



Memorandum

Memorandum No: 25-031

Date: April 2, 2025

To: Honorable Mayor, Vice Mayor, and Commissioners

From: Rickelle Williams, City Manager *RW*

Re: **Personnel and Organizational Updates**

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as Fort Lauderdale's City Manager and for entrusting me to lead this great organization. I have taken the past several weeks since my appointment to get more familiar with the organizational structure and better acquainted with the City's charter officers, executive leadership team, and various stakeholders.

One of the most important responsibilities I have is to identify the necessary staff resources to ensure the efficient operation of our City. Through participation in various internal group meetings and in sitting with each assistant city manager and department director individually, I have had an opportunity to review and discuss departmental budgets, business plans, organizational charts, and staffing vacancies.

After a preliminary assessment, consideration of current and future needs, and discussions with our executive leadership team, it is prudent that I make a few minor adjustments to the organizational structure and staffing assignments.

City Manager's Office Preliminary Assignments – Effective Immediately

To further evaluate functions and staffing responsibilities within the City Manager's Office (CMO) over the next few months, I intend to maintain, on an interim basis, all the existing Assistant City Managers and Acting Assistant City Managers with preliminary assignments as described below:

- Susan Grant will return to her previous role as Assistant City Manager with oversight of the Chief Education Officer, Finance Department, and Fort Lauderdale Executive Airport (FXE). I would like to thank Ms. Grant for her leadership during her tenure as Acting City Manager. I look forward to our ongoing collaboration to advance the City Commission's goals and objectives.
- Anthony Fajardo, Assistant City Manager, will continue in his role with his existing portfolio including Information Technology Services, Public Works, and oversight of the agenda coordination function.

- Christopher Cooper, Acting Assistant City Manager, will continue to have oversight of the Development Services Department and Neighbor Support Division (including Homeless Services) and will also provide leadership to the Community Redevelopment Agency.
- Laura Reece, Acting Assistant City Manager, will maintain oversight of the Office of Management and Budget, the Human Resources Department and the Office of Professional Standards.
- Ben Rogers, Acting Assistant City Manager, will continue to oversee the Parks and Recreation and Transportation and Mobility departments and the Office of Real Estate.

The Fire and Police departments, as well as the Public Affairs and Strategic Communications divisions, will report to me.

New Interim Personnel Appointments

As you know, the City is experiencing and anticipating vacancies at the senior management level. In advance of the changes becoming effective, I am filling the leadership voids with proven staff members to maintain operational continuity.

Development Services

Alfred "Al" Battle Jr., Development Services Department (DSD) Acting Director, has accepted a promotional opportunity with another municipality. For over 20 years, Mr. Battle has provided dedicated leadership to the City as Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) Director (2005 – 2014), DSD Deputy Director (2014 – 2024), and two stints as DSD Acting Director (2016 and 2024/25). During his tenure, Al has led various redevelopment area projects including Sistrunk Boulevard streetscape improvements; Northwest-Progresso-Flagler Heights commercial development including 914 Sistrunk (current home to CRA offices), Dickey Plaza, Smith Plaza, and Shoppes on Avenue of the Arts. Al has implemented affordable housing funding programs and development incentives, championed performance improvement and efficiency through efforts such as his work on implementing a new land management software platform known as LauderBuild, and served as the DSD ISO9000 quality management system champion.

Effective April 16, 2025, Porshia L. Garcia, DSD Deputy Director, will assume the role of DSD Acting Director. Ms. Garcia has held various positions within DSD over the past 11 years, including four combined years in the Assistant Director or Deputy Director role. Ms. Garcia is a U.S. Army Veteran and holds three bachelor's degrees in addition to a Master of Public Administration from Florida International University.

