

CITY OF HALLANDALE BEACH, FLORIDA
MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 16th, 2022

TO: Honorable Mayor, Vice Mayor, and Commissioners

FROM: Jeremy Earle, Ph.D., AICP, City Manager/CRA Executive Director

SUBJECT: City Manager Self Evaluation 2020-2022

Let me begin by first stating that it has been an honor to serve the City of Hallandale Beach in the capacity of Interim City Manager and then City Manager for the past year and a half. It has been my privilege to serve the residents of this community, beside some of the most amazing public servants that South Florida has to offer.

A year and a half ago, if someone had told me that I would be appointed Interim City Manager and then City Manager, and immediately be faced with multiple challenges including an extraordinarily serious global pandemic that has claimed over 900,000 in this country, a struggling national and local economy, which has caused the loss of countless number of small and large businesses, reduction of City revenues, a looming \$60.5 million City budget deficit, low staff morale, high staff attrition, failing infrastructure due to years of delayed maintenance, which caused numerous water and force main breaks, lift station failures, and major flooding of our City, I would have thought that person to be crazy.

In spite of the numerous challenges that we faced together as a team comprised of elected officials and staff, we rose to meet each one of them head on; strategically and methodically making necessary changes across the board, with the goal of leaving future commissions and administrations a much stronger, safer, progressive, and innovative City. With a strong emphasis on teamwork, our staff has collectively accomplished more in one year to transform this organization and this City, than has been done in seemingly decades. Despite the fact that we still face serious challenges, we are a much better and stronger City than we were just a year ago.

We are more transparent with both our residents and our elected officials. We have worked hard to be as honest as possible with the financial information that we have provided.

In preparation for my annual performance evaluation, I conducted an assessment of the issues and challenges that I have worked on during this period, as first the Interim City Manager and then the City Manager for the City of Hallandale Beach, and the Executive Director of the Hallandale Beach Community Redevelopment Agency.

None of the accomplishments below were completed by my hand alone, as I have stated from the dais numerous times, in the words of English poet, scholar, soldier and cleric, John Donne:

*“No man is an island entire of itself; every man
is a piece of the continent, part of the main...”*

These achievements have only been successful because of the teamwork of the dedicated professionals that serve the City of Hallandale Beach and the Hallandale Beach Community Redevelopment Agency.

BACKGROUND

My tenure as Interim City Manager and then City Manager began the night of August 12th, 2020. After working diligently with our team across the organization in order to understand some of the most fundamental challenges that we faced as a City, I informed the City Commissioners of just a fraction of what I found. Some of these challenges included:

1. Discovering, via a very detailed budget analysis, that the City had been deficit spending for at least the past seven to eight years and had used approximately \$14.5 million dollars of its reserves to balance the budget. Conservatively speaking, the City was slated to run out of reserves in the General Fund by the end of Fiscal Year 2022 and would find itself in a financial crisis that could have potentially led to bankruptcy had we not received ARPA funding from the Federal Government. Unless further steps were taken, the projected budget deficit over a five-year period of time would be \$60.5 million if we operated business as usual.
2. Lack of staff in the Transportation Fund to take care of our sidewalk and ROW issues. We had been using staff from the utility fund to do these tasks, which of course means that they could not fully work on utility related matters.
3. Not having the resources necessary to handle our other transportation and mobility needs.
4. Being on the very edge of not having the federally required staffing that we need to run our water treatment plant. Remember, that plant operates according to Florida Department of Environmental Protection standards.
5. Not having the workers necessary to maintain the cemetery.
6. Only having two experienced planners in our entire City and one of those planners is the Director of the newly renamed Community Enhancement and Sustainable Development Department, who needed to actually focus on running her department and not working on the minutiae of urban planning.

