

**City of Miami Beach**  
**City Manager April 15, 2021 Candidate Interviews**

**Master List of Interview Questions**

***The Process for the Committee of the Whole Interviews:***

***Each candidate will be provided a time certain for an individual interview with the City Commission, for approximately 30 minutes each. The City Clerk will keep time and provide candidates with a 2-minute grace period at the 27 minute mark, to permit the candidates and the City Commission conclude the interview).***

***In order to ensure a level playing field, each candidate will be provided with this Master List of Interview Questions (the “Master List”) in advance of the April 15, 2021 meeting.***

***During the individual interviews, candidates may only be asked questions from this Master List, along with any follow-up questions based on the candidate’s response.***

***City Commission members have each been provided with the opportunity to contribute to this Master List, so that any commissioner’s specific questions are included in the Master List.***

***The actual questions asked of each candidate during his or her interview may be randomly selected and may vary, provided, however, that each candidate may only be asked questions from the Master List.***

***Due to time constraints, it is anticipated that each commissioner will have the opportunity to ask each candidate at least one question during the April 15, 2021 interview.<sup>1</sup>***

***As no action will be taken at the Committee of the Whole and the interviews are not public hearing items, no comments or questions will be taken from the general public at this meeting.***

---

<sup>1</sup> In addition to this public panel interview process, each member of the City Commission has had the opportunity to conduct one-on-one interviews with each of the finalists.

## **INTRODUCTION**

1. **(Opening Statement – this question should be asked of all candidates)** Please briefly summarize your background and experience and tell us why you believe you are a good candidate for City Manager, and why you would want such an extremely demanding position.

## **PERSONAL EXPERIENCE**

2. What do you bring to the table that makes you stand out among the field of candidates for this position?
3. Please share with us your track record and experience with handling:
  - a. The budget and post-COVID economic recovery;
  - b. public safety;
  - c. challenging environmental issues such as sea-level rise and flooding; and
  - d. affordable housing.
4. If we were to ask your colleagues what they would say about your greatest strengths and your greatest weaknesses, what do you think they would tell us?
5. What do you consider to be your most significant professional accomplishment or challenge? How did you overcome it or manage it?
6. Everyone's career has high points and low points. Describe a professional disappointment or failure, and what you've learned from it.

## **MANAGEMENT / LEADERSHIP**

7. As you know, we have a very strong public safety focus for both police and fire. What has been your level of involvement with (a) Police and (b) Fire?
8. In terms of your personal management style. How hands on are you? What would you prioritize to handle personally, and what would you delegate? How will you balance being a "strategic/big picture thinker" with day-to-day details?
9. As you know, change within a government organization is often difficult and slow. What have you done previously to increase efficiencies in your prior work?

10. To the extent that organizations and communities resist change, how have you increased the likelihood of success when you have encountered resistance from others?
11. The position of City Manager often involves crisis management, in a fast-paced environment, with new issues arising daily. How do you take care of the unexpected and still get your other work done?
12. The national experience with the COVID pandemic has raised important policy questions about mask mandates, mandatory vaccinations, and has even created a “work from home” phenomenon. How would you approach each of these issues as City Manager?  
  
**[Note to Commission Members: As this question has multiple sub-parts below, members are encouraged to pick and choose one or two of the questions questions, to ensure candidates are asked a different mix of questions related to COVID-19]**
  - a. Would you mandate mask usage?
  - b. Would you mandate vaccinations for City employees?
  - c. What would you have done differently?
  - d. With respect to “work from home,” would you continue this practice? How will you approach these issues, both as to your own personal situation and/or your staff?
  - e. What do you think about Governor DeSantis’s recent vaccine passport emergency order?
  - f. Do you believe the City should continue to extend the midnight COVID-19 curfew, even though Miami-Dade County lifted the curfew as of April 12, 2021?
13. When it comes to real estate, the City of Miami Beach has a long history of experiencing “boom” and “bust” periods. As City Manager, how would you balance development vs. historic preservation goals during “boom” periods, and how would you spur development during “bust” periods?
14. What are your impressions about the City of Miami Beach? What do you see as the challenges and opportunities facing Miami Beach?

## **FINANCE**

15. Tell us about your experience dealing with a full array of financial aspects of running a city? Be specific about dealing with both government funds as well as proprietary or enterprise funds. Any particularly creative way of dealing with capital budgeting?
16. From your research about Miami Beach, give us your thoughts about the size of our organization and its budget. Do you consider the size and budget appropriate? Any recommendations for change?

## **CAPITAL PROJECTS / RESILIENCY**

17. In 2018, the City approved a \$439 million General Obligation Bond Program to revitalize public spaces, public structures, and public security for the future of Miami Beach. Additionally, resiliency and climate adaptation have been priorities for our city. What has been your experience with capital and infrastructure projects?
18. Sea level rise and the City's multi-faceted resiliency program is a critical policy issue for the City. Various approaches, such as raising of roads in low lying neighborhoods, or location of pump stations, are often controversial. How would you approach these issues as City Manager?
  - a. In terms of the efforts the City has undertaken to date, what would you do differently?
  - b. In terms of resiliency and all of the possible strategies for flood mitigation and combating sea level rise, what do you think the City's focus should be?

