

# The City of Fort Pierce, Florida

Invites your interest in the position of

# CITY ATTORNEY



## The Position

The City Attorney is, pursuant to the City Charter, legal advisor to and counselor for the City and its officers in matters relating to their official duties. The mission of the Office of the City Attorney is to safeguard the legal, ethical, and financial integrity of the City of Fort Pierce. The City Attorney represents the City before all levels of state and federal courts. The Office of the City Attorney reviews all City contracts and agreements for approval as to legal form and correctness.

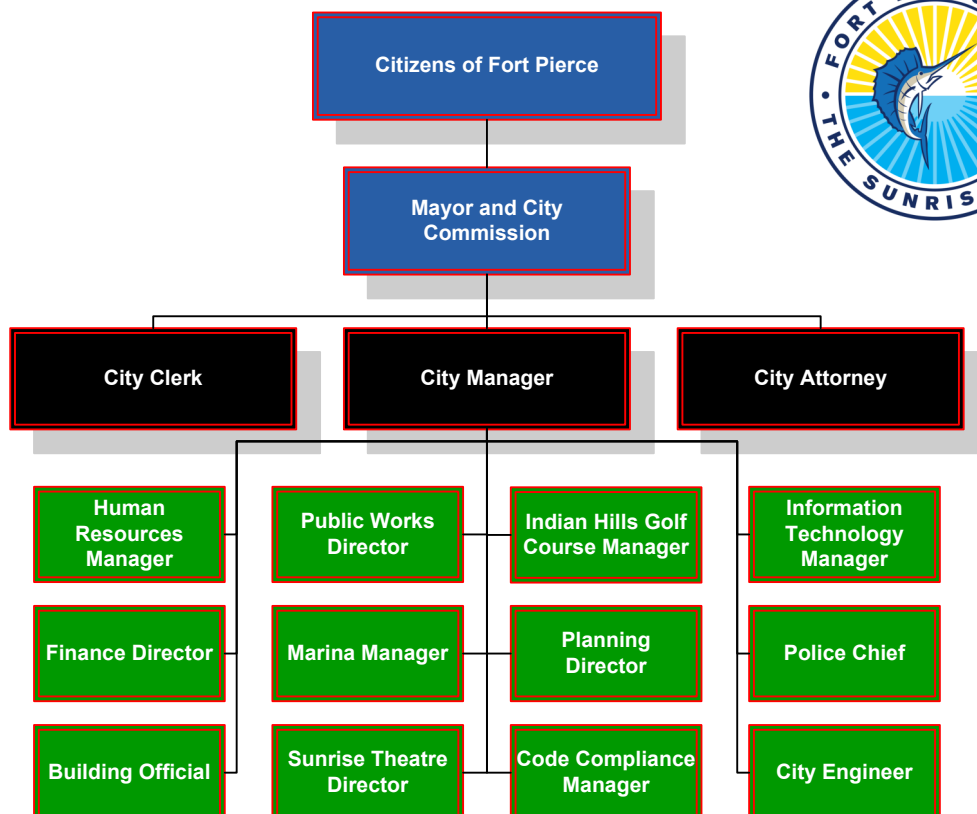
The position is one of three "Charter Officers" appointed by and directly reporting to the Mayor and the four City Commissioners - the City Manager, City Attorney, and City Clerk. The City operates under a Commission/Manager organizational structure with daily operations entrusted to the City Manager. Requests for legal advice from departments are routed through the City Manager's office.

The Mayor is elected at large to a four-year term with membership on the Commission. Four Commissioners are elected to overlapping terms from two two-member districts. The offices of City Commissioner and Mayor are elected on a nonpartisan basis.

Three positions are budgeted for the City Attorney's Office with a total budget of \$524,018 out of a total City General Fund budget of \$43,323,874. The City Attorney has the discretion to delegate legal matters to private attorneys as appropriate.

# City of Fort Pierce, Florida

## Organizational Chart



FORT PIERCE CITY COMMISSION	
Linda Hudson	Mayor
Rufus J. Alexander III	District I
Curtis Johnson, Jr	District I
Jeremiah Johnson	District II
Thomas K. Perona	District II



### City Attorney Office Mission Statement

The mission of the Office of the City Attorney is to safeguard the legal, ethical, and financial integrity of the City of Fort Pierce. This is accomplished by offering legal services to the City Commission, Officials, and several Boards in a manner consistent with the City's Charter, Code of Ordinances, and the laws of the State of Florida and the United States, in a manner meeting the highest standards of professional diligence and ethics.

