

K. Lortie Public Comment

What do the county manager and the county attorney cost the taxpayers of Brevard County?

This comment pertains to the cost and lack of accountability of Brevard County leadership. Following numerous conflicts between the citizens and local officials at the county commission this year, a social media post in the Brevard Cares Citizens Coalition Facebook Group has published a line-item detail of County Manager Frank Abbate and County Attorney Morris Richardson's year-over-year pay history from 2009 to the present. As of this writing this post has received over 10,000 views.

According to public records County Attorney Morris Richardson received an \$86,241 increase in 2022 after leaving the City of West Melbourne and returning to Brevard County. What a nice payday for him when switching jobs and returning to county employment! County Manager Frank Abbate received \$52,858 in increases on the exact same days. When asked about Mr. Abbate's substantial pay increase at the 2023 Citizens Academy, Mr. Abbate responded that his sizable increase had to do with achieving "pay equity" with the County Attorney.

Where did the "pay equity" originate? This is a mystery. Mr. Richardson must have some excellent negotiation skills to warrant a 49% (\$86K) pay increase in just a month's time to rejoin the county's employment. What was the reason that this increase was needed to recruit Mr. Richardson's services back to the county? This one is a mystery! The increases in these county positions cost taxpayers \$111,770 in annual pay increases in FY2023 alone. Does that sound like a pretty expensive event for Brevard County for these combined position increases?

Records requests have also revealed that neither position has been receiving annual performance evaluations from the county commissioners. Should these individuals be receiving annual performance reviews as noted in their contracts? Were their sizable pay increases warranted? Do their current salaries of \$275K and \$265K/year warrant a 5% annual cost of living increase for them to keep up with inflation? Would it save taxpayers if cost of living adjustments were limited to lower paid positions?

While the county attorney and the county manager are enjoying their generous salaries and the absence of performance evaluations, what can Brevard County taxpayers look forward to, including the firefighters that are present with us today fighting for their own equitable compensation?


How many speakers have been interrupted and possibly removed from this very meeting? When will our leaders start assisting residents instead of belittling us?


It is requested that this comment and the pay history detail be included in the meeting minute records for July 9, 2024. A hard copy is being provided to the Clerk of Courts.

Kirstin Lortie, Cocoa Resident
Brevard Cares Citizens Coalition Founder

Pay History Brevard County Manager and Brevard County Attorney 2009 - 2024

R. Lortie Public Comment

Brevard County Manager Frank Abbate Salary History 2009 - 2024				
Date	Salary	Dollar Increase	% Increase	Title
9/28/2009	\$ 114,418	NA	NA	Human Resources Director
10/1/2011	\$ 117,278	\$ 2,861	3%	Human Resources Director
9/28/2013	\$ 119,624	\$ 2,345	2%	Human Resources Director
5/27/2015	\$ 131,586	\$ 11,962	10%	Assistant County Manager
10/10/2015	\$ 135,534	\$ 3,948	3%	Assistant County Manager
2015 Increase Total		\$ 15,910	13%	Total of (2) Increases in 2015
10/8/2016	\$ 137,567	\$ 2,033	1%	Assistant County Manager
4/29/2017	\$ 188,181	\$ 50,614	37%	Brevard County Manager
10/7/2017	\$ 194,767	\$ 6,586	3%	Brevard County Manager
2017 Increase Total		\$ 57,201	42%	Total of (2) Increases in 2017
10/6/2018	\$ 197,689	\$ 2,922	2%	 Brevard County Manager
10/5/2019	\$ 201,643	\$ 3,954	2%	
10/3/2020	\$ 206,442	\$ 4,799	2%	
10/2/2021	\$ 209,538	\$ 3,097	1%	
9/5/2022	\$ 249,000	\$ 39,462	19%	
10/1/2022	\$ 262,396	\$ 13,396	5%	
2022 Abbate Increase Total		\$ 52,858	25%	Total of (2) increases in one month
9/30/2023	275,515	\$ 13,119	5%	County Manager Current Salary
		\$ 161,097	141%	Total Abbate Increase 2009-2024

