

INDIAN ROCKS CHOOSES NEW CITY ATTORNEY FOR FIRST TIME IN 10 YEARS

/BY: **Carlos Moncada**

Indian Rocks Beach—Moving quickly to fill a critical vacancy, the City Commission has hired a new city attorney, choosing a Tampa law firm whose ranks include the former mayors of St. Petersburg and Tampa.

The commission voted on June 10 to select Shumaker, Loop & Kendrick LLP, at an hourly rate of \$400, from among three candidates to replace the outgoing city attorney, Randy D. Mora.

Mora submitted his resignation May 1, after his firm represented the city for nearly a decade. His pending departure came the day before longtime City Manager Brently Gregg Mims tendered his resignation to take a job with Pinellas County, leaving city hall scrambling to fill the two key administrative posts.

The sudden and unexpected departures come at a crucial time for the coastal community of 3,640, which is still grappling with the aftermath of last year's hurricanes as well as



City Attorney Randy D. Mora
Photo Courtesy Trask Daigneault LLP

former St. Petersburg mayor Rick Kriseman, who served from 2014 to 2022, and former Tampa mayor Bob Buckhorn, who served from 2011 to 2019. Other "advisors" include former Hillsborough County commissioners Sandra Murman and Lesley "Les" Miller Jr.

Additionally, one of the firm's partners, Ron Christaldi, has been a condo owner in Indian Rocks Beach for over 16 years. The law firm said in its proposal that it has done work for other Pinellas beach communities, including St. Pete Beach and Madeira Beach.

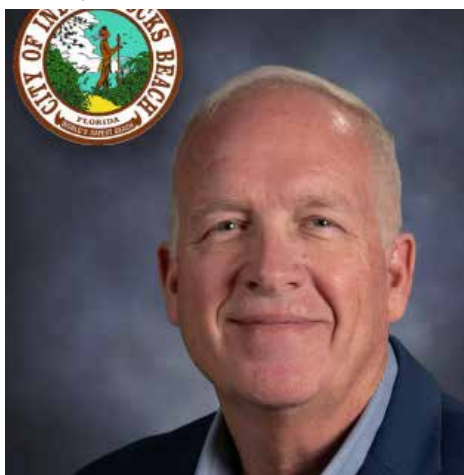
The contract that Mora's firm, Trask Daigneault LLP in Clearwater, had with Indian Rock Beach expired on May 31. To assist with the transition, Mora agreed to stay on with the city through June 30, at a rate of \$225 an hour.

Meanwhile, a search for a new city manager continues.

The city is using the Florida City and County Management Association, a professional organization of practicing public administrators from throughout Florida local governments, to help recruit and interview candidates.

Mims has held the post since 2013. His May 2 resignation takes effect on July 25. He has already accepted a position with the county as its new director of Housing and Community Development, effective July 28.

The city manager is appointed by the five-member commission and serves as the chief executive of the city's government. The manager is responsible for the day-to-day operations and the hiring and supervision of all 1,800 employees.



City Manager Brently Gregg Mims
Photo Courtesy Indian Rocks Beach

several pending legal challenges to its short-term rental ordinance.

The city issued a request for proposals for municipal legal services on May 14, with a bid deadline of June 6.

Besides Shumaker, Loop & Kendrick, the city received proposals from two other applicants: the Sabatini Law Firm of Mount Dora and Ralf Brooks, an attorney based in Cape Coral.

Mayor Denise Houseberg said after the vote that the commission will finalize the selection after Mora and Mims negotiate contract terms with Shumaker. Shumaker's staff includes