7. Not addressing many land use, Regional Activity Center (RAC), Comprehensive Plan, and zoning code changes, which affect future development in our City due to staffing issues. This, of course, affects future ad valorem revenues.
8. Not having the project managers necessary to properly manage all of the water projects that were approved by the City Commission, much less all of the new projects that will come as a result of the proposed Revenue Bonds. Without consistent oversight, those projects would have serious challenges to overcome. Our Department of Public Works team was absolutely overwhelmed.
9. Not having the internal capacity to collect hundreds of thousands of dollars in uncollected insurance claims (revenue to us).
10. Not being able to fully keep up with those items in our Finance Department that could relate to addressing “potential” waste, fraud, or abuse due to a lack of resources. This problem was not new and had been going on for many years. The Commission will recall that approximately three years ago, we had to authorize emergency help for finance. It was a temporary band aid, and we were able to come above water for a bit, however, it did not fix many of the fundamental problems we had, which were years in the making.
11. Not collecting potentially hundreds of thousands of dollars’ worth of money/revenue in Utility Billing, because we don’t have the resources to go after it.
12. Not collecting hundreds of thousands of dollars in parking fee revenue just at our beaches because we did not have a parking enforcement team in place to do so.
13. Absolutely struggling with our entire permitting process, due to software issues. Upgraded software, that was subsequently implemented, created more efficient workflow for overall operations, reducing processing backlogs, phone calls, creating a manageable volume of calls and in-person inquiries for staff to address.
14. Not addressing many of our high priority storm water maintenance challenges. We needed to focus on them. We were constantly flooding.
15. Having over 40 bid/solicitations that we needed to complete at one point in time in our Procurement Department. This was due to serious staffing shortages. Many of our potential projects including any utility related projects to address our water and wastewater pipe breaking issues were delayed due to this.
16. Having demoralized City staff from having to jump from one fire to another without being able to actually complete the tasks that they were already working on.
17. Deciphering our budget process that had become unwieldy, and collectively we did not understand all of the basic component pieces that would ensure full transparency for both the City Commission and residents. We worked on new transparency initiatives to ensure full transparency of our City’s financial situation.

18. Not having the programs in place to fully collect all of the revenues that we could have been collecting from a business tax receipt and a certificate of use perspective. We were leaving real and potential dollars on the table, so to speak.
19. Not having all of the tools necessary to address our bulk trash/sanitation issues.
20. At one point, being approximately six to eight months behind on any preventative maintenance on our vehicles including our police vehicles due to staff shortages in our Fleet Division.
21. Internally, struggling with our employee evaluations and employee relations processes, which in and of itself has led to many issues that affect morale.
22. Our police department not having the resources, training, and staff to truly fulfil its obligations to our community.
23. Not having a clear and concise plan of action for how we would upgrade and replace our failing infrastructure. For numerous years, we had talked about some of the improvements which needed to occur to our seriously deficient water, wastewater, and stormwater systems.
24. Serious issues with our Public Records and Records Management processes, including a few lawsuits.
25. The Police Union not having a contract for approximately three years and morale was very low in the Police Department. This partially led to large vacancies for various positions.
26. The wages of our part time staff as they had not changed in approximately eight years and we were losing vital staff members including our beach lifeguards.
27. Our building permitting process being completely broken. We were behind on all of our reviews, short staffed, and permit issuance in many cases were taking months longer than they should have.
28. Not upgrading much of our IT infrastructure for many years, in some cases over a decade. Our systems including servers and network switches were in many cases failing. Due to failing servers and systems, our Police Department was not able to bill for the certain items including alarms.

CURRENT

Strategic Planning and Fiscal Stabilization

In FY 2020-2021, I provided commissioners with a **Teams and Initiatives Framework (Exhibit 2)**, which outlined the steps necessary to meet our challenges head on. This plan was based on the core principles of the **City Commission Approved 2019 Strategic Plan**. Our stated core values in that report of communication, trust, accountability, integrity,

professionalism, and customer service, became the basis by which we would address our three **Strategic Focus Areas**, which were comprised of:

1. **Finance and Budget**
2. **Organizational Capacity**
3. **Infrastructure/Projects**

Although there is much work to be done, everything cannot be priority. We had to make difficult decisions to, in a sense, triage the organization in order to have the most long-term benefits. A focus on these three strategic areas allows us to be more transparent with both the commission and residents, improve the overall organization including improving employee morale, and implement funded programs and projects that would address immediate deficiencies.

In addition to the Teams and Initiatives Framework, I also provided the City Commission with a five-year **Fiscal Stabilization Plan**, which we are currently in the process of implementing. This plan is a work in progress, and there will be course corrections made as needed; however, it provides a clear plan of action that leads to our stated goal of becoming more financially stable over the next four to five years.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In October of last year, I provided the City Commission and staff with a copy of some of the many accomplishments that we are fortunate to have made over the previous year and a half (**Exhibit 3**). As you are aware, we are on a five-year plan to not only save this City financially, but also turn the organization itself around in order to ensure long term sustainability.

