

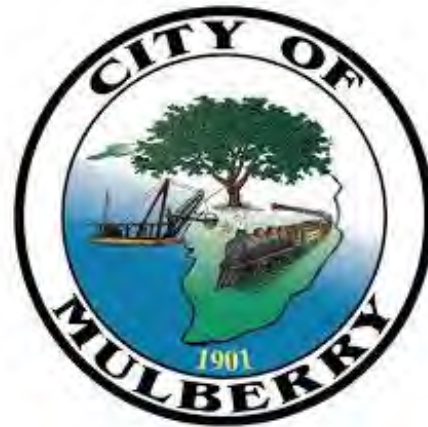


CITY MANAGER

Mulberry, Florida

Annual Salary:

\$145,000–\$185,000 DOE/DOQ



Are you an experienced, highly energetic, ethical, decisive, strategic, and values-driven servant leader who has a passion for local government? If so, apply to become the City of Mulberry's next **City Manager**.

The City is seeking an exceptional leader who is:

- Experienced in economic development and community engagement
- Collaborative, transparent and strategic leader with outstanding communication skills
- Passionate about developing teams to deliver exceptional public services

#moretomulberry – read on to learn more about this opportunity!



ABOUT THE COMMUNITY

Incorporated in 1901 with a population of roughly 4,000 and comprising 5.5 square miles, the City of Mulberry offers a friendly, close-knit community where neighbors know one another, local events bring residents together, and the pace of life is quieter than in larger cities. Conveniently located at the intersection of Florida State Roads 60 & 37, the City is centrally located on a main travel route between Lakeland and Bartow, providing easy access to shopping, healthcare, restaurants, and employment while maintaining a more peaceful residential environment. Nearby metro areas of Tampa and Orlando, along with their international airports are each about an hour drive from Mulberry.

Mulberry embraces its history, while continuing to invest in its future. The area has played a pivotal role in Florida’s mining history, long recognized as the “Phosphate Capital of the World.” Today, Mosaic and CF Industries operate in the Mulberry area utilizing modern operations and technologies in the production of fertilizer products and are known for supplying over 80% of the nation’s and one third of the world’s phosphate, which is a vital ingredient for agricultural fertilizer. The City is also known as the hometown of the former furniture and retail giant Badcock Home Furniture & More, which was headquartered in Mulberry in 1904.

The City holds numerous community celebrations, holiday events, and festivals help bring residents together throughout the year, including Mulberry Jams with its mixture of live music and arts held at Badcock Commons Park; the Annual Founders Day celebration honoring the city’s incorporation and history; the Chili Cook-Off competition featuring local cook teams, car shows, vendors, and live music; and the Evelyn Bryant Culture Festival celebrating Black History with live entertainment, a food court, and art vendors. Other cultural and recreational attractions operated by the City include the redeveloped GEM Theater, Depot 303 Food Court, Studio 37, Phosphate Museum, Mulberry Civic Center and the City’s Community Pool

Mulberry’s demographics are largely comprised of: White (71%), Hispanic or Latino (16%), and Black or African American (6%) population groups. Housing is affordable with residents of Polk County appreciating a 10.5% lower cost of living than the national average, coupled with no Florida State Income Tax.



