



# Utilities Director/ City Engineer

*Bartow, Florida*

EXECUTIVE  
RECRUITMENT  
PROVIDED BY 





## THE COMMUNITY

The City of Bartow, known as the City of Oaks and Azaleas, is known for its vibrant economy that drives the community's wellbeing. Its roughly 20,000 residents benefit from the organizational vision of prosperity for families, and provision of outstanding business opportunities, superior public services, and a safe, friendly community. Serving as the seat for Polk County, the City offers a unique dynamic that blends the best of a small-town environment with that of a bustling center of government and commerce. In addition to City and County offices, there are also a number of regional, state, and federal offices located within Bartow city limits, including the Florida Department of Transportation District One office, which is responsible for southwest Florida's transportation needs.

Bartow is strategically located in Central Florida at the crossroads of US-98, Florida State Route 60, and US-17. Over nine million people reside within a 100-mile radius from the City. The Tampa and Orlando International airports, as well as the Port of Tampa can be accessed within one hour. Other nearby cities and metropolitan areas feature world-class art and cultural activities that are just a short drive away, including some of the top tourism destinations in the world including Disney World, SeaWorld, Legoland, Busch Gardens and more.

Family-friendly community events, accessible cultural opportunities and innovative lifelong learning are vital to Bartow. They help to form a place where individuals can feel cherished, appreciated, productive and fulfilled, resulting in greater health and balance in family, business, school, social and civic settings. Major community events include an annual arts festival, craft fair, science fiction/cos-play extravaganza, parades, monthly downtown Friday evening festivals, and the largest annual pre-1840 living history encampment in the Southeast, just to name

## CITY VISION STATEMENT

Bartow 2025 is an attractive, livable city that has a historic hometown feeling, an active expanded downtown, sustainable neighborhoods, and a strong local economy. Residents are safe and have exciting leisure opportunities.

## CITY MISSION STATEMENT

To promote high quality of life by providing effective municipal services in a customer friendly and financially responsible manner.

a few. Bartow's historic downtown is experiencing a renaissance, including an expanding array of unique shops and restaurants featuring traditional southern cooking, sports bar cuisine, sandwich shops, cotes, coffee houses and a local craft brewery.

Organized team sports are available for children as young as four years, with soccer, baseball, softball, and football as popular programs. Lighted pickleball and tennis courts are available for night play, and those into exercise have access to the City's fitness center. Bartow's Municipal Golf Course is one of five Polk courses on the Florida Historic Golf Trail with an 18-hole, par-72 layout that measures up to 6,600 yards and is considered a traditional golf course with winding doglegs and small, elevated greens.

The City is also a perfect place for serious nature lovers. At the 460-acre Mosaic Peace River Park, you can take a walk on a wooded boardwalk through century-old cypress trees, majestic oaks, and pines. Birds and wildlife abound in this pristine setting and it is also a great place for horseback riding. The nearby Circle B Bar Reserve is home to Polk's Nature Discovery Center, featuring an exhibit hall providing visitors an opportunity to discover Polk County's water, wilderness, and wildlife. Polk County is known as Central Florida's Lakes Country. Those who like to fish, boat and canoe have access to more than 550 freshwater lakes and numerous rivers and streams. Cyclists benefit from miles of roadways with a variety of terrain to enjoy the great outdoors, including the Fort Fraser Trail linking Bartow to Lakeland, with more than seven miles of paved trail and related activities.



The community offers superior education opportunities, with Bartow schools recognized as some of the best in the area. Bartow High School consistently ranks as one of the best high schools in America and Bartow's International Baccalaureate (IB) program is recognized for its rigorous course of study that prepares students for success in post-secondary study and employment. The IB program is consistently ranked as one of the top 10 schools in the nation. Polk County Schools also offer a variety of career academies designed to guide and inspire middle and high school students toward their passions in life.