I have said this many times and I will continue to say it, without your support and leadership as the Governing Body, over the past year, our team members would not have had any of the resources necessary to accomplish all that they have.

The accomplishments listed below are by no means exhaustive or indicative of every single thing that our team members did over the past year and a half. However, they will provide you with a good picture of how we overcame some of the challenges listed previously, as well as many others. They will also provide insight into the strides that we made in embodying the City's motto of Progress, Innovation and Opportunity. A more extensive list of the accomplishments is included as a part of **Exhibit 3**.

Budget and Program Monitoring Department

1. Initiated and implemented the most substantial change to the City's budgeting process by the utilization of OpenGov Software, which increases and promotes transparency and open governance as it relates to the City's finances.

2. Revamped and Produced the City's first online interactive Budget Book, which allowed the residents to drill down into various aspects of the budget, thus promoting transparency.

City Clerk's Office

3. JustFOIA - In August 2020, the City Clerk's office implemented the new JustFOIA Public Records Request management program to guarantee efficiency for the public and staff. Since the program's execution, the public is offered the benefit to submit, obtain the status of public record requests, download records responsive to a request immediately once available, and pay online from the comfort of their home. To date, the City Clerk's office has received, managed, and responded to a total of 2,135 public records requests.
4. Records Management Coordinator - In December 2020, the City Clerk's office hired a Records Management Coordinator (RMC) to assist with the volume of public records requests received through the City Clerk's office. With the additional position granted to the City Clerk's office, the department has accomplished all required tasks without delay. The RMC actively assists, through the City Clerk, all employees and provides the necessary training to guarantee all City personnel handle public records requests in compliance with Florida Statute Chapter 119. The RMC, through the City Clerk, provides City-wide Records Training to assist City staff with their records management responsibilities to comply with current State laws and other administrative guidelines.
5. Training - The City Clerk's office recognizes the importance of training to guarantee the City complies with State regulation and City policies. In January 2021, the City Clerk's conjunction with the City Attorney provided the first Virtual Boards and Committees Members training. Approximately forty (40) Board/Committee members, including the Board/Committee liaisons, attended the training to better understand their role as Board/Committee members and required Sunshine Law.
6. In April 2021, the City Clerk's Office in conjunction with the City Attorney offered a Public Records Request Training to all City personnel. A total of 60+ City personnel attended the training given on two separate days. The training emphasized the importance of Public Records Requests and the requirements that must be followed to comply with Florida Statute Chapter 119.
7. The Clerk's office is currently setting up a process to routinely administer subject training on an annual basis

City Manager's Office of Grant Management, Sustainability, and Innovation

8. Instrumental in the City receiving approximately \$15 million in funds for force mains and lift stations in January of 2022.
9. Grant Applications - The Grant's Office, in coordination with various City departments, submitted 22 grant applications for a total value of \$26,625,277. This includes a major proposal for Water and Sewer Infrastructure in the amount of \$23,116,819, EV Parking & Charging Station Grant (federal) in the amount of \$785,000, EV Bus Fleet Parking & Charging Station (state) in the amount of \$465,000, EV Bus Operating Enhancements in the amount of \$779,000 and the Smart Policing Initiatives in the amount of \$500,000.
10. Grants Awarded - The City has been awarded over 20 grants for a total value in excess of \$35 million. This includes an American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Grant in the amount of \$19,957,515 and the Florida Recreation Development Assistance Grant in the amount of \$200,000.

Community Enhancement and Sustainable Development Department

11. Adopted impact fees for Fire, Police, parks and open spaces and transportation services and facilities.
12. Updated the 10-Year Water Supply Plan.
13. Adopted affordable housing requirements throughout the RAC.
14. Surtax Projects Cycle 1 award: 5 projects (\$6,642,873)
 - a. Bus Shelter Improvements
 - b. Sidewalk Improvements
 - c. Crosswalk Improvements
 - d. Digital signage for bus stops
 - e. NW/SW 8TH Avenue Complete Streets Design
15. Surtax Projects Cycle 2 submittal: 14 projects.
16. FDOT Grant award (EV Bus purchase) (\$5,000,000) (50% match)
17. Increased minimum staffing level from 22 to 27 in order to address a backlog which affected permit issuance.