### The City

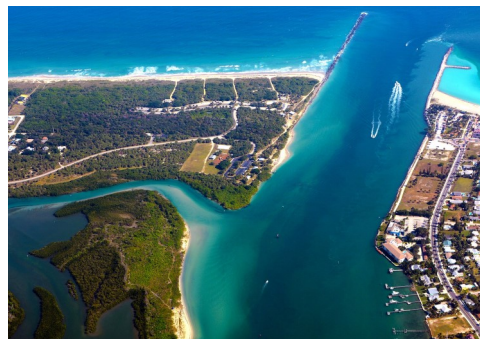
Fort Pierce has retained much of the charm of the fishing village that it was when incorporated in 1901 as it evolved to the highly diverse community found in larger urban areas today. The City is the county seat of St. Lucie County, Florida. It is known as the "Sunrise City" and is located on Florida's Treasure Coast. The Treasure Coast commemorates the sinking of a recently discovered Spanish fleet in 1715 to distinguish the area from other parts of Florida. The natural beauty of the City is evident to even the casual visitor. The City is located on the Indian River Lagoon with easy access to the Atlantic. Fort Pierce is still known for its exceptional fishing, beautiful sand beaches, and outdoor activities.

The City encompasses approximately 31 square miles and is home for a diverse population of approximately 41,600 residents. The US Census estimates that 33.55% of the population is white alone, not Hispanic or Latino, 41.4% black or African American alone, and 22.8% Hispanic or Latino. The City population is also diverse economically with an estimated household median income of \$35,198 and 29.4% of the population is estimated to be "in poverty."

The Commission, community, and Police Department have combined efforts to keep the Fort Pierce a place where families and businesses can thrive. The National Council for Home Safety and Security ranked the City as one of the 100 safest cities in Florida.

The City population is growing. Efforts are being made to maintain the historic, family friendly ambiance of a beach community while encouraging economic growth.

The cost of living in Fort Pierce compares well to other areas of south Florida and the US generally. According to the "Best Cities" survey, the overall cost of living in Fort Pierce is rated



87.6 on a 100-point scale. The cost of housing is particularly noteworthy as it is listed at 66.7 on the same scale. It should also be understood that there is considerable variation in housing costs throughout the City.

A wide range of K-12 school options are available for Fort Pierce residents. Public high schools in the City include Fort Pierce Central High School, Fort Pierce Westwood Academy: The WEST Prep Magnet and Lincoln Park Academy. For the 2021 school year, there are 12 private schools serving 3,202 students in Fort Pierce. Private schools include John Carroll Catholic High School and Faith Baptist School (Treasure Coast Baptist Academy). Private middle schools inside City limits include Saint Andrew's Academy and Saint Anastasia Middle School.

Postsecondary schools include the Florida Atlantic Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institution, the Indian River State College, the Florida State University Regional Medical School, the University of Florida Indian River Research and Education Center, and the Bethune Cookman satellite campus.

### Low Crime

The City's aggressive policing initiatives, strategies, and community engagement, have resulted in a significant and continuing pattern of crime reduction. In fact, over the last 5 years, there has been a 20.8% decrease in violent crime, a 39.2% decrease in property crime, and a 36% decrease in overall Part 1 UCR crime. Fort Pierce's steadily declining crime rate has made the City a safer place to live, work and play. According to the National Council for Home Safety and Security (Alarms.org) and Safewise.com, Fort Pierce is among the top 100 safest cities in Florida, ranking 61 and 99 respectively.



