

THE CITY OF  
**HIGH POINT, NORTH CAROLINA**



INVITES YOUR INTEREST IN THE POSITION OF  
**CITY ATTORNEY**



# HIGH POINT, NORTH CAROLINA — AN EXCEPTIONAL OPPORTUNITY



This is an exceptional opportunity to serve as City Attorney, the appointed chief legal advisor and advocate, in one of North Carolina's premier cities.

Strong candidates are effective leaders and sound managers with the ability to work productively under the policy guidance of the City Council and maintain and inspire a dedicated City workforce. They are able to collaborate with elected officials and all citizens and employees to achieve community objectives. They are effective stewards of public funds with budget development and administration experience. They have knowledge of the principles and best practices of public administration with innovation and sound judgment.

## THE CITY OF HIGH POINT

High Point, known as the "Home Furnishings Capital of the World," is North Carolina's ninth largest city. The estimated population is over 115,000, in a metropolitan area of 750,000 and a larger Piedmont Triad region of 1.6 million people.

The community acquired its name because it was located at the highest point of the NC Railroad between Charlotte and Goldsboro, at its intersection with the Great Western Plank Road that ran from Fayetteville to Salem. The General Assembly incorporated the town in 1859.

The city is situated primarily in the southwest corner of Guilford County, with portions also in Davidson, Forsyth and Randolph counties—the state's only city in four counties. It is bordered by Greensboro to the north, Jamestown to the northeast and Archdale to the southeast. High Point is in two river basins—the Yadkin-Pee Dee and the Cape Fear.

The Market features 12 million square feet of showroom space and attracts 100,000 exhibitors, buyers, retailers and design professionals from around the world. The official slogan—"North Carolina's International City"—is derived primarily from the High Point Market. It is the largest economic event in North Carolina, twice per year. The Mayor and City Manager serve as members of the High Point Market Authority Board of Directors.

Other major industries include bus manufacturing, distribution and logistics, textiles, customer service, banking, photography and pharmaceuticals. Among the largest employers are Wake Forest Baptist Health, Ralph Lauren, Thomas Built Buses, Bank of America, Guilford County Schools, High Point University, the City, Alorica, Aetna and XPO Logistics.

The city is home to High Point University, the "Premier Life Skills University." HPU is an accredited private liberal arts, coeducational, Methodist-affiliated institution with approximately 4,950 undergraduate and graduate students. It has enjoyed tremendous academic progress, campus development and increased national prominence in recent decades, with inspired leadership. The University offers 63 undergraduate majors, 11 graduate degree programs and 3 doctoral programs. HPU is a member of the NCAA Division I and the Big South Conference.

Since High Point is situated in four counties, the city is served by four public school systems: Guilford County Schools (the third largest public school system in NC), Davidson County Schools, Forsyth County Schools and Randolph County Schools. Guilford Technical Community College maintains a High Point campus.

Major highways passing through or near High Point include Interstates 40, 74 and 85; U.S. Routes 29 and 70; and NC Highways 62, 66, 68 and 610. Piedmont Triad International Airport (GSO) is located less than 15 miles from downtown High Point. Amtrak's Crescent, Carolinian and Piedmont trains depart from the historic and recently refurbished High Point Amtrak station. Public transportation is available within the city, and to and from other nearby municipalities. There are abundant cultural attractions and programs, including the High Point Theatre and Public Library, both owned and operated by the City.



The new \$36 million Truist Point downtown multi-purpose stadium is home to the High Point Rockers, of the Atlantic League of Professional Baseball, and in 2024 to Carolina Core FC, an independent franchise in MLSNextPro. The stadium has served as a catalyst for a vigorous downtown revitalization as part of the City Council's 2016 Strategic Plan which has resulted in over \$238 million of new private downtown development since 2019, including a mixed-use office building containing the Triad's first food hall, Congdon Yards, a mixed-use office and entrepreneurial hub, the Nido and Mariana Qubein Children's Museum, and new bars, restaurants and shops. Future development will include an event's center, hotel, and downtown residential development. Forward High Point – a public/private, City-funded entity – is the lead downtown development agency. North Carolina is the ninth most populous state, between Georgia and Michigan, with over 10.5 million people. The state population grew by 10% in the decade between 2010 and 2019.

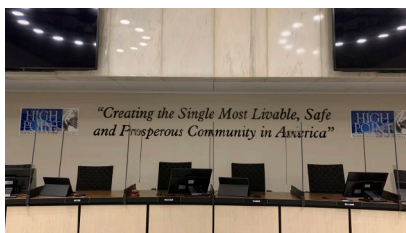
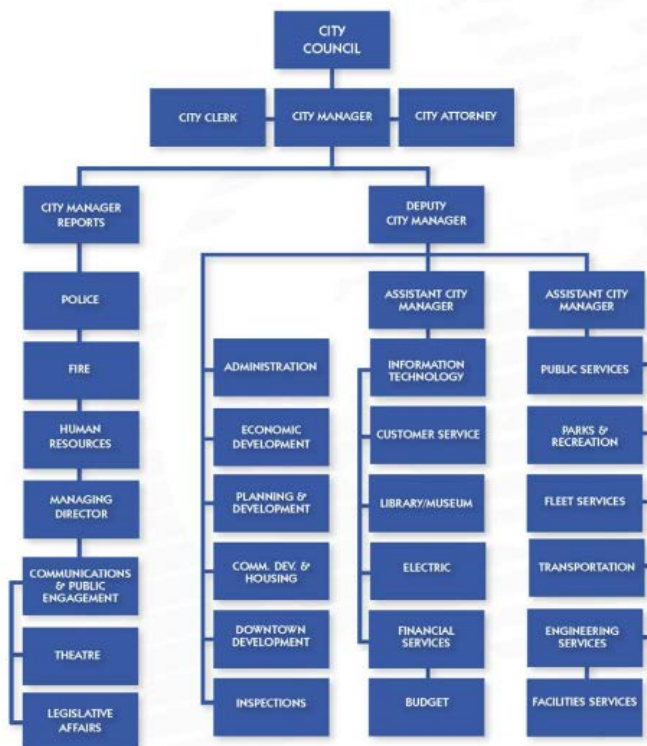
## The Government