POPULATION
4,000



MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD
INCOME
~ \$57,700



MEDIAN HOME SALES
PRICE
~ \$323,000

Tourism



History

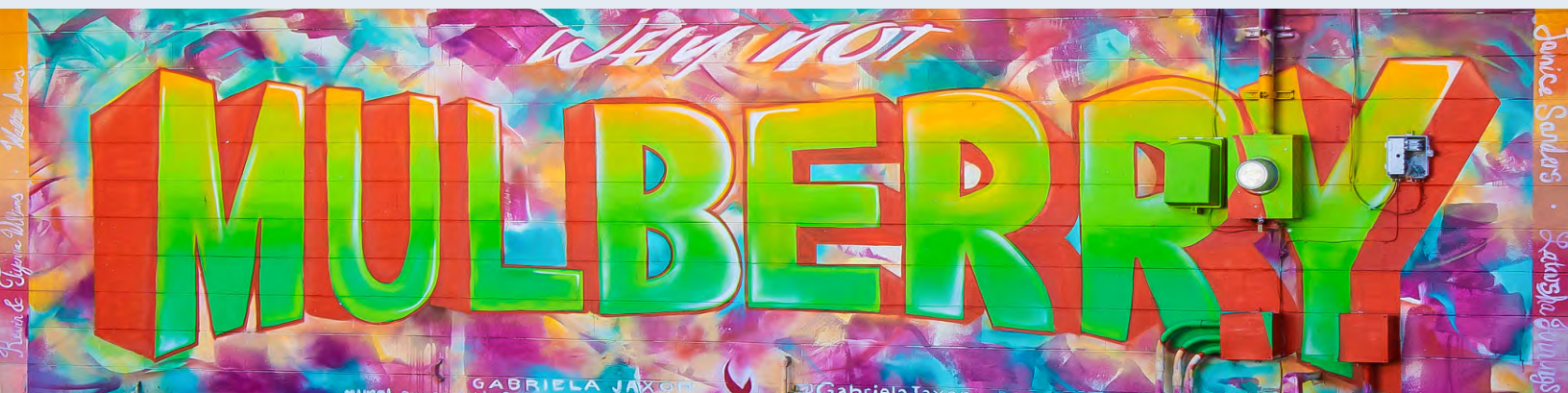


GOVERNANCE & ORGANIZATION

The City of Mulberry operates under a Commission-Manager form of government. The Mulberry City Commission consists of five members, and a Mayor, each elected in staggered three-year terms. Four of the Commissioners represent specific single-member districts, with one Commissioner and the Mayor elected at-large. The City's next election is scheduled in April 2028. Discussions are occurring to revise the current Commission Districts to achieve more uniformity in represented constituents. The Mayor & City Commission appoint the City Manager and City Attorney (contracted services). The City Manager sets policy direction and directs day-to-day operations.

The City provides an array of traditional municipal services including Administration; Code Enforcement & Permitting; Public Works (including stormwater management, streets, fleet, ROW maintenance, and contracted solid waste/refuse); Utilities (Water Treatment & Distribution and Wastewater Collection & Treatment); Finance; City Clerk, Human Resources; Community Library; Culture & Programs; and Outreach & Engagement. Law Enforcement and Fire/EMS services are provided through service contracts with the Polk County Sheriff's Department and the Polk County Fire/EMS Department, respectively. Planning services are provided by the Central Florida Regional Planning Commission (CFRPC) in Bartow.

Mulberry's Adopted FY 2026 Total Annual Budget is \$15.5 million (General Fund \$7.2 million), supported in part with an ad valorem millage rate of 6.3900. Municipal services are provided by approximately 50 employees.



ABOUT THE POSITION:

The City Manager serves as the Chief Executive Officer of the City of Mulberry and has, in the past served as the Executive Director of the Mulberry Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA). The position is responsible for the professional administration and day-to-day operations of the City and its Departments, implementation of the City's strategic vision, and directing all municipal activities, redevelopment initiatives, and economic development efforts. The City Manager further ensures that CRA activities fully conform with the adopted Community Redevelopment Plan. The position provides strategic leadership, manages financial and administrative functions, and fosters strong relationships with the community, businesses, and governmental agencies. Direct reports include an Assistant City Manager, the Directors of Finance, Public Works-Utilities, Library, Human Resources, City Clerk, Events & Programming, and Education/Outreach.