18. Created a Call Center in order to address the large volume of calls pertaining to permit applications, reviews, inspections, and payments.
19. Implemented IVR (inspection request system) Software so that customers can call and schedule their own inspections.
20. Revived 40-year recertification program, notified close to 400 properties.
21. Implemented concierge services to residents and business owners in the form of a Business Assistance Coordinator.
22. Eliminated the months long backlog of documents uploaded to HBpermitting.

Hallandale Beach Community Redevelopment Agency

23. Partnered with the City on the purchase of the EV Buses.
24. Started design on almost \$20 million in neighborhood improvements, which will include new sidewalks, new streetlights, new streetscape in FFADD, new traffic calming improvements.
25. Processed a larger number residential incentive programs including the Neighborhood Improvement Program, Shutter Program, Paint the Town Program, and First Time Homebuyer Program.
26. Promoted the Economic Development within the City of Hallandale Beach/CRA by partnering with the South Beach Food and Wine Festival to have a Hallandale Beach Series, which highlighted Hallandale Beach restaurants.
27. Encouraged millions of dollars in private sector development throughout the community redevelopment area.

Finance Department

28. Instrumental in the City receiving approximately \$15 million in funds for force mains and lift stations in January of 2022.
29. Implemented a new customer portal making paying your Utility Bills, General Bills, and Business Tax Receipts Bills easy. We expanded payment options to include MasterCard, Visa, American Express, Discover, Electronic Check, PayPal, PayPal Credit and Venmo. Pay-by-text, automatic payment, customized bill notification and bill reminder options are available. Please visit CoHB.org/PayMyBill for more information.

- 30. Completely redesigned the City's PayMyBill webpage for a centralized and mobile friendly location to pay all City bills. For more information, please visit CoHB.org/PayMyBill
- 31. Converted all Utility Billing forms to electronic fillable forms making filling out and sending forms for utility billing services easy to access. For more information, please visit CoHB.org/UB/Forms.
- 32. Upgraded our Tyler Cashiering POS system cutting down the time it takes to process payments at the cashier window at City Hall.
- 33. Implemented an interactive voice response (IVR) payment system to pay your Utility Bills, General Bills, and Business Tax Receipts Bills. Both English and Spanish options are available. This service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, through all devices. For more information, call 1-866-819-0126.

Human Resources Department

- 34. Helped to negotiate 3-year IUPA Collective Bargaining Agreement, that had been stalled for approximately three years.
- 35. Conducted virtual citywide mandatory training regarding race, gender and bias called *Mutual Respect – The Bottom Line*
- 36. Conducted Citywide Customer Service Training. This training will be rolled out in the new fiscal year to various departments on a monthly basis.
- 37. Settled 13 Liability Claims and 17 Worker's Compensation cases; Opened 22 total Worker's Compensation cases of which 11 were closed. Opened 72 new Liability claims of which a total of 78 were closed to include claims from prior years.
- 38. Drafting of numerous policies and safety protocols related to the COVID-19 pandemic resulting in minimum employee exposure and continuity of operations.

Human Resources Department

- 39. The Department collectively distributed Meals on Wheels boxes to senior participants every Thursday.
- 40. During the beginning of COVID-19, the Food Pantry provided over 14,562 meals, food items, food staples to the community. Some of the meals were delivered by staff to homes and via drive-thru weekly and monthly food distributions.

41. Partnered with the City of Oakland and assisted 43 Senior participants in getting the COVID vaccines during the early release of the vaccine to the vulnerable population.
42. The Human Services Department was awarded Emergency Food and Shelter Program funding grants for the following:
 - a. Emergency CARES \$10,295.00 in Food Vouchers
 - b. Phase 37 Food Pantry \$1,754.00 & Food Vouchers \$2,380.00
43. During the Pandemic, the Human Services Department remained open and active for After School Program students offering them services via the Learning Pod for virtual learning sponsored by Children Services Council.
44. Over 23,902 Youth Services Case Management Activities were provided to clients.