### The Climate

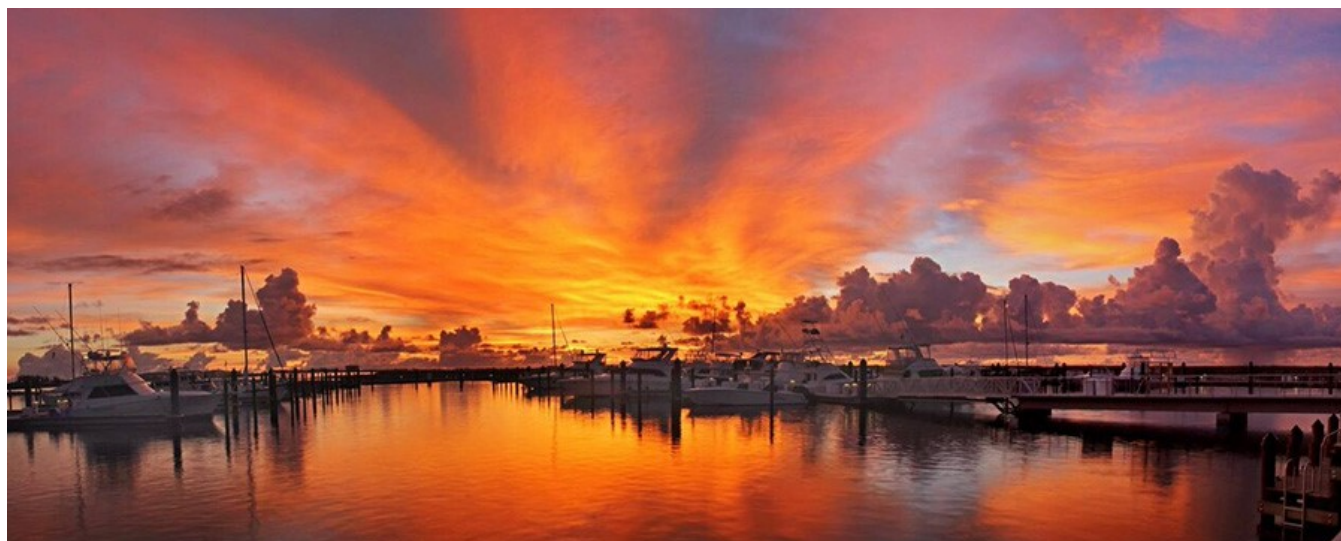
Fort Pierce has a humid subtropical climate, with hot, humid summers and warm, drier winters. Summer temperatures average in the low 90s while winter brings temperatures in the 70s. Approximately 51 total inches of rain fall annually during 133 days with rain. Tropical storms and hurricanes are possible in the region but their occurrence in Fort Pierce have historically been infrequent and without substantial property damage.

### The Economy

Much of the Fort Pierce employment is currently in the government and service industries.

The easy access to the Florida Turnpike, Interstate 95, the Treasure Coast International Airport, the Port of Fort Pierce, and developable properties with the City and within annexable areas offer continued opportunities for a growing economy.

More information about Fort Pierce is available on the web at: [www.cityoffortpierce.com](http://www.cityoffortpierce.com)



## Issues

The Commissioners do not see any one issue of overriding importance to the City. However, several issues are percolating that will likely require prompt attention:

- When the 2020 census data is available, redistricting will be required. In addition to assuring the redistricting process is done lawfully, consideration will likely be given to changing to a system which is composed of four single member commission districts along with the elected at large mayor.
- The Commissioners are currently considering an ordinance dealing with short-term rentals that may be adopted prior to the hiring of a City Attorney. However, there likely will be issues with the implementation of the ordinance.
- Water and wastewater operations are in an area of the City with prime development potential. The operations are nearing the end of their useful life and a relocation is anticipated. Property acquisition and development contracts will require significant legal attention. (Water, wastewater, electricity, natural gas, and internet services are provided through the Fort Pierce Utilities Authority (FPUA). The Authority is a separate governmental unit with a Board composed of the City Mayor and four Commission appointed members. 6% of its revenue is forwarded to the City. The Authority has its separate legal counsel.
- City expansion through annexation and the disposal of surplus City-owned property continues to be a probability with required legal guidance.
- Development agreements will continue to be negotiated and need to be enforced as businesses are attracted to the business climate and quality of life available in the Fort Pierce area.
- Effort is needed to continue the update the City Code of Ordinances.
- Other issues are common to any City Attorney's Office. The next City Attorney should expect to be involved with development/redevelopment, code enforcement, contracts, labor relations and negotiations, law enforcement, etc.

## The Ideal Candidate

The Commissioners are looking for a person who, in addition to having the educational, experiential, and license qualifications listed for the position, has the personality and personal integrity necessary to guide the, at times, demanding commissioners and staff. The Attorney is expected to operate in a collaborative, diplomatic and respectful manner but not at the expense of offering quality legal advice.