Brevard County Attorney Cecil Morris Richardson Salary History 2009 - 2024				
Date	Salary	Dollar Increase	% Increase	Title
10/3/2009	\$ 98,902	NA	NA	Brevard County Attorney III
10/1/2011	\$ 101,375	\$ 2,473	3%	Brevard County Attorney III
9/28/2013	\$ 103,402	\$ 2,027	2%	Brevard County Attorney III
9/1/2015	\$ 115,964	\$ 12,562	12%	West Melbourne Attorney
10/1/2016	\$ 121,762	\$ 5,798	5%	 West Melbourne Attorney <i>Pay Adjustments from West Melbourne</i>
10/1/2017	\$ 129,676	\$ 7,914	6%	
10/1/2018	\$ 136,136	\$ 6,460	5%	
10/1/2019	\$ 144,304	\$ 8,168	6%	
10/2/2020	\$ 151,519	\$ 7,215	5%	
10/1/2021	\$ 166,671	\$ 15,152	10%	
9/5/2022	\$ 240,000	\$ 73,329	44%	Returned to Brevard County 9/5/2022
10/1/2022	\$ 252,912	\$ 12,912	5%	Brevard County Attorney
2022 Richardson Increase Total		\$ 86,241	49%	Total of (2) increases in one month
9/30/2023	\$ 265,558	\$ 12,646	5%	County Attorney Current Salary
		\$ 166,656	169%	Total Richardson Increase 2009-2024

In 2022 Brevard County paid each position the following increases:

2022 County Manager Position Increase	\$ 52,858	25%	Sep-October 2022
2022 County Atty. Position Increase	\$ 58,912	30%	Sep-October 2022 (\$194K Jorandby prior)
2022 Total Brevard County Pay Increases	\$ 111,770		Total Position Increases 2022

Combined Annual Salaries County Attorney & County Manager = \$541,073.04

Combined Monthly \$22K County Attorney + \$23K County Manager = \$45,089.42

Brevard County responded "no responsive records" for performance evaluations for either employee 2009-2024

K-Elizabeth

We want something that fits. I hear that over and over. When it comes to development, maybe a softer strategy is required because the ramifications of doing more of the same is fiscally irresponsible. Floodplain management is a community-based effort to prevent or reduce the risk of flooding, resulting in a more resilient community. And the number one cause of community flooding is urbanization and/or over development. Our comprehensive plan was created in 1986? Future land use numbers that impact density are now 40 years old. If we are to be truthful, a lot happens in 40 years. I can see the advantages of increased density to include increasing the tax base and increasing available affordable housing but that isn't always the case. Short term luxury apartments benefit developers and investors and are the cornerstone of our new development projects .

Developing on wetlands and flood plains are taking its toll. Why does government think their strategy will improve what nature does best? The disadvantages of continuing to surrender our greenspace and sensitive wetlands to developers is only adding stressors to residents that might not have been considered in 1986. For example, we know this property (1260 S Courtenay) lies on a floodplain and is bounded by Coastal Hazard wetlands to the east and south and the impact of building potentially 43 new homes on less than three acres is contrary to the comp plan's strategy for riparian zones near rivers which recommends reducing not increasing impervious surfaces. Improper mitigation of floodwaters can create a bigger problem as it introduces additional stormwater runoff. (Part of Brevard's solution for any development is to increase the elevation at least 2 feet above flooding levels or Base Flood Elevation) When I spoke with the Floodplain Administrator, John Smith, and various FEMA departments in length, he emphasized that the existing planning statutes are updated after storm and water events. Updated after..... This is a lose lose for neighbors if we are getting it wrong. The strategy to fill properties above the required elevation only increases stormwater runoff. But what about those major storm and water events. I have provided documents for you to look over as I cannot cover them now in only two minutes. I know each of you is busy and I hope to give some insight into my concerns. Please feel free to contact me before Thursday's meeting. I have skin in this game. Flooding and extreme storms are driving up our homeowners and flood insurance rates. We are an island yet we continue to destroy the natural elements that protect us. What wetlands do for a barrier island is what the barrier islands do for mainland. Protection from hazards and risks associated with these hazards. The fact that Jefferson Middle School is a neighbor should be of further concern. And do you know why I know this isn't a great idea.