Known as the "Home of Champions," with both successful athletic and academic programs, Bartow High School offers a wide range of extracurricular activities, including band, drama, chorus as well as clubs and other programs. Summerlin Academy is a rigorous military-style educational setting. A public school of choice, Summerlin Academy offers high school students an experience similar to that at U.S. military academies in Annapolis, Colorado Springs and West Point. The school is designed to prepare young men and women for college through highly academic course work. Round-

ing out Bartow area schools are seven public elementary schools, three private elementary schools and three middle schools. Bartow Elementary Academy and Union Academy are magnet schools with students selected by an application process. Both have been ranked among the best in the county. Enrichment activities include foreign language studies, art, science, theater performances and field trips.

Opportunities for advanced education are within easy driving distance of Bartow. Polk County is home to six colleges and universities and seven technical schools, including world-class Florida Polytechnic University and the Polk State College Clear Springs Advanced Technology Center. Both institutions offer industry-focused courses of study that leave students fully prepped for career success.

The City's demographics are comprised of 56% White (Non-Hispanic), 19.6% Black or African American (Non-Hispanic), 10.4% White (Hispanic), 3.4% Asian, 2.46% Multiracial, 3.4% Multiracial (Hispanic), and 3.46% Other. Bartow's median household income is \$53,595 with a median sales price of a home of \$307,000.



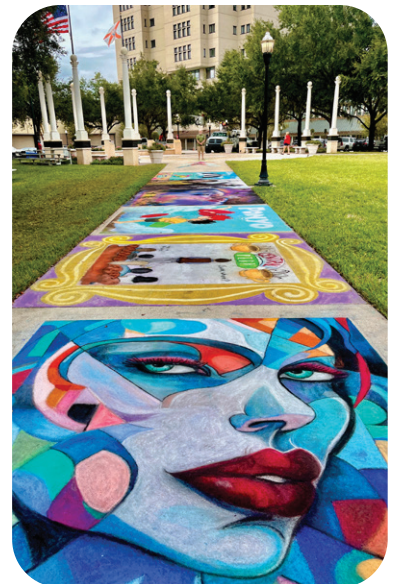


## GOVERNANCE & ORGANIZATION

The City operates under a Council-Manager form of government, with a five-person elected City Commission focused on legislative and policymaking body, with day-to-day operations the responsibility of the appointed City Manager. Two of the City Commissioners are elected at-large, with the remaining three Commissioners elected by district. There are no term limit restrictions regarding their tenure on the governing body. The City Commission appoints the City Attorney and City Manager as Charter Officers, the latter of which is responsible for the City's day-to-day operations. All Department Heads/Department Supervisors, the Clerk's Office, and the Assistant City Manager report directly to the City Manager.

Mire Herr was appointed as Bartow's City Manager in December 2022. His career in public service spans more than 40 years in both Indiana and Florida working in a variety of fields of government, including community development, transportation planning, public works, City-County management, and utility services. Prior to his current post, he served as Polk County's Director of Transportation from 1998 to 2002 and was subsequently promoted to County Manager where he served from 2003 to 2010. During this time, he managed budgets in excess of \$1.2 billion, while leading an organization of more than 2,000 employees providing services to nearly 600,000 residents. Mr. Herr also worked in the private sector as President of ECON from September of 2010 to April of 2012.

The City provides a wide array of local government services including police, fire, utilities, solid waste, roads, and drainage, building permitting and inspections, planning, parks and recreation, library, cemetery, and multiple support functions. Bartow employs roughly 365 full-time and seasonal employees and operates with a FY 2024 General Fund of approximately \$33 million, supported in part with an ad valorem property tax of 4.6080 mills.





