



Description of the City of Starke

Starke is a small rural community located in the Northeast region of Florida and is known for its beautiful fresh water lakes and strawberries. It is 25 miles north of the City of Gainesville (home to the University of Florida) and 60 miles southwest of Jacksonville, Florida. The city has a small-town residential atmosphere that overflows with hospitality, historical landmarks, and managed wildlife areas.

Starke is the county seat of Bradford County.

Demographics

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Starke has an estimated population of 5,411 and covers 7.21 square miles. A majority (55.3 %) of the housing is owner occupied and the average owner-occupied home value is \$87,000. The average median household income is \$43,974. The population is approximately 67.6% white, 27.2% African American, and 5.1% Hispanic. Just under thirty percent of the population is over 65 years old-17% is under 18 years old.

Most (62.3%) of the households have a broadband internet subscription and 76.3 % of the residents over 25 years old have a high school degree, with 13.9% having a bachelor's degree or higher.

History of the City of Starke

The settlement began with the arrival of a rail line in 1857 that brought construction workers to the area. Soon the sparse settlement along the tracks grew until it warranted the establishment of a post office in 1857. George W. Cole, a land speculator and developer, attracted here by the prospects of growth following the arrival of the railroad, obtained title to a 40-acre tract on both sides of the railroad for a reputed \$100. This section of land is still shown in a legal description as the original town of Starke. Mr. Cole, whose efforts were instrumental in obtaining the post office in Starke, was named as the first postmaster. One legend has it that the post office was given the name of Starke in honor of Mr. Cole's fiancé whose family name was Starke. Another account has it that the town was named in honor of Madison Starke Perry, Governor of Florida from 1857-1861. No one actually knows which version is correct.

The railroad was crucial to the development of the area because it provided badly needed transportation for timber, navel stores, and cotton which were the main economy for the area at that time.

By 1886 Starke's population was nearing 400 and its citizens believed the time had come to incorporate. An election was held on April 26, 1876 with 42 male residents turning out to cast a unanimous vote for incorporation. A new impetus for growth and development came in the early 1880's with the arrival of several well-to-do and cultured families, mostly from Pennsylvania. The newcomers built fine homes and did much to spur the educational, cultural, religious, and economic development of the town.

World War II helped Starke grow due to its close proximity to Camp Blanding, which was used as a major army training center. Camp Blanding is eight miles east of Starke and still serves as a National Guard base and training site.

Description of City Government

The City Commission is made up of a Mayor (elected annually from the Commission), and four Commission Members with 4-year terms. The City Commission also serves as the Planning Commission and Community Redevelopment Agency Board. The Police Chief and City Clerk are also elected positions for 4-year terms that report directly to the City Commission and are not under the direction of the City Manager, although the City Manager and these two elected officials are expected to work closely together. The City Clerk also serves as the Treasurer of the City per City Charter. The City Commission contracts with a local law firm for the position of City Attorney.

While the City Charter states the form of Government as the Mayor-Commission, the City in 2002 made a major change in government by creating the office of City Manager by ordinance.

The City Manager, with the exception of the City Clerk and Police Chief, supervises the departments of the City including Public Works, Utilities (including water, sewer, gas, and electric), Fire, Parks and Recreation, Planning, purchasing, and Human Resources. The City has a Finance officer that reports to the City Clerk.

The City has 72 full time employees with a General Fund and Utility budget of \$29.4 million dollars.

Qualifications of City Manager

The City Manager serves at the pleasure of the City Commission and is appointed by a majority vote of the Commission for a term fixed by an employment agreement not to exceed three years. The City Manager is required to have a Bachelor's degree from an accredited 4-year college or University with a degree or major course work in public administration, business administration, or a closely related field. He or she must have a minimum of five years work experience as a top-level municipal or public sector administrator. Within 12 months of employment, the City Manager's residence must be within Bradford County.

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities for the City Manager

The ideal candidate will have a Bachelor's Degree from an accredited college or university with a major in Public or Business Administration, and relevant experience as a City Manager or Assistant City Manager.