The ideal candidate would exhibit a passion for the opportunities for making Fort Pierce a continually improving community to live and work in.

The ideal candidate would understand what it means to operate in an ethnically and economically diverse community and with a governing board which reflects that diversity.

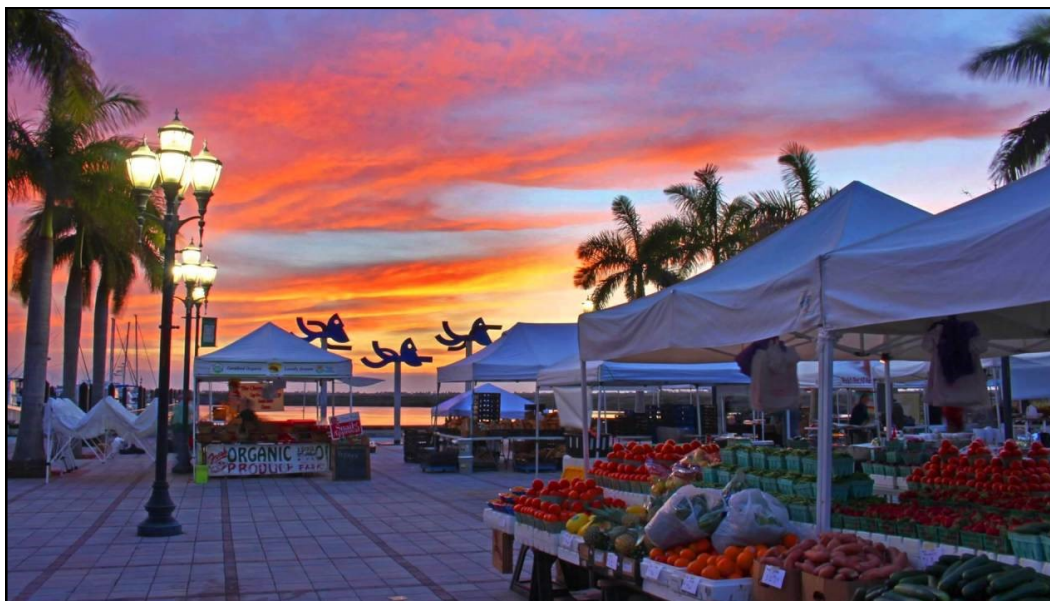
The ideal candidate would appreciate that the City operates with a limited internal attorney staff and contracted outside counsel. It is expected that the City will continue to be flexible with the management and internal operations of the Office.

The ideal candidate would have a working understanding of the potential liabilities from public safety and other aspects of City operations.

As part of the City's leadership team, the City Attorney will work with the Commissioners, City Manager, City Clerk and staff to find ways to accomplish the City goals within the framework of the law.

The bottom line is that the next City Attorney will exhibit independent judgment as well as the highest level of professionalism, ethics, and dedication. The person will understand that the City Attorney reports collectively to all five members of the Commission, with no one person receiving better treatment or information.





### Qualifications and Expectations

The position requires a Juris Doctor (J.D.) degree and licensure to practice law in Florida. Note that Florida does not have reciprocity with any other state. Requires at least ten years of increasingly responsible experience in the management and practice of law, preferably with municipal law practice. Membership in the Florida Bar Association is required.

Also highly desired is the City Attorney establishing Fort Pierce residency.

### Compensation

The beginning salary will be negotiable depending on the experience and qualifications of the selected candidate. Fort Pierce provides excellent benefits.

### To Apply

The position will remain open until filled. The first review of resumes will take place on August 13, 2021. If interested, please email your resume and cover letter with your compensation expectations to [slavin@bellsouth.net](mailto:slavin@bellsouth.net).

For additional information about this opportunity, contact Robert E. Slavin, President at (770) 449-4656 [slavin@bellsouth.net](mailto:slavin@bellsouth.net) or David Krings, Midwest Regional Director at (513) 200-4222 [david@kringsconsulting.com](mailto:david@kringsconsulting.com).



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***Note: Under Florida Law, resumes are public documents and will be provided to the media upon request. Please call prior to submitting your resume if confidentiality is important to you.***

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