

August 15, 2024

Mayor Liz Alpert
Vice Mayor Jen Ahearn-Koch
Commissioner Arroyo
Commissioner Battie
Commissioner Trice
Office of the City Commission
1565 First Street
Sarasota, Florida 34236

Honorable Mayor and City Commissioners:

Beginning in the fall of 2023, I shared with my family, close friends and associates, then with my key staff in December 2023, and with you at the beginning of this year, my timelines and decision related to my continued employment with the City of Sarasota. I have made that decision. It is with heartfelt anguish that I have decided to retire as City Manager, effective October 15, 2024. Per my employment agreement, I am required to provide 60 days' notice of my decision that I am providing you today. If you choose, I am offering to remain in my position beyond 60 days until a successor is appointed or you decide otherwise.

At the beginning of the year, I shared with you, both professional challenges never experienced in my career, and life challenges that I continue to face that led to my decision. Adding to my decision were 31 years of government service, with that being one year more than what I set out as my target goal in this field, coupled with, witnessing very close family, friends and colleagues leave us unexpectedly without having accomplished other lifelong career and personal opportunities/goals/dreams. With that said, I realized now is the time for me to pursue other opportunities. Although I do not have a specific plan in place or another career opportunity, I am ready and excited to discover and fully embrace new challenges that may arise and to begin my next chapter.

Honorable Mayor and City Commissioners, I must confess that this has been one of my life's toughest decisions given our amazing organizational accomplishments and this equally amazing city we call home. However, after 15 years of what I hope you would all agree, was dedicated and loyal service to the public, you, our employees and the city of Sarasota in general, I believe it is time for me to move on. Many will speculate and come to their own conclusions as to the reasons for my decision, but you know the reasons from what I have personally shared with you. I suspect that a very few will celebrate this decision as some kind of moral victory, while many many others will celebrate it as a recognition of my years of service to this amazing city; its residents, business owners, and visitors, and my previous service to other municipal entities including my strong relationships with non-governmental organizations, all within the state of Florida.

During my tenure, both as Deputy City Manager and as City Manager, our organization has achieved remarkable accomplishments that should be celebrated and recognized. Together with you, we have laid the foundation and set in motion a vision for our city to further realize an even brighter economic and prosperous future despite opposition from a vocal minority. Our city has grown into a municipality that is widely recognized and respected statewide, nationally and internationally, and as a result, many have now chosen Sarasota as their home, drawn by its unique charm and success. My greatest fear is that the voices of dissent and their constant negative discourse will overshadow our achievements and jeopardize our city's continued progressive future, our low tax rate, our strong financial position and visible economic prosperity accessible to and enjoyed by our residents and businesses. I (nor you or the majority of our silent public)

have never heard any positivity or a progressive vision of what our city could/should be, emanate from these individuals. Be warned of succumbing to a loud vocal minority!

By the end of my service, and as was said, I will have devoted over 31 years to public service starting with the City of Tallahassee. I must share here a quality that's important in my growth, in that, I have been afforded the great fortune to be mentored throughout my life and career by some amazing, amazing women who instilled in me the importance of empathetic and servant leadership, and just the plain good old treatment of people, especially those who are your family members, the public, peers and those who are in your employment. These women cautioned that this type of leadership also came with making tough decisions when confronted with challenging situations that may not be in your or someone else's personal/professional best interests, but that we must do the greater good and what's best for the silent majority by standing firm when confronted by those challenging your decisions. That maternal intuition that they displayed is a quality that I have attempted to replicate in my professional career, and it is my hope that it is one of many I have displayed.

I am leaving the City of Sarasota, an organization that has a continued strong work ethic, with a trusted, dedicated, and loyal 800+ employee base, with equally strong leadership in our Charter Officials, department directors, key management staff, and you, our Commissioners. You all are the backbone of our success, and it is reflected in the greatness of our city. The City of Sarasota is in a very strong financial position, and I urge you once again not to be swayed by the detractors.

Using my personal philosophy, I hope my successor comes from within our organization, and I would highly recommend no other than Deputy City Manager Patrick Robinson. His institutional wisdom, operational skillset, his "get it done" approach, integrity, tenure with the organization, communication style, partnerships and connections throughout the city of Sarasota, Sarasota County and beyond makes him an excellent choice for this role.

To our residents, our business owners, their staff, our visitors, my Honorable Mayor and City Commissioners, Ms. Griggs, Mr. Fournier, my amazing Executive Team, and our equally amazing employees, we have all worked so well together over the years, so I thank you from the depths of my heart for allowing me to be of service to you over the last 15 years, first as Deputy City Manager and finally as City Manager. Upon leaving, I pray for the City of Sarasota's continued progress and growth, and all the best for generations to come.

From my family and me, again, thank you so much for your unwavering and unquestionable support during this "amazing ride".

Sincerely,



Marlon

CC: Honorable Shayla Griggs, City Auditor and Clerk
Honorable Robert Fournier, City Attorney
Patrick Robinson, Deputy City Manager
Lori Rivers, Deputy City Auditor and Clerk
Mike Connolly, Deputy City Attorney
Executive Team