



## City Manager Position Open - Apply by March 20, 2015



**Potential!** Yes, that is the best way to characterize Palm Bay, Florida. Covering 100.24 square miles, Palm Bay is the 7th largest city in Florida by land area and 18th largest by population. Yet it has only just begun to tap its potential. The city's estimated build-out population is between 300,000 and 350,000 and only 40% of the land is developed. In fact, at build-out, it is likely to become the fourth most populous city in Florida, just behind Tampa and well ahead of Orlando. What the City needs now is the right city manager to help it fulfill its destiny. If you are the consummate professional, an outstanding manager and someone with vision and superb leadership skills, please apply.

Located in Brevard County on Florida's East Coast approximately 70 miles southeast of Orlando, Palm Bay is rich in natural resources and provides numerous opportunities for outdoor adventure and eco-tourism. A drive on the National Scenic Highway along the Indian River Lagoon, the gateway to the City, provides residents and visitors with a view of



scenic waterfronts. Parks are plentiful – 29 in all – as is open space.

A major attraction in the City is the Turkey Creek Sanctuary. A tributary of the Indian River, Turkey Creek is a 4 mile-long waterway that runs through Palm Bay. Guided tours offer views of two distinct habitats, each home to endangered plants and animals. The Sanctuary also offers 9 miles of biking trails, a 4,000 foot boardwalk, a nature trail and 1.5 miles of jogging trails. The Sanctuary can also be accessed by canoe or kayak where you'll be close to the abundant wildlife. The newly renovated Castaways Point Park provides one of the few natural beaches along the Indian River Lagoon.

Virtually everything you could want or need is here or within an hour's drive. In fact, Palm Bay may well be the best kept secret in Central Florida. Numerous golf courses dot the area, including the Major's Golf Club. Not too far away are the Brevard County Zoo and Space Coast Stadium where you can catch some minor league baseball and the Washington Nationals spring training, the latter through 2016. Professional sports fans can easily get to see the Orlando Magic, Tampa Bay Bucs, Jacksonville Jaguars and Tampa Bay Rays. A little farther away are the Miami Dolphins and Florida Marlins. If you like to travel, Melbourne International Airport is 15 minutes away. Broader service is available at Orlando International and Orlando Sanford International Airports, an hour and an hour and a half away respectively. The cruise ship terminal at Port Canaveral is 45 minutes north and hosted 4.2 million passengers in 2014 and plans to become the largest cruise port in the world by late 2017 in terms of passenger volume.

Unusual for its size and cultural diversity, Palm Bay retains a small town feel and sense of community. Residents are friendly, down-to-earth and hardworking. They help their neighbors and want the best for their



community. It is family-focused community and humble in spite of the great things on the horizon. It is also a safe city and in 2011 was named the safest city in Brevard County. A wide variety of housing options are available and all are very reasonably priced. For example, a four bedroom, three bath home on the Indian River Lagoon can be had for a little over \$300,000. Further, the City’s undeveloped property provides a feeling of open space – and opportunity.

Educational opportunities are excellent and include 24 excellent public and private K through 12 schools with highly rated charter schools and career academies. Eastern Florida State College, Palm Bay Campus, prides itself on providing associate and baccalaureate education as well as serving as a regional campus for the University of Central Florida. It also has offerings from Webster University and Barry University.

### History

The Timucua people, attracted to the mouth of Turkey Creek at the Indian River by freshwater springs, fish, oysters, and wildlife, are thought to have been the first inhabitants in the Palm Bay area. The City’s recent history began in the 1850s when the first European settlers built homes along Turkey Creek. By the mid-nineteenth century, the area boasted a lumbering operation, a packing house, and orange groves. The railroad arrived in 1894 and goods could be shipped much more quickly to and from market.

In the 1920s, the city was renamed after the bay bordered with palm trees known as Palm Bay, located at the mouth of Turkey Creek. A group of local businessmen established the Melbourne-Tillman Drainage District. Starting in 1922, a 180 mile grid of 80 canals was dug to drain 40,000 acres of swampy land west of Palm Bay. The canals made it possible to control flooding and turn marsh lands to agricultural use.

Palm Bay's modern history traces back to 1959, when the General Development Corporation (GDC) purchased land for a local residential project known as Port Malabar. The company then platted and subdivided the land and began selling the lots to individuals. The company declared bankruptcy in 1991 before much of the infrastructure (particularly water and sewer) was installed. GDC also

envisioned Palm Bay primarily as a community for retirees and set aside only a minimal amount of land for commerce and industry. As a result, most of the City’s labor force commutes to jobs in neighboring communities.

Palm Bay continues to grow largely due to its low housing costs and its proximity to the ocean and the Space Coast as well as to the other major areas and attractions of Central Florida.

### Demographics

With a population estimated to be 108,797, Palm Bay is the 18th largest city in Florida. In terms of age, the population is reasonably evenly distributed with a significant retiree population – 15.9% (see Table I).