A summary overview of the responsibilities of the City Manager include:

- Implement the strategic direction and policies set forth by the Mayor & Commission;
- Serve as a resource to the Mayor & Commission members to provide professional recommendations, review and discuss projects, programs, and matters impacting City operations;
- Oversee daily operations of all City Departments, ensuring efficiency, compliance, and alignment with strategic goals.;
- Promote economic development, business recruitment, redevelopment, and private investment. Manage redevelopment agreements, incentive programs, and public-private partnerships;
- Serve as, or employ, the Executive Director of the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA);

ABOUT THE POSITION, CONTINUED

- Prepare the Annual City Budget and CRA Budget and associated CIP's for submission to the Mayor & Commission and CRA Board, respectively, and be responsible for budget administration following adoption;
- Prepare and submit to the Mayor & Commission as of the end of the fiscal year, a complete report on the finances and administrative activities of the City for the preceding year;
- Keep the Mayor & Commission advised of the financial condition and future needs of the city and make such recommendations as may seem desirable;
- Serve as the primary liaison between City staff, elected officials, residents, and external stakeholders;
- Monitor projects, contracts, and infrastructure improvements to ensure timely completion and adherence to regulations;
- Respond to community concerns, facilitate public meetings, and promote transparency in government operations;
- Ensure compliance with all local, state, and federal laws, regulations, and reporting requirements;
- Hire, supervise, evaluate, discipline, and mentor Department Heads and staff to foster a high-performing municipal workforce;

DEPARTMENT STRUCTURE

- Assistant City Manager
- Finance
- Public Works & Utilities
- Human Resources
- City Clerk
- Library
- Events, Culture, & Programming
- Outreach & Engagement

 **EMPLOYEES**
~50

 **FY2026 BUDGET**
\$15.5
MILLION

GENERAL FUND:
\$7.2
MILLION

[FULL JOB DESCRIPTION](#)





CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES:

- **Strategic Visioning & Planning:** The City has largely completed its established stated multi-year priorities, and the new City Manager will be expected to drive the development of a new community Strategic Vision & Plan to plan for Mulberry's desired future state. Candidates with Strategic Planning to assist the community as it envisions its future are desired.
- **Utility & Residential Building Issues:** Mulberry has several ongoing and planned single family and multifamily residential developments that involve various development challenges including utility commitments, development agreements and utility infrastructure financing, unique soil conditions, egress/ingress access, platting/setback issues and other related matters. As such, experience with, planning and zoning, development agreements, and public/private partnerships are deemed critical.
- **City Hall Complex:** The City executed a \$5 million loan to improve municipal property along SR 60 for a future municipal complex and undertake associated initial environmental remediation issues on the site. The long-term development is planned to include various development components including a new City Hall & Library (Phase I); a Civic Center, Cultural Center, and Museum (Phase II); and a replacement for the current Police Substation (Phase III). The City is currently exploring USDA grants and financing for the projected \$30-40 million project.
- **Utility Hardening & Upgrades:** The City received 2025 Hurricane Resiliency funding from the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) to support \$40.4 million to construct a Wastewater Treatment Plant flood barrier, sludge handling and other plant improvements. The City similarly secured Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DSWRF) support towards \$13.1 million improvements for Water Plant and Wells SCADA improvements, site improvements and high service pump redundancy projects. These projects are currently in the design phase, with construction completion projected in 2028.
- **Water Management:** The City of Mulberry is a member of the Polk Regional Water Cooperative (PRWC) that was created in 2016 by interlocal agreement between other Polk County local governments to encourage integrated, robust public water supply systems comprised of diverse sources including alternative water supplies. PRWC members contribute their proportionate share of the PRWC's annual working capital needs. In 2017, several PRWC Member Governments entered into a combined projects implementation agreement, which established three combined projects to be pursued by the PRWC at a total estimated cost of \$23,000,000. The Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) is funding 50% of the total estimated Phase I costs, with the remainder funded by Member Governments based upon their average water use in comparison to the total average water use by all Member Governments. The PRWC has selected two of the three projects for design and construction, with Member Governments opting to be a participating member or an associate member - the latter having the authority to attend meetings but not having a voting position on the individual project board, nor having any financial obligations for further design or construction costs. The City of Mulberry has chosen to be an associate member for selected PRWC projects, and as such, will need to properly plan for their renewal of their current Consumptive Use Permit with SWFWMD in upcoming years.

