



ORANGE COUNTY MAYOR

**Jerry L. Demings**

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October 16, 2020

TO: Commissioner Betsy VanderLey, District 1  
Commissioner Christine Moore, District 2  
Commissioner Mayra Uribe, District 3  
Commissioner Maribel Gomez Cordero, District 4  
Commissioner Emily Bonilla, District 5  
Commissioner Victoria Siplin, District 6

FROM: Mayor Jerry L. Demings 

SUBJECT: Appointment of Deputy County Administrator and Assistant County Administrator

As you may recall, Randy Singh recently resigned from his position as Deputy County Administrator to accept employment within the private sector. I am pleased to announce the appointments of Darren Gray who will serve as Deputy County Administrator, and Carla Bell Johnson as Assistant County Administrator. Subject to confirmation by the Board of County Commissioners, their start date will be December 14, 2020.

Mr. Gray will have oversight of the financial resources and support functions of our organization, with a specific focus on financial activities. He brings extensive senior management experience to our organization. He previously served as County Manager of Lake County Government for two years and as City Manager of Clermont for the past eight years. Darren also worked for Orange County Government early in his career for nine years in various positions including Senior Management & Budget Analyst, Fiscal & Administration Supervisor, and as an Assistant to a Department Director. He has managed every aspect of local government operations, with a specific focus on the budget and finances of those organizations. Mr. Gray's starting annual salary will be \$198,640, and his resume is attached for your review.

Mrs. Carla Bell Johnson will fill an Assistant County Administrator position that will become vacant at the end of this year. We assessed the organization as we approached filling the Deputy County Administrator position and identified an opportunity to strengthen accountability, oversight, and depth by assigning daily supervision of two departments under one of the Deputy County Administrators to an Assistant County Administrator. She will oversee the Administrative Services Department and the Community and Family Services Department, along with other duties as assigned by the County Administrator. Carla has an exemplary work history with Orange County Government, working in a number of areas and on several notable and challenging assignments during her 28-year career. She has worked in the Public Works Department, Growth Management Department, Convention Center, County Administrator's Office, and with the Greater Orlando Aviation Authority. Carla has consistently been an exceptional performer. Her starting annual salary will be \$172,494.40, and her resume is attached for your review.

Appointment of Deputy County Administrator and Assistant County Administrator

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Please contact County Administrator Byron Brooks if you have any questions or desire more information.

**ACTION REQUESTED:** Confirmation of the Mayor's managerial appointment of Darren Gray as Deputy County Administrator and Carla Bell Johnson as Assistant County Administrator.

JLD/rm

Attachment: Resumes

c: Byron W. Brooks, County Administrator  
Ricardo Daye, Director, Human Resources

# DARREN GRAY

352-536-4751 dgray428@gmail.com  
132 Nautical Mile Drive, Clermont, FL 34711

## About

Darren Gray has enjoyed an outstanding career in public service, first in Orange County and more recently in Lake County, where he served as assistant city manager and city manager of Clermont, the largest city in Lake. He also served as deputy county manager and county manager. As county manager, he brought numerous, innovative changes in economic development. In his current position as Clermont city manager, he led a re-branding effort and many initiatives that have won national and state awards. Darren was named Lake County's Leader of the Year.

## Education

Bachelor's degree  
Public Administration  
University of Central Florida

Master's degree  
Public Administration  
University of Central Florida

## Memberships

Ex-officio Board Member  
South Lake Chamber of Commerce

Florida City and County  
Management Association

International City/County  
Management Association

Leadership Florida Class 38

## Honors

Lake County Leader of the Year

Presenter at the Florida  
Government Finance Officers  
Annual Conference

Panel Member at the Triathlon  
Business International Conference

## Experience

### City Manager – City of Clermont

October 2012 – Present

- Responsible for all daily operations.
- Reported to five-member council.
- Manages a projected budget of \$149 million.
- Oversees 400+ employees in 14 departments.
- Led numerous initiatives, including creation of \$6.3 million arts and recreation center, Lake Hiawatha Preserve, \$10.2 million Victory Pointe stormwater facility & passive park, complete rebranding and an award-winning 10-year master plan.
- Under his leadership, Clermont earned numerous honors, including: Top 20 City in America for Economic Development and Quality of Life, Best Central Florida City to Live In, Top 20 Cities in USA for Retirees, Bicycle-Friendly Community of the Year for Florida and the Florida League of Cities' City Spirit Award.