## **COMMUNICATION / MEDIA / PUBLIC OUTREACH**

19. Please give us an example of when the policy makers in your organization prescribed a course of action that you disagreed with. How did you react? What did you do to convince them to accept your desired course of action? What was the outcome? If your Board did not accept your advice, how did you approach the situation?
20. Please provide an example of how you have led a project that resulted in improved teamwork, reduced conflicts, and enhanced communication.
21. How have you dealt with opposing interests with your Board? What is your approach to facilitating discussion and building consensus?
22. We are a diverse community, and many residents in the City, particularly elderly residents, only speak Spanish. How comfortable are you with your Spanish

proficiency? If you are comfortable, you are welcome to provide your response in Spanish.

23. Miami Beach prides itself in being accessible to its residents. Our residents are the City Commission's top priority. What is your style of interaction with residents? Are you accustomed to receiving daily communication from residents? Do you engage, follow up, and attend community meetings or do you delegate to subordinates?
24. The recent Spring Break issues have included conversations about diversity and sensitive questions of race. Have you had experience dealing with similar issues, and if so, please describe the issue and how you've approached it.
25. As you know, we have an active, and involved citizenry as well as local media devoted to covering all activities at City Hall and in the community. Describe a successful interaction with the media, and a not so successful interaction. What has been your philosophy and approach to dealing with the community and media?

## **GOVERNANCE**

26. How will you keep the City Commission informed of key issues?
27. The prior City Manager had a contract with the City, which included performance benchmarks, which would only be used for purposes of calculating bonus incentives. How should the City Commission assess your annual performance and measure your success?
28. Tell us about a time you had to challenge a decision made by your Board. What were the circumstances? What was the outcome? Could you have handled it differently?
29. As part of your preparation for this job, you may have followed a few City Commission meetings. What would you change about our process if you could?
30. The City Manager's role with respect to agenda items is to make recommendations to the City Commission. Prior City Managers have, on occasion, avoided making strong recommendations, to give the City Commission more flexibility in making a final decisions. What can we expect from you as City Manager. Will you make strong recommendations, or are you more inclined to seek direction from the policymakers?
31. Information is critical to effective, data-driven decisions. How do you approach incorporating data in your decision-making, and what can we expect from you with respect to sharing data with the City Commission?

- a. If one of your department heads declined to share data with an elected official for whatever reason, how would you approach the issue?

32. The Mayor and every Commissioner are elected at large. We are all elected by the same electorate and we serve the same constituents. Before making a time sensitive decision do you consult with any of the elected officials? Are you comfortable saying “no” when pressured by any of the elected officials?

### **ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS**

33. What will your first few months on the job look like?

34. How long do you expect to work for us if hired? Where do you see yourself in five years?

35. As part of the job profile, the City Commission has expressed a preference for a City Manager that maintains residency in the City. What are your thoughts about this?

36. What types of activities or hobbies do you enjoy outside of work?

37. If you could change one thing about your personality at the snap of your fingers, what would it be and why?

### **CLOSING**

38. Fast forward to your retirement dinner with the City of Miami Beach. What will you most want to be remembered for? What will be your legacy?

39. In closing, is there anything you would like to share with us as a closing remarks or thoughts to leave with us about your level of interest in this important position?

**NOTE ON EMPLOYMENT LAW CONSIDERATIONS**

It goes without saying that the selection of a City Manager is an important policy decision for the Mayor and City Commission. Please be mindful that the selection is also an employment decision that is subject to federal, state, and City anti-discrimination laws. The City's Human Right Ordinance includes all of the protected classes under federal and state law as well as several that are unique to the City, so we will list those here. Section 62-86 of the City Code prohibits employment discrimination based upon race, color, national origin, religion, sex, intersexuality, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital and familial status, age (defined by City Code as 18 and above), disability, ancestry, height, weight, domestic partner status, labor organization membership, familial situation, or political affiliation.

Each question on the Master List has been vetted for its compliance with the anti-discrimination provisions of federal, state, and City law; however, Commissioner's should be careful in their follow-up questions not to ask any question that may show a perceived bias against anyone based upon these protected characteristics. The most common mistakes made by even seasoned interviewers usually have to do with gender, age or disability discrimination. Some examples of acceptable and unacceptable questions are:

OK: How long did you stay at your last role?

NOT OK: How old are you and when did you first start working? (age discrimination)

OK: How long have you been at your current address? What was your previous address and how long did you live there?

NOT OK: Do you own your own home, or do you rent? Who do you live with? How are you related to the people you live with? (familial status)

OK: Do you have any commitments that might prevent you from performing the functions of City Manager?

NOT OK: Are you married? Are you single? Do you have any children or are you planning on having children? (gender, familial status discrimination)

OK: Accurately describe the job then ask the candidate if they can perform all of the functions.

NOT OK: Do you have a disability? Have you ever filed a worker's compensation claim? Have you ever suffered a workplace injury? (disability discrimination)