IDEAL CANDIDATE

The City of Mulberry seeks an experienced, highly energetic, ethical, decisive, strategic, and values-driven servant leader who has a passion for local government to become its next City Manager. The ideal candidate will be a person with a high level of emotional intelligence who possesses advanced interpersonal and listening skills, a proactive, transparent, collaborative, and a “no surprises” management style. A demonstrated history of building consensus to achieve community and organizational goals is desired. The selected individual will be an experienced municipal leader who understands the details associated with municipal operations, can help set the vision for the organization, establish obtainable goals, and be a visible champion for exceptional customer service Mulberry’s residents and stakeholders expect. The successor City Manager should be politically savvy but never political and a concise “straight shooter” in their communications with the Mayor & Commission as they develop productive relationships with its members.

Candidates should have a strong financial background/acumen, including long-term budgeting, capital planning, grant application/administration, and economic development/redevelopment experience. Demonstrated experience with Community Redevelopment Agencies (CRA's) and specifically with the redevelopment of former industrial facilities is strongly desired.

The next Manager will be a hands-on, skilled problem solver with excellent negotiation skills and a track record of creative solutions in service delivery to both organizational and community challenges. The chosen individual will have strong management and leadership skills and will be approachable and even tempered.

An advocate for municipal services and the employees who provide such services, the City Manager will be responsive to inquiries from the Mayor & Commission, staff, and the public. A skilled delegator, the selected candidate will empower employees, motivate staff, and build morale in support of results-driven teams. He or she will be supportive of the professional development of employees and serve as a coach and mentor to staff.

Lastly, the successor City Manager should be an outstanding communicator, with strong public relations and intergovernmental skills, be comfortable in operating in a highly engaged community, and become a visible part of Mulberry's community fabric with residents, stakeholders, and participate in community events.

EXPERIENCE & QUALIFICATIONS

Required:

- Bachelor's degree in Public Administration, Business Administration, Planning, Finance, Political Science, or closely related field.
- Seven (7) years of progressively responsible executive or senior management experience in municipal government, county government, special district administration, or a related public sector organization.
- Minimum five (5) years of supervisory experience in municipal government, public administration, or a related leadership role.
- Valid Florida Driver's License (or ability to obtain).
- At the time of appointment, the City Manager need not be a resident of the City or State of Florida, but shall reside within the City during tenure of office.

Preferred:

- Master's degree in Public Administration, Leadership, Business, Management, or related field.
- At least five (5) years of experience managing or working as a CRA Director.
- Certified Public Manager, ICMA Credentialed Manager (ICMA-CM), FRA Redevelopment Administrator (FRA-RA), Certified Economic Developer (CECd), Emergency Management certification, or similar professional credential.
- Experience with economic development, downtown revitalization, grant acquisition, and public-private partnerships.
- Knowledge of Florida Sunshine Law, Public Records Law, procurement, budgeting, ethics, and land use regulations.

SALARY & BENEFITS

Compensation: \$145,000–\$185,000 DOE/DOQ

Health Benefits: Medical, Dental, Vision, and Life Insurance

Paid Leave: Vacation, Personal Leave, Sick Leave, and Holidays

Retirement:

- Primary 401(a) Deferred Compensation Plan with City match
- Voluntary 457(b) Deferred Compensation Plan

Additional Perks:

- Vehicle allowance
- City cell phone
- iPad/Laptop



HOW TO APPLY

Apply Here



For more information on this position, contact:

Doug Thomas, Executive Vice President – Recruitment & Leadership Development

DouglasThomas@GovernmentResource.com | 863.860.9314

The City of Mulberry provides equal employment opportunities to all employees and applicants for employment and prohibits discrimination and harassment of any type without regard to race, color, religion, age, sex, national origin, disability status, genetics, protected veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or any other characteristic protected by federal, state, or local laws. Applicants selected as finalists for this position will be subject to a comprehensive background check.

Pursuant to the Florida Public Records Act, all applications are subject to public disclosure upon receipt of a public records request.