



10/17/2019

City of Tallahassee
300 S Adams Street
Tallahassee, Florida

City Manager Reese Goad Annual Performance Review: Overall Score: 1.4

Mr. City Manager,

As we come to the close of the first year of a new Commission and roughly 13 months on the job as the City Manager, it is important we speak honestly.

Our city demands that we move Tallahassee forward. To do that, we need a clean slate of those unconnected to the bribery crisis. Knowing the injustices that took place before my swearing in, I decided to give the hiring decision of my predecessors one year to evaluate the City Manager role in good faith.

Your appointment as Manager was a very contentious process just weeks before an election that would replace a majority of the Commission. The new Commission has focused on robust public input and thorough vetting — I believe you would agree the last City Manager search was not consistent with those values.

Your appointment as City Manager was made by a motion from indicted former City Commissioner Scott Maddox in the Tallahassee Room, with no public input in a move that was widely viewed as “business as usual” during an extraordinary time.

In 2018, Tallahassee voted for wholesale change in City government to restore the public trust. I do not believe we can move forward under your administration’s leadership. With four new commissioners — who had no say in the hiring decision — it is imperative we do a national search to find the most qualified person to lead our city into a new era of openness, transparency and trust.

A willingness to bend the rules was evident in your investigation of the value of football tickets gifted to employees to sit in Adam Corey's skybox at FSU football games alongside Rick Fernandez and Scott Maddox. Internal reports were inconsistent with the findings of the Florida Commission on Ethics report which showed additional value for food and beverage and that employees received multiple tickets and attended multiple games, well exceeding the \$100 limit. This pattern of omitting facts and presenting information to arrive at a predetermined conclusion has been routinely evident to me in your time as City Manager.

Your defense of a nepotism policy that allows for friends and family members, including your own brother-in-law, to use a temporary employment loophole as a gateway to permanent positions brings into question your own ethical judgement and whether you are capable of restoring public trust in our institutions.

Furthermore, recent audits that show improper and careless recordkeeping, inconsistent hiring and pay increase practices leave the public and employees bereft of the information needed to know that employment offers, raises and promotions are done consistently, through a fair and defined process.

Your actions have directly exposed the City of Tallahassee to lawsuits which have accused the City and you personally of withholding or destroying public records that may be related to the ongoing public corruption and bribery scandal.

In my private conversations with you regarding auditing contracts related to public corruption and strengthening the Independent Ethics Board, I was appalled by your response. Your attempts to limit the number of employees that are accountable to the ethics board, as well as your position that "getting a good deal" on a contract is more desirable than exposing wrongdoing leads me to believe you are more interested in covering up unethical behavior than you are in finding the truth. That is wrong and our city cannot tolerate it.

It is clear to me and the public that you are not interested in scrutinizing the past actions of your former boss City Manager Rick Fernandez and your own administration. As we have learned more about the depth and spread of the bribery scandal, I have spoken to dozens of current and former City employees to gain an understanding of your own role in creating a self-serving culture of fear and intimidation which has contributed to the bribery crisis.

Throughout the year I monitored your leadership style and I would characterize it as opaque, closed and political. Our City Manager is meant to be an executive who operates our government in a professional manner without political considerations.

I view you as propped up by Department heads that do and have done an exceptional job. I believe they provide exceptional service in spite of your politicized leadership, not because of it.

This is further demonstrated by your payments over the years to the political consulting firm VancoreJones to do city business and the influence political consulting firms exerted during your hiring process. Based on what I have seen, I cannot trust you to do the right thing for our neighborhoods and community.

After speaking with current and former employees, I am alarmed by a multitude of accusations leveled against you: strongarm tactics to discourage direct communication between employees, the public and Commissioners, instructing staff to mislead members of the public and Commissioners, personally encouraging behavior which circumvents the public records process, and rewarding select city staff with out of town conferences and purchase card expenses, including expensive steak dinners and alcohol paid for by the taxpayers of Tallahassee. Our city and our employees deserve better.

Taking all of these factors together, I am left to believe that you may have been complicit in unethical actions taken by previous leadership and your own office. I believe the City will be unable to restore public trust with you at the helm.

I believe that your integrity has been compromised, and I do not believe you are capable of moving our City forward. With this review I am entering a vote of no confidence in your current role as City Manager.

Commissioner Jeremy Matlow