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Looking for a Few More Great Candidates

CITY ATTORNEY | Apply ASAP

Tucked away on the east coast of Florida a little south of Cape Canaveral, Sebastian is an attractive waterfront, family-oriented community that boasts a quiet, laidback charm. The area is a paradise surrounded by natural beauty. Just across the Intracoastal Waterway lie some of Florida's most attractive barrier islands, Sebastian Inlet State Park and Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge.

Surprisingly, given its location, Sebastian has maintained its small-town atmosphere without becoming a typical tourist destination, and residents like it that way. The City has a building height limit of 25 feet in some residential and commercial areas, and 35 feet in the others. A few resorts lie nearby with gorgeous ocean views, but they are not in the City. Daily life here is picturesque, with cool sea breezes, plentiful fishing, outdoor parks, and opportunities for bird watching. The right City Attorney will treasure Sebastian's relaxed, comfortable atmosphere, its leisure amenities, and the gorgeous natural landscapes surrounding it. In fact, Forbes Magazine recently recognized the area as the 35th Best Small Place for Business and Careers.



The City's downtown is home to several shopping plazas and numerous excellent restaurant choices that overlook the water. The seafood is especially fresh and plentiful. One of Sebastian's primary attractions is Mel Fisher's Treasure Museum. It is famous for teaching history alongside a collection of artifacts found along the beach and nearby— items that include pieces of eight dating back to the 1500s.

The hub of Sebastian is its Riverview Park, an area that offers a stunning view of the Intracoastal Waterway (also referred to as the Indian River Lagoon). Here residents gather for festivals, shows, fairs, and other free entertainment. The Christmas season brings the must see Christmas parade and a Christmas tree to the park, as well as a visit from Santa and Mrs. Claus. In mid-January, the City hosts the Sebastian Fine Arts and Music Festival. In mid-March, comes the Shrimp Fest & Craft Brew Hullabaloo. The Sebastian Lionfish Festival occurs in mid-May. You will not want to miss the 4th of July celebration. In early November, the City hosts the famous Sebastian Clambake. Nature events include Earth Day in April and the Pelican Island Wildlife Festival in May. On Friday night, you will find Concerts in the Park. Other important activities include honoring veterans on memorial holidays, the Halloween costume contest, the Chamber of Commerce Light up Night the day after Thanksgiving, and the Easter Bunny makes an appearance for the annual Easter egg hunt.

Hunting and fishing are popular—snook, snapper, grouper, redfish, bluefish, and Spanish mackerel are all abundant in the area. Fifteen miles to the west, near Fellsmere, lies the Stick Marsh, a 6,500 acre fresh-water reservoir, synonymous with trophy size giant Bass. An hour and a half southeast is Lake Okeechobee. Hunters will find deer, hogs, turkey and other birds nearby.

Residents enjoy 19 parks which offer sports facilities, hiking trails, dog parks, lakes and ponds, playgrounds, pickleball courts, skate parks, golf, and even a yacht club. The aforementioned Riverview Park itself features a small playground area, splash park, and a sidewalk along the lagoon that stretches for miles. The City has its own golf course – a true gem and a popular full-

service restaurant/sports bar in the golf course clubhouse facility. It is a great place to relax, be entertained, chat, or simply to enjoy the beauty the City has to offer. Nearby Vero Beach offers a symphony, opera and live theater.

Sebastian offers a variety of housing options. While the median home value is affordable at just under \$350,000, you can spend into the high six figures if you like. The community is considered very peaceful and the crime rates are low. The Police Department does a great deal of outreach and, as a result of that and good police work, Sebastian is a very safe city. Homelessness and opioids are not considered significant issues here. The schools are very good and, if you apply yourself, you can get an excellent education. A multitude of opportunities for higher education are nearby, the most notable being the University of Central Florida, Indian River State College, and Florida Atlantic University. Adjacent to Sebastian City Hall, an extension of Indian River State College offers courses toward Associate and Bachelor's degrees. Medical care in the area is excellent led by the Cleveland Clinic and the Sebastian River Medical Center (the former being in Vero Beach and latter being an acute care hospital barely outside city limits to the north).

Just across the Intracoastal Waterway, lies Sebastian Inlet State Park where recreation meets wildlife to create a gorgeous park for residents and visitors alike. Open 24 hours a day, the park provides many leisure activities. It is a favorite for saltwater anglers nationwide. Other facilities allow swimming, surfing, snorkeling, scuba diving, boating, and camping. The McLarty Treasure Museum in Vero Beach features the story of the Spanish treasure fleet which was destroyed by a hurricane just off the coast in 1715, and the Sebastian Fishing Museum traces the area's fishing heritage. Wildlife is abundant—casual visitors are generally able to see ospreys, shore birds, sea turtles, bottlenose dolphin, and manatees. Canoeing and kayaking in the Indian River Lagoon are two more available activities, and the mile-long Hammock Trail is a relaxing stroll at the end of the day.

