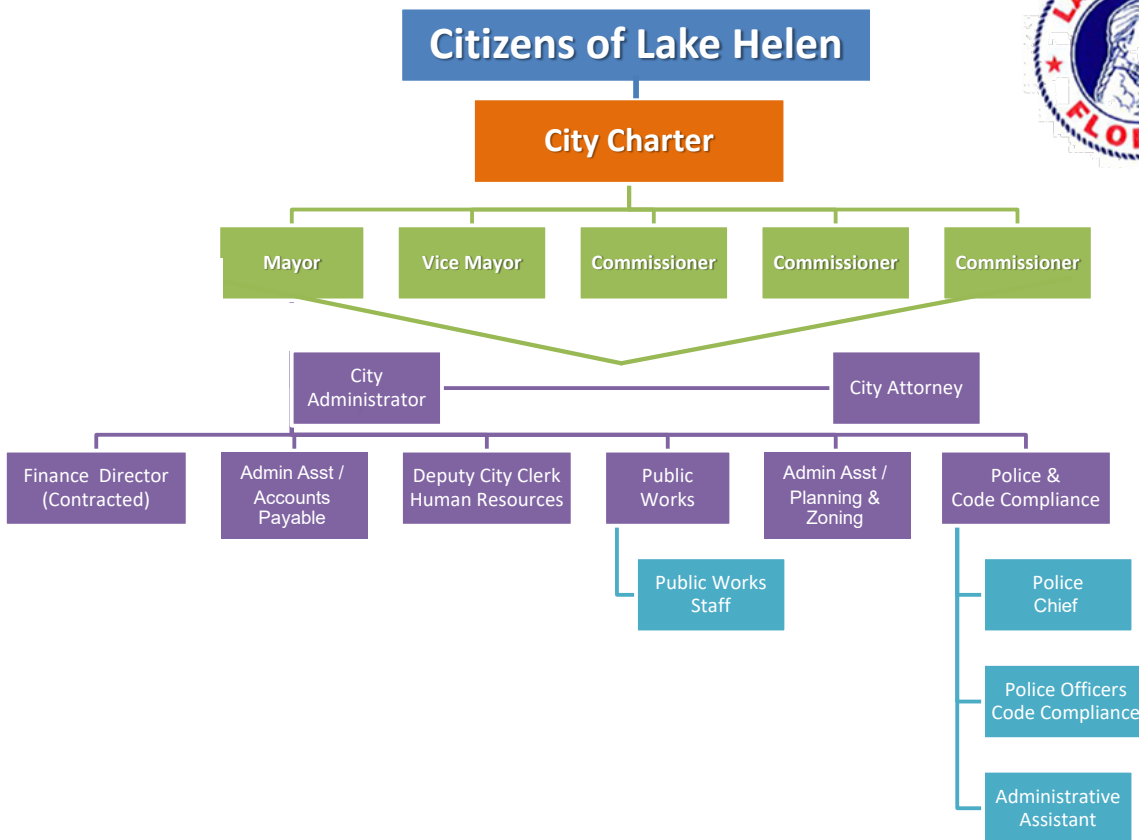
The City Administrator has the typical City Manager responsibilities and duties except all hiring and firing decisions

must be approved by the City Commission. The Administrator is appointed and dismissed by a simple majority of the Commission. The Administrator also serves as the City Planner (although the actual planning is handled via contractual services), City Treasurer (handled by the City Finance Director - also by contract) and the Deputy City Clerk (handled by a staff person).

Not counting the City Administrator, the city has 15 full-time employees with three vacancies that may be filled in the new fiscal year and one newly funded position in the Police Department. The City’s total budget is \$4,730,000 and the General Fund Budget is \$3,636,000.

The City provides the following services: Police, Planning and Zoning, Public Works including water treatment and distribution, Fire by contract, Solid Waste by contract, Stormwater improvements and maintenance, Building Inspections by contract, Code Enforcement with a Magistrate,

City of Lake Helen



IT Services by contract and Human Resources. Police Officers are represented by a union and the first contract is expected to be approved in October 2023.

THE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Lake Helen is a fiscally sound community and has the typical challenges one would expect in a community of its size. The City has an award-winning Master Plan. That said, the City Administrator will be very busy.

The City has significant infrastructure projects in the planning and/or early stages of implementation. The first is the reconstruction of the water distribution system. The pipes are old, and many are of insufficient diameter to meet future (as well as some current) needs. For example, water pressure is often insufficient to fight fires in the area. In addition to increasing the sizes of the mains, they are replacing water meters. Additionally, as an older City, it does not have an adequate stormwater system, and when a significant storm strikes the area, the water can linger for quite some time. The third significant infrastructure issue is City Hall was built as a school in 1916, and mold was found on the second floor. It was caused by a leaky roof that is currently being replaced. Once the roof is finished, they will remediate the mold and reopen the second floor.

Another issue is the City Charter has not been updated in many years and some of the updates made previously contradict other sections of the Charter. An update of the Charter is very important, but prior efforts have failed to obtain voter approval. The next Administrator will need to work with the elected officials and public to build community support around a charter revision.

Working with FEMA will be an important task for the next Administrator. Some questions have been raised about reimbursements from recent storms. Navigating the process for the best outcome for Lake Helen will require finesse and diligence.