Latest Census Bureau figures show 75.2% of the population is White, 16.9% is Black/African American, 1.7% is Asian and the remainder is composed of some other race or two or more races. 14.4% of the total population (all races) was of Hispanic ethnicity. In terms of education, 87% of the population over 25 years old have at least a high school degree and 11% have a Bachelor’s degree or higher. 2010 Census data estimated the median household income to be \$43,076 with 13.3% of all families falling below the poverty level. Owner occupied homes comprised 74.4% of the housing units.

Table I: Population by Age

Age Bracket	Percentage
Under 15	19.0%
15-24	13.0%
25-34	11.5%
35-44	11.6%
45-54	15.6%
55-64	13.4%
65-74	8.9%
75-84	5.2%
Over 85	1.8%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau



Table II: Palm Bay Principal Employers

Rank	Employer	# of Employees
1	Harris Corporation	3,596
2	Brevard School Board	1,611
3	City of Palm Bay	785
4	MC Assembly	598
5	Palm Bay Hospital	575
6	Intersil	412
7	Publix Supermarkets	410
8	Walmart	377
9	Brevard Community College	256
10	Winn-Dixie	234
11	AAR Airlift Corp.	165
12	The Home Depot	130

Source: Palm Bay 2013 CAFR

## Commerce

While offering many amenities and located very near the Atlantic Ocean, Palm Bay is not primarily a tourist destination. Rather it is a well-rounded community and a commercial center in its own right. The City's principal employers are shown on Table II.

## Climate

The climate is considered humid, subtropical with mild winters and warm, wet summers. See Table III for details.

Tropical storms affect the area from time to time but direct hits by hurricanes are quite rare in this part of Florida. In fact, a recent U.S. Navy study concluded the likelihood of a tropical storm striking this area was lower than most of the United States East Coast.

Table III: Monthly Normal Temperatures and Precipitation

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Average High °F	73	74	77	80	85	88	89	89	87	83	77	73
Average Low °F	54	56	69	64	68	72	74	74	74	69	62	56
Precipitation Inches	2.1	2.2	3.5	3.5	3.6	5.1	5.8	6.0	9.1	7.1	2.4	1.6

Source: Weatherbase

## Geography

Palm Bay is located approximately 60 miles southeast of Orlando on the Space Coast straddling Interstate 95. It is approximately midway between Jacksonville and Miami. The city covers 104.24 square miles. The land is very flat with an average elevation of 19 feet above sea level. The headwaters of the St. Johns River lie to the west and the Indian River Lagoon to the east.

## Government

Palm Bay is governed by a Council composed of a Mayor and four Council members, all elected at large. While candidates run for specific seats, the seats do not represent geographic districts. Council Members are limited to three terms of four years each in their respective seats. The elections are held in concert with the national elections in November. All serve staggered, four year terms. The Mayor is in his first term as Mayor but previously served a term as a Council Member. A second Council Member is in her second term. The other three members are in their first terms – the Deputy Mayor being elected two years ago and the other two this past November. One of the latter, however, had also served on the Council in the early 2000s. The current members are respectful of one another and recognize resources are very limited. While they do not agree on everything, they get along well and work well together. The Council is fiscally conservative and that is not expected to change. They are also respectful of staff and are comfortable with the operation as a whole.



The City Manager is appointed by the Council, and is charged with the responsibility of administering daily operations and implementing Council directives. City staff is recognized for its quality and dedication. Both the City Attorney and City Clerk are also appointed by the Council.

The City provides all the services normally associated with a municipality: police, fire, emergency medical services, parks and recreational activities, streets and parks maintenance, traffic engineering, sanitation, water, wastewater treatment, stormwater improvements, community redevelopment, code enforcement and planning and zoning. The police, fire and general employees are unionized.



The City's total budget for FY 2015 is \$133,196,544, including the General Fund, which makes up \$58,498,128 of that total. The budget contains funding for 748 FTE's. Of the full time employees, 230 are in police and 133 in fire. Property taxes comprise 40% of budget revenue for FY 2015. Total assessed taxable property values were \$2.9 billion in 2004 and doubled to \$5.8 billion in 2007 before declining to \$2.5 billion in 2012. Total assessed taxable value began to rise again beginning in 2013 and reached \$2.8 billion in 2015.

## The Opportunities and Challenges

While Palm Bay has incredible potential, it also has some significant challenges. The first and foremost is financial. While the City has done a good job of managing its resources and responding to its day-to-day needs, these resources are not sufficient to cover the City's long term needs. The community celebrates its 55th anniversary of incorporation this year and much of its infrastructure will need to be replaced relatively soon. For example, the City has over \$160 million in road work that needs to be done. The next manager will be expected to review the City's operations critically to determine what can be done to fund these



needs. Finding money to solve the City's short and long term needs will not be easy. Further, as with many communities, pensions loom as an issue. The City wants to be certain the plans are sustainable in the long run and when its employees retire, money will be there for their retirement.

The second challenge is the geographic distribution of homes within the City. As noted, GDC sold most of the lots to individuals. The homes were then built when people were ready to do so and where they owned their lots. The result is that today some neighborhoods are largely built-out while others have only a few homes scattered over many city blocks. From both a service delivery and maintenance perspective, the distribution of homes presents issues. Residents on streets with only a few homes have been paying taxes regularly yet the taxes dollars have not been sufficient to redo their roads. At the same, most of these homes use well water and septic systems. Money does not exist to lay the pipe throughout the City for the utilities. The result is the infrastructure is not adequate and costly to install and maintain.