Orlando, one of Florida's largest and best known cities, is only an hour and a half away and is home to some of the most visited vacation resorts in the world including Walt Disney World

Table I: Sebastian Demographics

Distribution by Race		Distribution by Age	
White	83.5%	0 to 14	10.4%
Black	4.7%	15 to 24	7.0%
Asian	1.4%	25 to 44	16.5%
Other	0.2%	45 to 64	31.3%
Two or More Races	10.2%	65 to 84	31.0%
Total	100%	Over 85	3.8%
Hispanic Ethnicity	8.9%	Estimated Population: 25,703	

Educational Achievement (Over Age 25)	
High School or Higher	93.6%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	30.1%

Other Statistics	
Median Age–Sebastian	56.1
Median Age–U.S.	38.8
Median Household Income–Sebastian	\$74,539
Median Household Income–U.S.	\$60,966
Poverty Rate	7.8%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Table II: Principal Employers, Indian River County, FL

Employer	Industry	Employees
Cleveland Clinic Indian River Hospital	Healthcare	2,112
School District of Indian River County	Public Education	2,039
Indian River County	Government	1,455
Publix Supermarkets	Grocery	1,380
Piper Aircraft, Inc.	Manufacturing	980
Walmart	Retail	806
Sebastian River Medical Center	Healthcare	750
Visiting Nurse Association	Healthcare/Hospice	500
John's Island (Residential / Resort)	Residential/Resort	495
Indian River Estates	Retirement Community	486

Source: City of Sebastian, FL 2022/2023 Budget

(hosting the Magic Kingdom, Epcot, Disney's Hollywood Studios, Disney's Animal Kingdom, and two water parks), Universal Studios (with its Islands of Adventure and the Wizarding World of Harry Potter World), and SeaWorld. A bit further away, lies LEGOLAND in Winter Haven.

Tampa and Miami lie just over two and a half hours away. They both offer seemingly endless opportunities for arts, culture, entertainment, and professional sports.

If you like to travel, Sebastian Municipal Airport (known as Florida's Boutique Airport) serves small personal and corporate aircraft and is a popular sky diving venue—one of the busiest and most attractive 'drop zones' in the country. Thirty minutes north is Melbourne International Airport offering one-stop connections worldwide. An hour and a half northeast are Orlando International Airport, the 17th busiest airport in the world, and Orlando/Sanford International Airport which offers direct flights by low cost carriers. The City enjoys convenient access to Port Canaveral, the second busiest cruise port in the world. A few hours further away are the first and third busiest—the Port of Miami and Port Everglades (in Fort Lauderdale). I-95, State Road 60, and U.S. Route 441 are near Sebastian and make traversing the state very easy. Best of all, there is very little traffic in the City.

Most importantly, though, are the people here. They are engaged in a positive way and live here because of the lifestyle and amenities. They simply love their City. Non-profits and other volunteer organizations play an important role here. This year's Sebastian Clambake Festival resulted in \$68,000 in grants given to community organizations.

In other words, Sebastian is an ideal combination of peaceful, small-town living while having the world at your fingertips. So it is easy to fall in love with the City. Combining quaintness with its quality of

Figure I: Location of the City of Sebastian, FL



life, natural beauty and accessibility, it is perfect place to settle down and take in the fresh air. This coastal treasure's beautiful seas await you.

## HISTORY

More than any other event, the sinking of the Spanish Treasure Fleet off the Florida coast in 1715 gave the Treasure Coast its name and Sebastian its fame. A fleet of twelve ships left Cuba, heavy laden with treasure and were driven into the Florida coast by a hurricane between the St. Lucie and Sebastian Inlets. In 1988, not far from the Sebastian Inlet, treasure hunters found an estimated \$300,000 in coins, jewelry and other artifacts that had been waiting on the ocean's bottom since the storm.

The first settlements in Sebastian date back to the 1880's when 40 pioneers migrated to a village south of the St. Sebastian River. Initially called Newhaven, the city was renamed Sebastian in 1884.

In the early 1890s, the predecessor of the Florida East Coast Railroad arrived in Sebastian on its way to the Florida Keys. At

the same time a commercial fishing industry and associated ice packing houses emerged.