Additionally, Ella Parker will serve as DSD's Acting Deputy Director overseeing Urban Design and Planning, Urban Engineering, Zoning and Landscape, Building Services, and the Cultural Affairs Officer. Ella has been with the City since 2002, most recently serving as the Urban Design and Planning Division Manager. She has the AICP credential by the American Planning Association and a master's degree in Urban and Regional Planning from the State University of New York – Albany. John Travers, DSD Acting Deputy Director, and Juan Rodriguez, DSD Assistant Director, will continue in their current capacities.

Information Technology Services

Tamecka McKay is also transitioning to another organization. Since May 2021, Ms. McKay has served the City in multiple roles within the Information Technology Services (ITS) Department, most recently as Chief Information Officer (CIO)/ITS Director. Ms. McKay has worked tirelessly to drive innovation and improve service delivery with a focus on digital transformation and cybersecurity. Most notably, Tamecka, along with her team, successfully led the replacement of our 50-year-old enterprise resource planning (ERP) system, replacement of our 20-year-old technology infrastructure as well as consolidation of five disparate, outdated datacenters including 90% cloud migration. Under her leadership, the City improved its cybersecurity posture by 200% and obtained over \$500,000 in cybersecurity grant funding. Tamecka and her team were instrumental in reducing ticket resolution time by 56% over the past three years and in 2024, ITS increased business value and employee satisfaction by 9% and 63% respectively. Additionally, ITS has been able to expand community outreach by providing cybersecurity training for seniors and civic associations and also secured the donation of laptops to a local non-profit through technology partnerships.

Effective April 18, 2025, Ms. Angela Marinas, ITS Assistant Director/Chief Digital Officer, will assume the role of Acting CIO, leading the ITS team. Ms. Marinas is a forward-thinking leader with over 25 years of experience in information technology (IT). She has a proven track record of implementing innovative solutions, including Infor CloudSuite, retiring legacy systems such as FAMIS and Cyborg, and leading IT modernizations, most notably the award-winning Homeless Outreach Application, honored with the prestigious "Smart 20 City Award." Angela's expertise spans IT management, data governance, cloud computing, and digital transformation, with a specialization in emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and machine learning.

We are grateful to Al and Tamecka for their significant contributions and service. Please join me in wishing them well in their future endeavors. Please also join me in thanking Porshia, Angela and the existing and upcoming acting directors and deputy directors on our team for bolstering our efforts during this transitional period. Each of these individuals brings a wealth of experience and expertise in their respective fields - making them well-suited to lead staff. Their dedication to service and commitment to the betterment of Fort Lauderdale are qualities that will undoubtedly continue to serve us well in the months ahead.

Recruitment

As you may recall, the Public Works Director position was vacated in February 2025. Since then, Talal Abi-Karam, P.E. (Abi), has provided leadership to the Public Works Department, serving as Acting Director. As Abi continues to provide stability, it is critical that this position is advertised. In the coming weeks, our Human Resources Department (along with an executive staffing firm, as may be needed), will aggressively recruit for the Public Works and Information Technology Services director positions to ensure the organization attracts or promotes the most qualified candidates to fill these roles.

Note that the City is also in the recruitment process for the Chief Waterways Officer position. I will provide an update to the City Commission once a selection has been made.

Looking Ahead

To create efficiencies, enhance accountability and encourage best practices, I expect to propose a reorganization strategy during the Fiscal Year 2026 budget process.

The preliminary personnel assignments, interim appointments, and recruitment initiatives demonstrate our commitment to maintaining continuity in leadership and delivering vital city services to our residents. I am confident that with the support of our entire team, we will navigate this transition successfully and continue to uphold the highest standards of service that our neighbors, businesses and stakeholders expect and deserve.

Should you have any questions or require further information regarding these appointments, assignments or upcoming recommendations, please do not hesitate to reach out to me directly. I look forward to continuing to work closely with each of you as we serve our community together.

Attachment: Preliminary Organizational Chart

c: D'Wayne M. Spence, Interim City Attorney
David R. Soloman, City Clerk
Patrick Reilly, City Auditor
City Manager's Office
Department Directors



CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

