

MEMORANDUM

COLIN BAENZIGER & ASSOCIATES

TO: Mayor and City Council
Venice, FL

FROM: Colin Baenziger and Scott Krim

DATE: June 12, 2025

RE: City Manager Search Update: Recommended Candidates

We are recommending the City consider seven candidates (of the 62 who applied) to be its next City Manager. We believe all the candidates are very strong and that most, if not all, would do an excellent job for Venice. Brief summaries of their credentials follow as well as a summary of the next steps.

The Recommended Candidates

- **Sonia Alves-Viveiros:** Ms. Alves-Viveiros has been the Business Administrator of Edison Township, NJ (population 106,836) since 2022. There she oversees all typical operations of the city as well as a health department, a department of senior citizen services, a municipal court, and an animal shelter. Previously, she was the City Manager for Englewood, NJ (population 29,034) for two years, and the Business Administrator for the Maplewood Township, NJ (population 25,684) for four years. Her management style is to be communicative and collaborative. She creates a participatory environment where department heads and subordinates feel valued. Having regular meetings with elected officials and staff ensures a constant flow of communication and avoids misunderstandings. Her greatest achievement has been overcoming challenging moments as she worked her way from an internship to City Manager. It has been a labor of love, and she is truly appreciative of the challenges she has faced. Each has taught her something and made her a better municipal manager. As she has progressed through local government, she has learned the importance of communication, building strong relationships, and developing more effective teams. Each of her roles was an opportunity where she constantly strived to grow and improve. One of her goals is to inspire her staff and other public servants to be proud of the work they do, no matter what role they play. Ms. Alves-Viveiros has a bachelor's degree in political science and a master's degree in public administration from Seton Hall University.
- **Andrew Butterfield:** Mr. Butterfield was recently appointed to be the Interim City Manager of Port Richey, FL (population 3,500). Previously, he served as the Chief of Staff / Deputy County Administrator for Manatee County, the Operations Manager for City of St. Pete Beach, FL (population 8,717) for four years. Prior to that, he had a thirty-six-year career in the U.S. Navy, serving most recently as Deputy Chief of Staff at U.S. Special Operations Command and Joint Base Deputy Commander / Naval Support Activity Commander at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, NJ for three years. In terms of management style, Mr. Butterfield is a consensus builder who focuses on organizational communication while moving multiple projects forward simultaneously. He revels in being part of a team where

everyone works together to make things better for all. One of Mr. Butterfield's biggest achievements was knitting together disparate units and three previously separate military bases into one strong integrated team. Mr. Butterfield has a bachelor's degree in naval science and political science from the U.S. Naval Academy, a master's degree in national security affairs from the U.S. Naval Post-Graduate School and a master's degree in public administration from Harvard University, John F. Kennedy School of Government.

- **James Clinch:** Mr. Clinch has worked for the City of Venice, FL (population 28,967) since 2012. He was hired as a Stormwater Engineer and quickly progressed through the organization. He has been the Assistant City Manager since 2021. Prior to this employment he worked in the private sector. His management style is centered on integrity, collaboration, accountability, and transparency. He firmly believes in leading by example and that developing a cohesive team is much more effective than any single individual. He has had the honor of participating in almost every capital project in Venice over the past ten years. His greatest success was the conversion of the old Police Station building into the current Public Works Administration facility. This was an innovative project that completely restored and repurposed an existing facility at a fraction of the cost of a new facility. It also provided real culture change for a department that had worked in a neglected facility for over fifty years. This new building has played a huge part in creating a professional environment and set a new standard of performance for the entire department. Mr. Clinch has a bachelor's degree in civil engineering from the University of Florida and a master's degree in public administration from the Florida Gulf Coast University.
- **Bill Lawrence:** Mr. Lawrence has been the Town Manager for Lady Lake, FL (population 17,311) since 2021. Previously Mr. Lawrence was the City Manager for Bowling Green, FL (population 2,902) for two years, the Town Manager for Warren, ME (population 4,718) for three years, for Howland, ME (population 1,201) for one-year, White Springs, FL (population 764) for one year, and for Lincoln, ME (population 5,300) for three years. Mr. Lawrence's career movement was caused by commitments to aging family members. He has a coaching management style and leads by example. He believes in building teams and surrounding himself with those who are better than he is. His greatest achievement occurred in Lincoln. The paper mill there was the town's largest employer and taxpayer. In 2013 a significant boiler explosion shut down the mill, and it never recovered. Mr. Lawrence contacted county, state, and federal authorities for assistance for those laid off and then unemployed workers. He brought the team together to work on a budget reduction to offset the tax base loss. The Council then adopted a new budget to fit their new situation. They rebranded the town as an outdoor destination instead of a mill town. They used traditional and social media to market their region. This effort brought four retail shops that created 90 jobs during an 18-month period. Further, the population has remained constant at 5,300. Mr. Lawrence has an associate degree in criminal justice and has completed 90 credits towards a bachelor's degree from the University of Southern Maine.
- **Dana Schoening:** Mr. Schoening has been the City Manager for Tuttle, OK (population 8,373) since 2022. Prior to this employment, he was the Assistant City Manager for Sweetwater, TX (population 10,401) for three years, the Community Development Director for Wichita Falls, TX (population 102,316) for two years, the Planning and Development