## ABOUT THE DEPARTMENT

The City's Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) was originally constructed in 1994 and recently underwent a variety of improvements to both the treatment process train and operational controls. The WWTP is a state-of-the-art facility that treats all wastewater discharged from the City of Eagle Lake, Polk County Central Regional Utility Service Area, and the City of Bartow. The plant has a design capacity of 5.33 MGD with an average daily flow of 2.400 MGD with the effluent pumped to a holding pond at the Hines Energy Complex owned by Duke Energy which is used for coolant purposes in the production of electricity. The wastewater collection system includes 43 lift stations, with roughly half currently outfitted with standby generation. The FY 2024 Wastewater Fund Budget is approximately \$9.9 million, including roughly 41.5 million in capital and supports 10 Full Time Equivalents.

The City's Water Treatment Plant was constructed in 2002 with a design capacity of 8.75 MGD but is currently permitted at 7.9 MGD. The WTP has a Consumptive Use Permit at 3.8 MGP with the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) through July 2031 with groundwater wells, with additional future raw water supply anticipated to be secured through the Polk County Water Cooperative. The FY 2024 Water Fund Budget is approximately \$12.9 million, including roughly \$6.1 million in capital and supports 11 Full Time Equivalents.

Employees in the Utilities Department below the classification of Manager/Supervisor are represented by a collective bargaining agreement with the International Union of Painters and National Trades (IUPAT).



## ABOUT THE POSITION

Under administrative direction from the City Manager, the Utilities Director/City Engineer performs highly responsible work in planning, managing, and directing the operations of the City's Utility Services Department to include Water and Wastewater Treatment Plants, and assistance to the Public Works Department's maintenance of the water distribution system and wastewater collection system. The Director manages the design and construction of all water/sewer projects, in addition to being responsible for administrative management, technical planning and review, and operational control of the City's water and wastewater infrastructure treatment facilities. Direct reports include the Wastewater Plant Manager, Water Plant Manager, and an Administrative Support Assistant.

A summary of the Utility Director/City Engineer's responsibilities includes the following:

- Direct the operation and maintenance of the water and wastewater treatment plants.
- Direct the design and construction of all water/sewer projects in the City.
- Supervise the preparation of specialized studies and reports for the City Manager and the City Commissioner.
- Responsible for developing long-range plans to meet the City's future water and wastewater needs. Evaluate the adequacy of facilities, funding sufficiency, and develop priorities for modification or extension.
- Develop, evaluate, and approve strategic operational plans and department policies and procedures to provide direction, enhance operations and improve customer service.
- Evaluate the soundness and efficiency of operations and develop and supervise the repair, maintenance, and installation of facilities.
- Oversee the preparation of and approve the department/division operating budgets for the recommendation to the City Manager and the City Commission.
- Monitor operating and capital expenditures to ensure compliance with budget and monitor revenues to ensure sufficient funds are available.
- Develop and approve agenda items for the City Commission, attend the Commission meeting, make presentations to the Commission as necessary.
- Monitor proposed state and federal legislation rules and regulations pertaining to Utilities, determine impact, provide comment, and implement, if adopted.
- Negotiate agreements and coordinate activities with neighboring jurisdictions and service authorities of which the City is a member.
- Coordinate with Legislative Affairs and Communications Director for the development and implementation of the public relations plan and news releases.
- Coordinate public presentations and information concerning the operation of Utility Services.
- Analyze costs in relation to revenues in order to determine appropriate rate structures.
- Negotiate for land acquisition, contributions by developers, and grant work for water and wastewater projects. Contribute to identification of financing methods which make such expansion practical.
- Analyze utility rate sufficiency rate structures while operating under existing systems of water and wastewater rate structures.
- Remain up to date on technical advances and new methods of treatments and operations of water and wastewater systems.
- Work with federal and state agencies relative to grants and applications. Attend Polk Regional Water Cooperative operation meetings and Technical Advisory Committee Meetings.
- Establish ordinances for City utilities services.
- Establish and implement department policies, procedures, and work performance and safety standards in accordance with City administrative policies and procedures as well as applicable laws.
- Foster positive employee relations and employee morale on a City-wide basis.