- **County Manager – Lake County**
- November 2010 – September 2012
- Reported to five-member county commissioners.
- Oversaw 750 employees.
- Managed a \$430 million budget.
- Streamlined county departments and created new economic development zones.
- Implemented a long-range financial planning analysis.
- Served briefly as deputy county manager before assuming county manager position.

### Assistant City Manager – City of Clermont

2004 – 2010

- Served as a liaison between the public and City Council.
- Assisted the city manager in a variety of roles.
- Oversaw the city's 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration.

### Assistant to Director, Fiscal & Administration

#### Supervisor, Senior Management & Budget Analyst --

Orange County Government

1995-2004

- Managed major projects.
- Oversaw \$77 million budget for Parks & Recreation (90 parks)

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## **Experience** *continued*

### **Assistant to Director**

**Fiscal & Administration Supervisor – Parks & Recreation**

**Fiscal & Administration Coordinator – Growth Management & Environmental Resources**

**Senior Management & Budget Analyst – Office of Management & Budget**

Orange County Government

1995-2004

- Managed Neighborhood Services, Code Enforcement, Environmental Protection and Animal Services.
- Other wide-ranging duties included human-resource functions, training, inventory control and supervised staff in multiple departments.
- Coordinated \$80.5 million budget over eight divisions.
- Designed and implemented audit, fiscal, performance and inventory-management systems.

### **Administrative Assistant**

Veterans Administration

1994-1995

- Provided assistance to military members and their families, coordinated counseling services, prepared a budget and supervised a staff of three.

### **Operations Specialist/Administrative Petty Officer (E-5)**

U.S. Navy

1988 – 1993

- Served in Japan, Persian Gulf and other duty stations
- Served in the first Persian Gulf War on board the *USS Midway*
- Monitored the division's budget. Analyzed projects and office services for top military staff. Briefed and debriefed flight crews on operational missions.
- Supervised a staff of 15.

## **Carla Bell Johnson, AICP**

2767 Cabernet Circle

Ocoee, Florida 34761

cbjohnson@embarqmail.com

### **Summary of Qualifications**

- Twenty-nine years of professional public-sector experience including leadership of transportation, planning, and community/economic development initiatives
- Demonstrated strategic planning and project management success
- Extensive citizen and business community stakeholder engagement
- Proven effectiveness in interdepartmental and interagency collaboration
- Exceptional presentation and written communication skills

### **Education**

June 1991                      Princeton University - Princeton, New Jersey  
**BSE - Civil Engineering and Operations Research**

### **Professional Experience**

5/19 – Present                      Orange County Administrator's Office

#### **Acting Assistant Director of Strategic Planning and Development**

- Lead interdepartmental team of more than 40 staff representing 5 departments and 20 divisions/offices assigned to key work functions supporting Mayor's Transportation Initiative
- Advise Mayor on key regional transportation policy matters and transit initiatives, including coordination with regional transportation agencies such as LYNX, Greater Orlando Aviation Authority, Central Florida Commuter Rail Commission, and Central Florida Expressway Authority
- Manage the International Drive Community Redevelopment Area (CRA) including Redevelopment Plan oversight, interdepartmental coordination, Advisory Committee administration and stakeholder engagement
- Provide administrative oversight of Tourist Development Council including stakeholder engagement

12/14 – 5/19                      Orange County Convention Center

#### **Manager/Acting Assistant Director of Strategic Planning and Development**

- Managed teams responsible for Transportation, Parking Operations, Market Research, and business/stakeholder engagement at Convention Center
- Developed and advanced strategic objectives for the Convention Center including advocating for supportive development and infrastructure within the surrounding district
- Served as Project Manager of the Convention Center's Campus Master Plan which defined short, intermediate, and longer-term strategic investments that are responsive to client needs and market trends, enhance the Convention Center's competitive stance within the industry, and create additional economic development for the region

- Managed the International Drive Community Redevelopment Area (CRA) including Redevelopment Program oversight, interdepartmental coordination, Advisory Committee administration and stakeholder engagement
- Served as a liaison to the International Drive Resort Area stakeholders and tourism industry representatives on behalf of County Administration and the Convention Center
- Participated in sales team presentations to current and prospective clients to market the OCCC and the district for future business

1/11 – 12/14                      Orange County Administrator's Office/Regional Mobility