Services Director for Abilene, TX (population 122,173) for two years, and the Community Development Director for Duncan, OK (population 23,124) for fifteen years. Team building is Mr. Schoening's primary leadership strength. He has significant experience in identifying priorities with City Councils, mobilizing staff resources, and working well with partnering stakeholders. He utilizes collaborative process alignments that are designed to establish effective community problem-solving capabilities. As the Director of Planning and Development Services with the City of Abilene, his priority was to better manage planning and development services programming to improve customer service. An opportunity presented itself when several direct report positions including Chief Building Official, Assistant Building Official, Assistant Department Services Director, Planning Manager and Neighborhood Services Manager left for retirement or other positions within the first three months of his tenure. He recruited for these positions after department repositioning to better manage development services processes. He developed effective teambuilding approaches and solicited the input of staff into the recruitment of management staff positions. This gave him insight into the motivations, abilities, and capabilities of staff. Mr. Schoening has a bachelor's degree in environmental planning and a master's degree in environmental policy and administration from the University of Wisconsin, and a master's degree in public administration from Midwestern State University.

- **Mark Sohaney:** Mr. Sohaney most recently served in the United States Navy for thirty-seven years. Most notably, he served as the Chief Executive Officer (Base Commander) for both the Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam in Hawaii and the Naval Air Station in Key West, FL. His management style is collaborative and inclusive. He believes in fostering open communication and engaging with the team at all levels to create a supportive environment where everyone feels valued, heard, and empowered. One of his biggest achievements occurred at Pearl Harbor-Hickam where he led a collaborative effort with city and state elected officials to create a \$200 million emergency evacuation project for Honolulu County. This initiative directly addressed growing concerns following the devastating Lahaina (Maui) fires, which highlighted the vulnerability of their communities to natural disasters such as hurricanes and wildfires. The people of West Oahu were particularly apprehensive, as that side of the island is susceptible to wildfires during the dry season. Recognizing the urgent need for enhanced preparedness, he spearheaded discussions and coordinated with various stakeholders to design and implement a comprehensive evacuation plan. This project not only provided a critical infrastructure to ensure the safety of the residents but also fostered a stronger partnership between military and civilian entities. It also instilled greater confidence within the community. Mr. Sohaney has a bachelor's degree in economics from the San Diego State University, and a master's degree in national security and strategic studies from the Naval War College.
- **Gus Zambrano:** Mr. Zambrano was most recently the Assistant City Manager for the City of Hollywood, FL (population 155,000) for nine years. Previously he worked for the City of Miramar, FL (population 139,049) for sixteen years, three years in planning and thirteen years in the Economic Development Department. He was the Community & Economic Development Director for the last year of his tenure in Miramar. Mr. Zambrano's management style is collaborative, data-driven, and hands-on. He sets measurable goals, empowers department heads, and keeps an open door. Mr. Zambrano's most significant

achievement was the passage and implementation of Hollywood's \$165 million "GO Hollywood" Bond. In March 2019, voters approved three measures under the GO bond. This bond allocated funds for enhancing public safety facilities, acquiring technology and equipment, upgrading the City's parks, golf courses, cultural facilities, and strengthening neighborhood resiliency. The first tranche of debt in the amount of \$70 million was issued in the fall of 2019 and the second tranche totaling almost \$95 million was issued in the fall of 2022 to ease the tax impact on residents. Mr. Zambrano has a bachelor's degree in geography from Concordia University and a master's degree in urban planning from McGill University. He is an AICP Certified Planner.

Note: While we do not want to give the impression that we are favoring military candidates, we feel it is important to explain the value of serving as a Base Commander (BC). In fact, the position is very similar to that of a City Manager. The individual generally has a significant budget and oversees almost all the services as a City Manager does (planning, police, fire, infrastructure, public works, utilities, parks and recreation, and finance) plus a few others (such as base housing and logistics). Generally, 90%+ of a BC's work force are civilians, and they know the BC will be rotated out in two years. Hence, the successful BC must use a personal approach and motivate and inspire. Just giving orders will not work. BCs also tend to work closely with nearby local governments. While the BC does not work for an elected body, typically a base has three or four generals/admirals on it, and each one believes the BC should cater to their needs. On top of that, the BC typically reports to a different general/admiral who is not located at the base. Needless to say, the BC's job can be very political. Finally, we have presented several retired military officers who have been BCs, and all have gone on to become extremely successful city managers / county administrators.

Next Steps

The finalists will come to Venice for a tour, public reception, and formal interviews on June 23rd, 24th and 25th. At the end of the interviews, the Mayor will make a recommendation to the Council nominating the person he feels is the best candidate for Venice's next City Manager. The Council will then confirm the Mayor's nomination or request he deliberate further and recommend a different candidate.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.