Social media has played an important and often negative role in the community. The next City Administrator will need to find ways to promptly correct erroneous information and develop trust in the city government.

Housing prices and the type of homes available currently prohibit young families from moving into Lake Helen. Affordable housing would help, and a large, undeveloped land parcel lies on the other side of I-4, overlapping the DeLand and Lake Helen city boundary. This parcel is slated for mixed use development with commercial development (including restaurants and a hotel) on the DeLand portion of the parcel and a 348 affordable apartment unit on the Lake Helen piece. Ownership of this land recently changed hands and the new developer has put the construction of the apartment units on hold. The next Administrator should plan to work with the developer to help to expedite the construction of the affordable housing or find an alternative solution that will not impact the historical ambiance of the community.

Other challenges include filling vacant positions, conducting a compensation review of employees (particularly in the police department), and finding ways to support the police department and the schools.

THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

The Commission is seeking an outstanding leader and manager to be its next City Administrator (CA). The individual will have a demonstrated track record of achievement. The individual will be a consensus and team builder who knows how to balance competing points of view and find common ground. He/she will be a motivator and not someone who spends most of her/his time behind a desk. Rather the individual will be a leader who is in the field with the staff and in the community with the public. Lake Helen is a small town with a limited number of staff meaning he/she will need to be a hands-on working CA.

The Commission wants someone to work with it as a partner and a trusted advisor. She/he will be open and honest with the Commission, staff, and the public with a focus on regular communication with all parties. The individual will be confident and strong in presenting ideas. The Commission is definitely not looking for a “yes” person, but the CA will also recognize the chain of command and that the Commission has the final say. The individual will ensure all the Commission Members have the same information at the same time and that there will be no surprises.



The Administrator will have excellent communications skills and know how to relate to a wide variety of constituents, whether rich or poor, highly educated or less so, no matter what race or ethnicity. In other words, he/she will keep everyone informed and be able to bridge divides. It will be important to develop strategies that communicate clearly to the residents how policies and projects will benefit the community as a whole and them in particular. As noted, social media can have a very negative impact. Consequently, the individual will be quick to correct misinformation and misconceptions. He/she will be proactive in telling the City's story while being completely transparent and honest.

Customer service will not be just a catchy phrase with the Administrator but rather, along with integrity and a strong moral compass, a core principle and a way of life. She/he will be someone who leads by example and encourages the staff to find ways to get to yes within the bounds of the law and ordinances. The City is looking for someone trustworthy along with high ethical standards and integrity. The individual will ensure that rules and services are consistently applied to all.

Due to the size of the organization, the Administrator must be very organized and willing and able to wear many hats. Where possible, the Administrator will delegate and encourage an environment that inspires creativity. He/she will not be a micromanager. Rather the ideal candidate will give assignments, set broad performance parameters, and expect results. While employees will be encouraged to be innovative, they will also be held accountable.

Personally, the individual will be intelligent, upbeat, friendly, outgoing, and relentlessly

positive – someone with a "can do" attitude and who is visionary yet practical. She/he will also be consistent, cheerfully persistent, high energy, and definitely not a bureaucrat.

In terms of specific skills, the individual will have demonstrated success in management, budgeting and finance, planning and land development and redevelopment, emergency management, working with FEMA, and grant writing. Knowledge of and experience in working with community groups and agencies and in intergovernmental relations will also be important to the individual's success.

The ideal candidate will have at least a bachelor's degree, and preferably a master's, in business administration, public administration, public policy or related field and five to seven years of increasingly responsible experience as a senior level government or private sector executive. Experience working in a small community will be an asset.

Finally, the City is looking for someone who will recognize this job for the tremendous opportunity it is and be willing to make a long-term commitment to the City and organization.

COMPENSATION

The salary range is \$105,000 to \$145,000 and the salary will depend on qualifications and experience. Benefits are excellent. The Administrator will be part of the Florida Retirement System. As a side note, Florida is one of nine states in the U.S. that does not have a state income tax.

THE MOST RECENT CITY ADMINISTRATOR

The present City Administrator is leaving after three years of service with the City.

RESIDENCY

While there is no residency requirement for the City Administrator, he/she should plan to live close enough to be available during emergencies.

HOW TO APPLY

E-mail your cover letter and resume to Recruit22@cb-asso.com ASAP, but no later than November 10, 2023. Applications will be screened as they arrive. Faxed and mailed resumes will not be considered. Questions should be directed to Ron Williams at (305) 338-8990, Colin Baenziger at (561) 707-3537, or Lynelle Klein at (970) 433-7189.

INTERNAL CANDIDATES

There are no internal candidates.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Under Florida's public records act, once an application is submitted, it is deemed a public record. As a practical matter, this search may not receive any media coverage until after the semi-finalists are named, and perhaps not even then.

THE PROCESS

Applications will be screened as they arrive so please hurry. Finalists will be selected on December 5th. A reception and interviews will be held on December 14th and 15th. A selection will be made shortly thereafter.

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Lake Helen invites all to apply and does not discriminate on the basis of religion, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or parental status.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For additional information about the city, visit:

www.lakehelen.org

business.westvolusiaregionalchamber.org