- Coordinate the implementation of Maintenance/Repair/Replacement Plans for the water and wastewater systems to meet changing regulatory requirements and system operating conditions by identifying/recommending upgrades, modifications, or improvements to equipment and facilities.
- Review and approve development and other technical plans and specifications for water and wastewater system expansion and improvement for compliance with comprehensive plans and local/state/federal regulations.
- Present discussions for financing, loan, and grant applications to the City Commission.
- Serve as an active member at the Emergency Operations Center during declared emergencies.
- Ensure compliance with regulatory permits, certifications, and other relevant documents to maintain public safety.
- Provide technical engineering advice regarding the operation and maintenance of all utilities facilities and equipment: treatment facilities, collection systems, transmission and distribution networks, and pump stations.
- Prepare and maintain recommended Department budget and controls expenditures from the approved annual budget.
- Utilize professional engineering standards, review plans and specifications; design solutions, expansion, construction, and relocation projects.
- Coordinate with various vendors such as developers, contractors, consultants, the public, and City departments.
- Attend and participate in City's Development Review Committee.
- Negotiate and oversee consultant contracts and projects. Review plans and specifications for conformance with project scope and City standards.
- Correspond with developers regarding water and wastewater system performance and capacity to serve prospective development flow and demand.
- Prepare requests for proposals, review bid submittals, and participate in pre-bid and pre-construction meetings.
- Monitor construction for compliance with design objectives, including coordination with design engineers, contractors, and staff for various projects.
- Review subdivision site and developer plans and legal descriptions and research information regarding rights-of-way, easements, water lines and sanitary lines.
- Assist other department personnel in responding to customer service matters such as DRC considerations.
- Permit regulatory reporting and compliance, including evaluating and initiating responses to the EPA regulation changes and federal mandates required by ODEQ.
- Develop long-range infrastructure improvement goals and oversee any applicable project construction.
- Assist in preparation for, response to, and recovery from, the impacts of a wide variety of disasters or emergency situations and may be temporarily assigned to other duties, locations, and shifts.





## CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

**Strategic Utility Management Focus:** The Administration is seeking candidates who can holistically review the Utility Department's treatment plants and operations, and proactively set the Department's strategic vision, mission, goals, and priorities. There is a general sense of known problem areas with the City's distribution and collection systems which collectively have impacts on the Water and Wastewater Treatment Plant operations, but coordination and prioritization with the Public Works Department's TCS Division which maintains the below ground systems (see below) will be critical to ensure effective and reliable utility services are provided to the community.

**Interface with Transmission & Collection Systems (TCS) Division:** The Utilities Director is responsible for the operation of the WTP and WWTP, but inherently works very closely with the TCS Division in the Public Works Department for the maintenance and installation of all the City's water and sanitary sewer distribution and collection systems. The TCS Division has completed the videorecording of the entire Wastewater underground collection system and is prioritizing collection system problems and developing a preventative maintenance schedule to address inflow and infiltration issues. The TCS Division has both Water and Wastewater Master Plan studies in the FY 2025 Annual Budget, and the interface between the Utilities Department and TCS will be critical as the City plans for both current maintenance needs and future expansions of the systems. The TCS Division is also in the planning stages to relocate its operations from the City's Public Works facility to a new facility at the Water treatment Plant, thereby creating enhanced inherent coordination between the two operations.

**Capital Project Management:** The Utilities Department is undergoing a variety of capital projects estimated at roughly \$7.7 million that will be overseen by the successor Utilities Director. These projects include the following: Water Softening Unit, Work Order Asset Management Software, Lift Station Generators, and various equipment purchases. Additionally, the TCS Division capital budget includes the previously mentioned relocation to the Water Plant grounds, Water & Wastewater Transmission System Improvements, Utility Adjustments/Relocations, Sewer Manhole Rehabilitations, Water Valve Replacement Program, Inspections, Repair, and Relining of Sewer lines, and other smaller equipment purchases which collectively impact Utility Department operations. Given the inherent work overseeing utility capital construction design and project oversight, candidates possessing an engineering background and/or a Professional Engineer License are desired; however, a PE is not required.