A third issue is that the best way to fix the roads and / or install utility service would require a special assessment. Such assessments must be approved of the unit receiving the benefit. To date, voters have been very reluctant to tax themselves for these kinds of efforts. While residents recognize the need, they want the City to find some other way to pay for it.

Fourth, the City wants to focus on economic development. That would not only help with the tax base but also create jobs for those who commute elsewhere. Aside from having significant amounts of land on or just off the City's major roads, the southern end of the City offers some real opportunity. The land there was not part of the original Palm Bay and is in the hands of large landowners. A new I-95 interchange there has been funded and construction will be completed in 2018. Local landowners are excited about the new access point and a large, mixed use development project (presently referred to as Emerald City) is a real possibility. The Bayfront Community Redevelopment Agency District (BCRAD) also offers some strong possibilities that are largely unrealized. With approximately 4 miles of waterfront on the Indian River Lagoon (aka, the Intracoastal Waterway) and the Pelican Harbor Marina, the BCRAD is ripe for redevelopment.

Finally, the City is creating a brand / image. Rather than being known as a bedroom community, it wants to become a destination in its own right and a place that its citizens are proud to reside. Some of that is already happening as the City was ranked as the second best city in Florida for millennial job seekers by the website *nerdwallet*.

## The Ideal Candidate

Palm Bay is looking for an outstanding leader and manager who is creative and financially astute. He/she will be outgoing, confident, positive, proactive, responsive and involved. Superb communications skills will be critical as the individual will need to serve as an effective ambassador for the City. The individual will not spend a great deal of time behind a desk but will be in the field meeting with current and prospective businesses, residents and employees.

The manager will be a consensus builder, approachable and easy to talk to – not just someone who works for the City Council but someone who will partner with the Council Members and serve as a trusted advisor. While the elected officials will sometimes have strong opinions, they want to hear input from the staff. The next manager will be a straight shooter and not afraid to speak truth to power – diplomatically, of course (and privately to the degree possible). The City Council Members do not want a “yes” person. They expect the manager to present all the options, make a recommendation, defend that recommendation and then, if the City Council decides to do something else, carry out its wishes with enthusiasm. The Council Members also expect the manager to make decisions in the area he/she is responsible for. And there will be some difficult ones so this position is not for the meek. Of course, since the decisions often reflect on the elected officials they expect and need to be kept well informed. He/she must provide the same information to all parties. Integrity and honesty are critical. Being humble and willing to admit mistakes will be important to establishing that credibility.

The next manager will understand the role of transparency in government and believe in it. To be successful, the individual will need to build trust in the community. He/she will listen carefully and be comfortable relating complex concepts to people of all economic strata. The selected candidate will be friendly – that is how the people

here are and that is what they expect in their City Manager. The individual will be very customer service oriented and expect the employees to work in the same manner. The customer is not always right but should be treated with respect and given an honest answer to his/her concerns.

The next manager will understand the importance of the day-to-day activities and operations but will also understand today is a prelude to the future and the future must be planned for. The manager will also have high expectations for the staff and set high standards. The individual will realize one person cannot do it all and will delegate and expect results. Accountability will be important. He/she will also recognize the importance of being a buffer between the elected officials and the staff.

Skill in economic development, finance and public and private partnerships will be important. Palm Bay needs to create a larger economic and job base so finding and encouraging new businesses will be critical. Still intergovernmental relations cannot be ignored. In fact, the Council expects the Manager to maintain good relations with neighboring government, at all levels.

The ideal candidate will have a minimum of ten years of progressively responsible experience in management and at least two years overseeing the efforts of at least 200 employees. The Council recognizes the importance of experience in government but also wants to look at candidates with strong experience in the private sector. A Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university, with a major in administration, management or a related field, is required. A Master's degree is preferred.

Finally, the next manager will recognize Palm Bay's potential to be a star. That will not happen overnight so the ideal candidate will be someone who is committed to Palm Bay for the long term.

## Residency

Any city manager who is relocating from outside the area must move into the City. Anyone who currently lives in the area and who can commute is required to move into the City should he/she ever move from their present home.

## Compensation

The salary range is \$140,000 to \$180,000. The Council would prefer to pay in the lower half of the range but most recognize it may have to pay in the upper end of the range to get just the right person.

## The Interim City Manager

The Interim City Manager is not expected to apply for the position.

## How to Apply

E-mail your resume to [Recruit22@cb-asso.com](mailto:Recruit22@cb-asso.com) by March 20th. Faxed and mailed resumes will not be considered. Questions should be directed to David Collier at (772) 260-1858 or Colin Baenziger (561) 707-3537.

## The Process

Applications will be screened between March 21st and April 21st. Finalists will be selected on April 22nd. A reception and interviews will be held on Sunday, May 3rd and Monday, May 4th with a selection shortly thereafter.

## Other Important Information

Palm Bay 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