The successful candidate must be able to foster effective communications and cooperation not only with the City Commission but also with the elected City Clerk/Treasurer, Police Chief, and appointed City Attorney. He or she must have strong administrative and computer skills, maintain positive community and intergovernmental relations, support local economic development and understand the Florida open meetings and public records laws.

Traits looked for by the City Commission include good judgement and integrity. Keeping up with current projects and keeping the commission informed is essential, along with the ability to budget the city's resources effectively. The City Manager must treat all commission members equally, support the goals of the city and have experience in all departments. The Manager also needs to respect others, tell everyone the same story, communicate effectively and be sensitive to the needs of the minority community. Embracing cultural diversity and the ability to retain and recruit a competent, professional staff is important. A working knowledge of municipal finance, human resources, public works, gas and electric utilities, and community development is preferred.

Major challenges the new City Manager is expected to address include funding to replace an aging utility infrastructure, construction of a new waste treatment plant, establishing an effective code enforcement process, working closely with the City Attorney to remove dilapidated buildings, monitoring two DOT highway projects and updating city ordinances.

Performance Expectations

Performance expectations are specific results the City Manager is expected to achieve and include:

- Establish positive and cooperative relations with the City Clerk, Police Chief, and City Attorney.
- Keep the Commission updated and informed on current projects and events. Treat all commissioners equally.
- Ensure all citizens are treated with respect, and citizen concerns are responded to promptly.
- Create a capital improvements plan and obtain funding for upgrades to the city water and sewer system.
- Keep all city facilities and parks properly maintained.

- Keep informed of changes to the electric and natural gas industry, and how they will affect the Starke electric utility. Serve on the Board and Executive Committee of the Florida Municipal Power Agency, and other statewide utility associations as needed.
- Work with the City Attorney to establish an effective code enforcement process that includes solving the dilapidated buildings problem.
- Ensure a splash park is built, run properly and maintained.
- Provide leadership by supervising city employees in a positive manner and earn their respect and buy-in while achieving the missions of the City.
- Keep the public informed on emergency management such as forest fires or hurricanes. Successfully pre-plan and train to restore services after an emergency event.
- Keep the City financially sound by managing the budget.
- Ensure the water and sewer plants meet all applicable state and federal permit requirements and have adequate capacity to serve the community.
- Ensure city roads are well maintained.
- Ensure that City employees are compensated fairly, personnel policies are followed, employees are valued as individuals, and properly trained. Work with the City Attorney to update personnel policies as needed.
- Be knowledgeable of the Community Redevelopment Agency.
- Review and update City ordinances as needed.
- Create and maintain positive public relations through working with the press and social media.

Success Patterns

A person's success patterns consist of accomplishments and skills that indicate whether a person will be able to meet the performance expectations above:

- Experience as a City Manager or Assistant City Manager in a small town
- A track record of working with city commissions, staff, or other public bodies, making presentations, and achieving positive results
- Experience in working with city or county government
- Successful experience in solving citizen concerns and establishing positive customer relations
- Extensive experience in city and county budgeting and financial management
- Successful experience in making decisions with water, sewer, electric, and gas utilities
- Successful experience in adopting and funding capital improvement plans to improve infrastructure
- Knowledge and experience of Human Resources and personnel policies
- Knowledge of the operation of Parks and Recreation Departments
- Experience in the operation of a Public Works Department to include road maintenance
- Experience working with Police and Fire Departments on programs to improve public safety
- Demonstrated experience with code enforcement and planning and zoning

Compensation

The City Commission will provide a competitive salary and benefits. The starting salary will be \$80,000-\$100,000 depending on qualifications. The City Manager is required to live in Bradford County within 12 months after employment.

Application and Selection Process

To apply, submit a cover letter and resume' with a salary history and at least 6 work related references by June 7, 2021, to the City Clerk, City of Starke, ATTN: City Manager Candidate, 209 North Thompson Street, Starke, Florida 32091, or e-mail to the City Clerk, ATTN: City Manager Candidate at CityManagerSearch@CityofStarke.org.

Note: Under Florida law, all information and documents submitted are public records and will be provided to the press and others upon request.