## IDEAL CANDIDATE

The City of Bartow is seeking a servant leader with exceptional skills in utility planning and water resources; a strong understanding of utility operations under local, state, and federal utility laws/regulations; and excellent judgment, discretion, customer relations, and authentic leadership to become their next Director of Public Utilities/City Engineer.

The next Director should help articulate the vision for the Utilities Department relying on Best Management Practices, take pride in the services it provides, and have strong financial acumen and capital budgeting, and fiscal management skills. The ideal candidate will be a highly relational individual with a collaborative management style. A candidate who has experience with organizational development, succession planning, and an understanding of utility service and staffing needs is strongly desired. The chosen candidate should be an outstanding communicator with diverse groups including elected officials, Department Heads, managers, technical staff, construction trade employees, and the public.

The City seeks a coach and team player who will mentor Utility Department staff and provide opportunities for their professional development. The ideal candidate will be an approachable people person with the ability to build camaraderie both within the Department and with other City Departments. The Utilities Director/City Engineer should be able to set expectations with clarity and authority without micromanaging and serve as a resource to staff when needed. They should be comfortable as a “go to” person for staff seeking advice as they work through unique challenges in their assignments and projects. The individual should have strong skills in both intergovernmental relationships with neighboring utilities, authorities, and regulatory agencies, in addition to working collaboratively with other City Departments. The chosen candidate should be able to effectively manage multiple and simultaneous large-scale projects and initiatives and be comfortable in delegating responsibilities to assist in the delivery of outstanding utility services for utility customers.

The chosen candidate should be both a technician to ensure the submission of required reports and disclosures on behalf of the City’s treatment operations and possess a “big picture” focus of comprehensive utility operations with a strong understanding of utility forecasting. The successful candidate will have a sound business acumen and budget and CIP development/administration. Experience with Florida utilities, managing employees operating under a collective bargaining agreement, and in rate study methodologies/practices would be a plus.

## EDUCATION & EXPERIENCE

The Utilities Director/City Engineer position requires a bachelor’s degree (graduate level degree preferred) in civil, environmental, or chemical engineering; or other appropriate job-related field. Applicants should possess at least seven (7) years’ progressively responsible experience in a water or wastewater systems or environmental regulatory agency servicing a population of not less than 15,000, including at least three (3) years’ experience in a supervisory capacity. Experience must include administrative, operational, and technical responsibilities in the water and wastewater fields. Professional Engineer License (PE) in the State of Florida preferred, but not required.





## COMPENSATION & BENEFITS

The City of Bartow offers a competitive starting salary range of \$125,000 - \$150,000, depending upon qualifications and experience. The City provides a generous benefits program, including health, dental, vision, pre-tax spending accounts, life insurance, long-term disability, paid vacation, personal days, sick leave, and other professional development assistance. Employees participate in the City's Defined Benefit Retirement Plan with a 4% Employee contribution, with an additional optional 457 deferred compensation plan available.

## APPLICATION PROCESS

[Please apply online](#)

For more information on this position, contact:

**Doug Thomas, Executive Vice President**

[DouglasThomas@GovernmentResource.com](mailto:DouglasThomas@GovernmentResource.com)

863-860-9314

The City of Bartow is an Equal Opportunity Employer and values diversity in its workforce. Applicants selected as finalists for this position will be subject to a comprehensive background check. Pursuant to Florida law, all applications are a public record once submitted and available for disclosure upon receipt of a public records request.

## RESOURCES

**City Website**

[cityofbartow.net](http://cityofbartow.net)

**Annual Water Quality Report**

[cityofbartow.net/departments-services/code-enforcement](http://cityofbartow.net/departments-services/code-enforcement)

**Bartow Chamber of Commerce**

[bartowchamber.com](http://bartowchamber.com)