Naturalists came to the area and America's National Wildlife Refuge System came into being in 1903 when President Teddy Roosevelt agreed to protect pelicans and other birds in a sanctuary known as Pelican Island Wildlife Refuge, just across the Intracoastal from Sebastian.

Sebastian incorporated as the "Town of Sebastian" in 1924 and then reincorporated in 1925 as the "City of Sebastian." In fact, Sebastian has just kicked-off its centennial celebration with a yearlong event ending in 2024. In 1987 the voters approved the change from a strong Mayor form of government to a Council/Manager form of government, that being the last major modification to the City Charter.

Between 1900 and the present time, Sebastian grew slowly to its present size of approximately 25,700 and is now the largest municipality in Indian River County.

## DEMOGRAPHICS

See Table 1 (top of page 3) for information on Sebastian demographics.

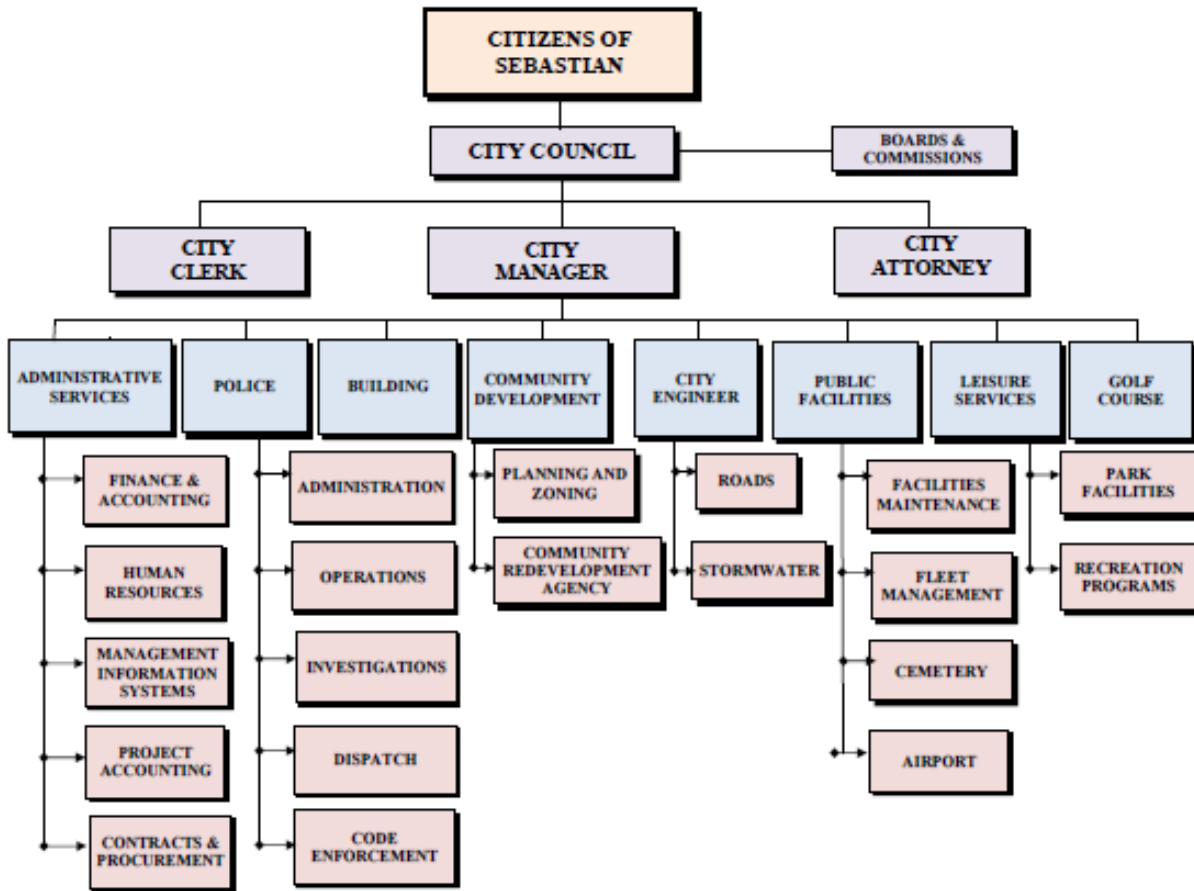
## CLIMATE

Sebastian experiences a subtropical climate with two primary seasons: a hot, humid rainy season (May to September) and a warm, dry season (October to April). High temperatures in the summers are in the low 90s and only rarely dip below the mid-70s. During the winter months, the temperatures typically range from the mid-50s to the mid-70s.