Innovation Technology Department

45. Created City's first Cyber Security Policy, Administrative Policy 2021.004
46. Performed City's first Penetration Testing, by Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and Security Compliance Associates (SCA) to check for critical network vulnerabilities externally.
47. Replaced aging server infrastructure from Fujitsu with brand new Dell VxRail system and migrated existing virtual infrastructure.
48. Implemented Exagrid Backup System, for Fastest Backups & Recoveries, Industry's Best Ransomware Recovery, Unparalleled, Cost-effective Scale-out.
49. Upgraded to new version of Laserfiche, implementing best practices for new install, and expanding Laserfiche licensing from four (4) to 39 licenses.
50. After several years of item pending, successfully researched and prepared item for Fire Station Alerting System for Hallandale's three (3) Fire Stations.
51. Concluded major upgrades to MUNIS and Energov for the first time in many years.

Parks, Recreation and Open Spaces Department

While our outdoor facilities provided refuge and respite from the COVID-19 pandemic, the indoor facilities hosted 138 rentals in the past year including city meetings, special events, programs, and activities totaling over 1,770 individual facility uses. These included:

52. Juneteenth Celebration hosted in conjunction with the Community Civic Assn
53. Walk Up testing Site at Foster Park

- 54. Free Vaccination Event at Foster Park in conjunction with the Broward Community & Family Health Centers, Inc.
- 55. Sharing South Florida Food Distribution
- 56. Memorial Day Celebration fully sponsored by the Rotary Club of Hallandale Beach.
- 57. South Beach Wine and Food Festival at Peter Bluesten Park
- 58. Successfully opened the Golden Isles Park and Tennis Center and continue to work on the development of Sunrise Park, the Historic Village and Chaves Lake.
- 59. Successful completion of the United States Life Guard Association Audit (USLA), and the development of a new manual in accordance with USLA guidelines.

Hallandale Beach Police Department

- 60. Completed the installation of License Plate Reader (LPR) cameras at 11 locations throughout the City.
- 61. Installed the highly effective ShotSpotter in both the NW and SW communities.
- 62. Added new Public Safety Cameras along Federal Highway and Foster Road.
- 63. Established a Strategic Intelligence Unit consisting of 11 staff members and a crime analyst.
- 64. The HBCRA and HBPD partnered to develop a Public Safety Strategy designed to enhance community relations. One such initiative is the Quadrant Safety Board (QSB) designed to foster communication between the police and the community, as well as develop a crime reduction plan to enhance public trust.

Procurement Department

- 65. Released upwards of 20 formal solicitations for various programs and projects.
- 66. Processed thousands of purchase orders
- 67. Conducted six (6) procurement trainings and re-trainings for all Departments. Trained new procurement staff.

Public Works Department

- 68. Foster Rd. Watermain Upgrade Project- (from an 8-inch to a 12-inch)

69. Southeast Stormwater Drainage Cleaning
70. Northeast Stormwater Drainage Cleaning
71. Municipal Roof Replacement
72. Police Department Roof Replacement
73. Lift Station #14 Submersible Grinder Pump Installation
74. Initiated the Environmental Compliance Division within Public Works Department
75. 19718 square feet of sidewalk repaired
76. 653 potholes repaired within an average of 2 days
77. Completed a Sargassum Compost Pilot Project
78. Beach Dune Restoration (4600 square feet)
79. 45th and 46th year CDBG projects
80. Stormwater Vulnerability Assessment Grant
81. Curb Inlet Replacement
82. Lift Station 8 Complete
83. Stormwater Filter Screens and QR System Installation Pilot on Parkview Dr. (First City in South Florida).

Because of the hard work and dedication of our team, there is so much more that I could have included in this memo. I am very proud our team!

Commissioners, as stated earlier, it has been an honor to serve the residents of this community as your City Manager. There is not one single day in which I take my job and what I do for granted. For me it is a sacred trust, and the fulfilment of a promise that I made to “honor my father and my mother.” I can sleep peacefully at night knowing that I have done my best each and every day, and that Hallandale Beach is in a much better position because of what we have been able to accomplish together.

Exhibit 1 – Self Evaluation 2020-2022

Exhibit 2 – Teams and Initiatives Framework

Exhibit 3 – Memo to City Commission – Departments and Teams Initiatives

Exhibit 4 – City Manager Employment Agreement