**Assistant to the Director**

- Coordinated regionally significant transportation initiatives with County growth management, sustainability, and economic development objectives
- Coordinated with regional transportation partners such as Metroplan Orlando, LYNX, FDOT, OOCEA, I-Drive Master Transit and Improvement District, GOAA, and WOAA
- Advised Mayor and Commissioners serving on regional transportation agency governing boards regarding policy decisions
- Represented County on regional transportation committees and working groups and serve as a point of contact regarding transit and rail-related initiatives
- Served as liaison to Orange County Convention Center, International Drive Resort Area business community and neighborhood associations
- Participated with Convention Center executive team and sales teams in marketing presentations to current and prospective clients
- Managed International Drive Community Redevelopment Area (CRA) Redevelopment Program and Advisory Board
- Managed special projects as necessary, including leadership of interdepartmental teams
- Represented Assistant County Administrator/Director of Regional Mobility as necessary

11/05 – 1/11                      Orange County Growth Management Department

**Assistant to the Director**

- Managed and oversaw CRA's countywide, led interdepartmental CRA Team, and served as liaison to municipalities on CRA initiatives
- Managed and marketed Enterprise Zone Economic Development Program
- Coordinated regionally significant transportation initiatives with County growth management and economic development objectives including TOD planning
- Coordinated with regional transportation partners such as Metroplan Orlando, LYNX, FDOT, OOCEA, I-Drive Improvement District, GOAA, and WOAA
- Advised Mayor and Commissioners serving on regional transportation and planning governing boards regarding policy decisions
- Represented Director of Growth Management as necessary

11/00 - 11/05                      Orange County Public Works Engineering Division

**Project Manager**

- Managed \$55 million transportation program (planning, design, and construction) supporting the expansion of the Orange County Convention Center and achieved aggressive schedule and budget objectives

- Advised Mayor and other elected officials on initiatives within the International Drive Resort Area
- Managed the International Drive Community Redevelopment Area (CRA) Redevelopment Program and Advisory Committee
- Represented Orange County on advisory committees for regional transportation initiatives

6/98 - 11/00 Greater Orlando Aviation Authority

**Manager of Transportation Planning**

- Managed planning and conceptual studies for Orlando International Airport including strategies for creating transit connectivity to the airport
- Coordinated with local agencies on regional issues affecting the airport
- Represented GOAA on regional transportation boards and committees
- Provided transportation recommendations for land development proposals on airport property
- Provided presentations regarding planned airport projects to business groups and community stakeholders

3/97 – 6/98 Orange County Planning Division

**Transportation Planning Engineer**

- Developed recommendations for Capital Improvement Program
- Managed completion of Comprehensive Policy Plan Evaluation and Appraisal Report for Transportation-related Elements
- Supervised Planning Coordinators for Roadway Conceptual Analysis projects
- Facilitated public meetings and workshops

8/95 – 3/97 Orange County Traffic Engineering Division

**Engineer II/Transportation Planning Engineer**

- Managed Planning Section of Traffic Engineering Division
- Performed level of service analysis for Concurrency Management System
- Represented Orange County on regional transportation committees
- Managed consultant contract for Orange County Transportation Needs Assessment

1/93 – 8/95 Orange County Development Engineering Division

**Staff Engineer**

- Reviewed development plans for compliance with Orange County regulations
- Performed consultant contract administration
- Prepared written and verbal responses to public inquiries

2/92 – 1/93 Orange County Traffic Engineering Division

**Engineer II**

- Performed level of service analysis for Concurrency Management System
- Completed traffic impact analysis for proposed Comprehensive Policy Plan Amendments
- Reviewed various traffic studies to determine impacts and develop mitigation recommendations

**Organizations/Boards/Community Service (past & present)**

- American Planning Association/American Institute of Certified Planners
- National Forum for Black Public Administrators Mid-Florida – President
- I-Drive Resort Area Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors – Ex-Officio
- City of Ocoee CRA Governing Board – Vice-Chairman
- Metroplan Orlando Technical Committee – Chairman
- Orange County Urban Design Commission – Vice-Chairman
- Graduate – Leadership Orlando Class 50
- Graduate – Orange County Leadership Institute Class of 2003
- Graduate – Tourism Orlando Leadership Program Class of 2010
- Heart of Florida United Way Leadership Club
- Habitat for Humanity Family Selection Committee –Vice-Chairman
- The Jobs Partnership of Florida -Jobs Counselor/Interview Coach
- L.A.N.E.S. Teenage Girls – Middle School Mentor/Workshop Facilitator
- Citrus Council of Girl Scouts – Troop Leader

**Awards/Certifications/Licenses**

- American Institute of Certified Planners (2001-present)
- State of Florida Licensed Realtor (2005-present)
- YMCA Black Achievers Award (2003)
- Greater Orlando Aviation Authority Employee of the Year (1999)
- Orange County Employee of the Month/Quarter (1993, 1996)