## GEOGRAPHY

Sebastian, FL has a total area of 14.42 square miles, 13.59 of which are land. The topography is very flat and the City lies 20 feet above sea level. Orlando lies about an hour and a half

**CITY OF SEBASTIAN, FLORIDA**  
**Organizational Chart**  
**Fiscal Year 2020/2021**



northwest, with Tampa, two and a half hours west, and Miami two and a half hours south.

## COMMERCE

Data for the Principal Employers in the City of Sebastian is not available. Table II (bottom of page 3) provides data for the top ten employers in Indian River County.

Agriculture and fishing support the local economy in Indian River County. The city itself does not foresee a great deal of business growth. The area's principal employers are primarily entities from the government and healthcare sectors.

## THE GOVERNMENT

The City of Sebastian follows the Council/Manager model. The governing body is a five-member City Council and it appoints a City Manager (as the Chief Operating Officer), the City Clerk and the City Attorney. Members of Council are elected to two-year terms and elections are staggered. Three members are elected in November of odd numbered years and two in November of even numbered years. Elections are non-partisan and all members are elected at-large. The Mayor is selected from among the Council Members by the members. The Council is very collegial, respectful of each other, and well prepared for meetings. The Council respects the Staff and allows them to do their jobs without interference. Council meetings are conducted in a friendly, professional manner and generally last about an hour and thirty minutes.

The City has been well managed and prides itself on providing high quality services at a reasonable cost. It offers all the typical city services except fire/rescue (provided by Indian River County) and utilities. The City also has a Municipal Golf Course and a General Aviation Airport (both of which breakeven). The City's total expenditure budget for FY 2022-2023 is \$46,222,192 while its general fund budget is \$14,984,153. Not surprisingly, public safety is the largest single component of the general fund budget at 46% of the whole. Special revenue funds (Local Option Gas Tax, Discretionary Sales Tax, Riverfront, and Stormwater as well as several smaller funds) account for \$8,038,286. The City has numerous capital projects and \$19,664,383 is allocated to them. Enterprise funds (golf course, airport, and building) make up the remaining \$3,535,538. The City has three unions—the International Union of Police Associations, (IUPA) for police and the Public Employees Association for general employees and supervisors. See Figure 2 (on page 5) for an organization chart of the City.

## THE DEPARTMENT

The City Attorney serves as the City's legal adviser and is appointed by, reports to, and serves at the pleasure of, the City Council. The individual is a Charter Officer and is expected to work closely with the other Charter Officers (the City Manager and City Clerk). He/she acts as legal counsel for the City, including legal advisor to the City Council, Planning and Zoning, Special Magistrate/ Code Enforcement, and Construction commissions/boards, and City departments (particularly the Police Department). As such, the City Attorney must be able to interpret laws, rulings and regulations, and is required to stay current with developments in the legal field to ensure City policies, procedures, and practices, are consistent with local, state and federal laws. The individual also serves as legal consultant for work\place issues, providing interpretation and counsel, regarding employment/workplace law and Collective Bargaining Agreements. Finally, the City Attorney monitors and supervises outside attorneys hired on specific matters and works with the City's Insurance Carrier on defending against third party tort actions.

The City Attorney's Office is composed of the City Attorney and outside counsel as needed. The Office's budget for FY 2022 – 2023 is \$236,730. Of that, \$188,340 is designated for personal services and \$48,390 for operating expenses, including outside counsel.

## THE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The largest challenge facing the City of Sebastian is the addition of the Grave Brothers' property to the City. While it is anticipated the annexation itself will be complete by the time the new City Attorney arrives, that is only the first step in the process of developing the property. Covering approximately 2,000 acres, the property is anticipated to be roughly 75% residential and 25% commercial. Build out is expected to take ten years and add between 7,000 and 10,000 residential units to the City's housing stock. That will add somewhere between 15,000 and 22,000 residents to the City's population. Aside from reviewing and responding to the accompanying matters, it is also expected that several actors will mount legal challenges to the annexation and related Council and staff decisions.

Otherwise, the City Attorney's job will be typical of that of any other city attorney and involve providing legal advice and, written opinions to the City Council and City Manager; drafting and reviewing ordinances, charter amendments, resolutions, contract documents, and correspondence; assisting in the review and preparation of agenda items for meetings; providing legal consultation on City insurance matters; performing all duties and functions imposed by general and special laws upon city attorneys; and preparing / reviewing / approving deeds, and other legal instruments affecting or pertaining to the City or in which the City is a party. The individual will also monitor the performance of any duties where matters are assigned to outside counsel.

## THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

The City Council is seeking an individual who will be a partner, supporter and trusted advisor to it and to city staff. The selected



candidate will exhibit initiative and independent judgment, as well as the highest level of professionalism, integrity, ethics, and dedication. He/she will work diligently to protect the legal interests and assets of the City while also seeking the most effective solution to a problem, even if it involves some risk.

The City Attorney will be an outstanding attorney, leader and manager – someone who understands politics but will not be involved in them. He/she will be responsive and knowledgeable, generally already knowing the answer to questions before they are posed. When he/she does not know the answer, the individual will say so, promptly conduct the appropriate research, and provide the correct answer. The City Attorney will give all members of Council the same information and keep them all equally well informed.

The City Attorney will review issues with an open mind and be someone who works with the elected officials and staff to accomplish their ends within the law. In other words, the individual will tell people how to get things done legally, rather finding reasons that it cannot be accomplished. For example, if a staff member wants to do something, the answer will not be, “Sorry, but that won’t work.” Rather, the response should be, “Well, we cannot do X legally, but we can legally do Y and that will accomplish your goal. Simply stated, the best candidate will be someone who can identify the legal means to get to yes, while also understanding that there are legal lines that cannot be crossed.

The individual will have outstanding communication and interpersonal skills so that he/she can interact with a wide variety of people from different backgrounds. He/she will

understand the importance of listening and understanding, and their role in communication. At the same time, the individual will be confident as well as comfortable in diplomatically telling elected officials and staff what they need to hear, rather than what they want to hear. Being fair with a sense of humor will be important characteristics of the new City Attorney.

The best candidate will be open and approachable. Being able to build consensus both inside and outside the government will be important. Indian River County only has three cities, and it will be important for them to work together to accomplish their goals.

Personally, the individual will be thoughtful and patient while also being energetic, creative, and having an appropriate level of impatience. He/she will recognize the importance of process, but also realize process is not the goal—just the means. Recognizing he/she has no staff, the ideal candidate will be comfortable both practicing the law and overseeing the efforts of third parties.

The position requires a Juris Doctor (J.D.) degree from an accredited law school and licensure to practice law in Florida. Seven years of increasingly responsible experience in the practice of municipal and administrative law is desired. Experience in zoning and land use is necessary. The best candidates will also be knowledgeable and have experience in most, if not all of the following: administrative matters and proceedings; city charter and city code of ordinances issues; code enforcement; contract law; drafting and reviewing ordinances and resolutions; ethics laws; constitutional law; applicable federal and state laws; litigation; municipal leases and agreements; and public records and sunshine law matters.

## COMPENSATION

The salary range is \$120,000 to \$150,000 and the actual salary will depend on qualifications and experience. While it prefers to pay in the lower half of the range, the City realizes talent can be expensive and will pay more for the right person. Benefits include 9% paid into a 401k for all charter officers.

## THE MOST RECENT CITY ATTORNEY

The most recent City Attorney accepted a position with the City of Melbourne as their City Attorney.

## RESIDENCY

Residency within the City limits is not required.

## HOW TO APPLY

E-mail your cover letter and resume to [Recruit33@cb-asso.com](mailto:Recruit33@cb-asso.com) at your earliest convenience as resumes will be screened upon receipt. Resumes will be screened as they are received, so please apply quickly. Faxed and mailed resumes will not be considered. Questions should be directed to Lynelle Klein at (970) 433-7189, or Stephen Sorrell at (513) 217-0678.

## INTERNAL CANDIDATES

There are no internal candidates.

## CONFIDENTIALITY

Under the Florida Public Records Act, all applicants are subject to disclosure upon receipt. As a practical matter, we do not expect extensive coverage until after finalists are named on April 26, 2023.

## THE PROCESS

Applications will be screened between March 23rd and April 25th. A reception and interviews will be held on May 5th with a selection being made shortly thereafter.

## OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

The City of Sebastian is an equal opportunity/drug free employer and does not discriminate on the basis of age, citizenship, pending citizenship status, color, disability, marital status, national origin, race, religion, gender or sexual orientation.

Please note that under Florida law, employment applications are open for public inspection. You must be a U.S. Citizen or alien resident lawfully authorized to work in the U.S. to be considered for employment with the City of Sebastian. The City will provide reasonable accommodations, due to any disability, for all applicants and employees.

#### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For additional information about the city visit:

[www.cityofsebastian.org](http://www.cityofsebastian.org)

[visitindianrivercounty.com](http://visitindianrivercounty.com)

[www.indianriverchamber.com](http://www.indianriverchamber.com)