FEMA creates a CRS, Community Ratings System, that is updated every 5 years. P.S. in 2021, FEMA sent our Administrator 127 pages of properties whose flooding status was updated. Although Brevard's newest CRS hasn't been updated online, the Administrator informed me that Brevard's rating moved from Class 7 to

Class 8. The wrong direction. Our FEMA discount is shrinking. We went from 15% to 10%. For Brevard it indicates we are not in compliance with best Floodplain management. For residents already struggling with bills, this is an additional cost since Flood insurance is mandatory for those with mortgages and/or want to protect their flood prone properties. In addition, properties worth \$600,000 and more are required to obtain flood insurance if they are insured with Citizens, our insurance company of last resort. Then that \$600,000 threshold drops every year. Basically, FEMA is doing what Florida is trying to do by removing homeowners from their rolls.

The estimated cost of flooding and hurricane hazard risks is outstanding. You have a map attached. \$366 Billion with a B and an additional \$10B for coastal and riverine flooding in just Brevard. FEMA is not rewarding runaway development. Look what happened to LEE County who lost any discount and actually put more pressure on its residents. Brevard is number 10 on a dubious list of top flooding counties in the US. Many of our cities are on the top 15 in the US as well. On another map, please note that this property like many of the new development projects on Merritt Island lies smack in the middle of high risk areas.

Impact fees do not add substantial funds to upgrade infrastructure and we are left holding the bag.

Florida, post the establishment of the national wetlands inventory lost 58,000 acres of wetlands annually from 1986 to 1997 or approximately 664,000 acres in total . Once upon a time the joke about selling swampland in Florida was as keen as selling the Brooklyn bridge.

If we don't pause and think about cause and effect when will we realize our mistakes?. Within just the last 20 years, many of our Florida colleges and universities are seriously studying the impact of restoring and protecting our Wetlands. Not only do we need to protect our environment but need to better understand the relationship it has on our economic well-being. We continually hear that we need affordable housing yet I am seeing new development is about short- term rentals. High rents, no new neighbors, and residents are left to deal with any problems that arise and developers get richer. Barrier islands protect coastal communities from extreme weather, absorb wave energy, mitigate sand loss, and I will leave the rest to the experts. Protecting Merritt Island, Cocoa Beach, Cape Canaveral is not some conspiracy by environmentalists to thwart development

National Risk Index

July 04, 2024

Brevard County, Florida

Summary

Risk Index is **Relatively High**



Expected Annual Loss is **Relatively High**



Social Vulnerability is **Relatively Moderate**



Community Resilience is **Relatively Moderate**














While reviewing this report, keep in mind that low risk is driven by lower loss due to natural hazards, lower social vulnerability, and higher community resilience.

For more information about the National Risk Index, its data, and how to interpret the information it provides, please review the **About the National Risk Index** and **How to Take Action** sections at the end of this report. Or, visit the National Risk Index website at hazards.fema.gov/nri/learn-more to access supporting documentation and links.

Hazard Type Risk Index

Hazard type Risk Index scores are calculated using data for only a single hazard type, and reflect a community's Expected Annual Loss value, community risk factors, and the adjustment factor used to calculate the risk value.

Hazard Type	Risk Index Rating	Risk Index Score	National Percentile
Avalanche	Not Applicable	--	
Coastal Flooding	Relatively Moderate	92.4	0  100
Cold Wave	Very High	99	0  100
Drought	Relatively Moderate	84.5	0  100
Earthquake	Relatively Low	68	0  100
Hail	Very Low	16.4	0  100
Heat Wave	No Rating	0	0  100
Hurricane	Very High	99.7	0  100
Ice Storm	Not Applicable	--	
Landslide	Relatively Low	42.2	0  100
Lightning	Very High	99.4	0  100
Riverine Flooding	Relatively Moderate	90.3	0  100
Strong Wind	Relatively Moderate	87.7	0  100