The City operates under the council-manager form of government. The City Attorney is appointed by and works under the direction of the Mayor and City Council.

The Council is composed of the Mayor and eight Council Members, each elected by the nonpartisan primary and election method, to serve concurrent four-year terms (not staggered). The Mayor and two Council Members are elected at-large, by all registered voters. The other six Council members are elected by the registered voters within their wards. Elections are held in odd-numbered years, every four years. The next municipal election will be held in 2023.

The City Attorney's Office has a total of seven (7) full-time employees including the City Attorney.

### Organizational Chart



The General Fund budget is \$132.8 million, Water & Sewer Fund \$62.6 million and the Electric Fund \$133.4 million. The City is one of 74 NC municipalities that owns and operates the electric distribution system, and also operates a landfill.

The City operates on a July 1-June 30 fiscal year, along with most other local governments, under the uniform and sound NC Local Government Budget and Fiscal Control Act (G.S. Chapter 159). The Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) presented a Distinguished Budget Presentation Award to the City for its annual budget for the fiscal year that began on July 1, 2019. To receive this award, a governmental unit must publish a budget document that meets GFOA's criteria as a policy document, an operations guide, a sound financial plan, and an informative communications vehicle.

The finances are sound, although budget development with the uncertainties of the current fiscal year was challenging. The Council reduced expenditures, increased fund balance, and took other measures to close a gap between projected revenues and requested expenditures. The property tax rate is \$0.6175. One cent on the tax rate yields approximately \$1 million per year, on combined total assessed valuation of approximately \$12.864 billion (24.5% increase over previous year estimate). Along with other NC cities, High Point receives significant local option sales tax revenue, along with other state-collected local revenues.

The City has strong general obligation bond ratings: AAA from Standard & Poor's, Aa1 from Moody's, and AA+ from Fitch.

The City Council and senior staff are intently focused on the Strategic Plan adopted in early 2016, and since reaffirmed and expanded.

Although all available hotel rooms and private rentals in the surrounding region are booked and downtown is bustling during the High Point Market periods, there is less activity during other periods. A major goal of the downtown catalyst element of the Strategic Plan, with the new baseball stadium as the anchor, is to bring more people downtown year-round. North Carolina is recognized consistently as a state with a strong commitment to the council-manager form of local government. The state has a relatively strong and resilient economy, sound local government finances and strong credit ratings, and enlightened and effective state agency oversight of local government finances and borrowing.



## THE CANDIDATE

The Office of the City Attorney provides legal advice and representation to the Mayor, City Council, City Manager, City Clerk and many other City departments, boards and commissions, agencies, officials and employees on a broad range of issues. The City Attorney is appointed by and reports to the Mayor and City Council.

The City Council is seeking an innovative, high energy Attorney with strong interpersonal skills, and highly effective communication skills. The ideal candidate must be able to provide sound legal recommendations free of personal opinions, with a focus on establishing harmonious working relationships with the internal departments of the city. The City Attorney must possess personal and professional maturity. Must have the ability to remove bottlenecks, establish standardized processes and uniformity in addressing issues. Must be a team player with excellent listening skills and the ability to provide responsive customer service to the M&C, City Manager and Department Directors. The new City Attorney must be committed to implementing performance measures for the department and establish a vision of excellence for supporting the organization.

## Minimum Qualifications:

- Juris Doctor degree from ABA accredited law school
- Licensed to practice law in NC or eligible for comity licensure
- At least ten years of relevant experience
- Broad knowledge of state, federal and local laws and ordinances, rules and regulations, particularly with respect to municipal operations and regulatory functions
- Knowledge of judicial procedures and rules of evidence, with successful trial and appellate litigation experience
- Highly skilled in legal research, drafting legal documents, ordinances and opinions, and providing legal advice in public and private



## THE POSITION:

Ability to work constructively and productively with the Mayor, City Council and City Manager as a credible and impartial legal advisor, maintaining professional objectivity and neutrality with respect to policy matters

Demonstrated ability to keep elected officials and senior City staff informed about emerging legal and legislative issues and challenges that should be addressed, with adequate notice and opportunity for consideration of sound alternatives, and skills to help build consensus

Willingness and ability to discuss and explain legal issues and requirements in a practical and understandable manner (facts, law and alternatives)

Ability and willingness to help teach newly elected officials and newly appointed senior staff members about their roles and responsibilities, from a legal perspective

Ability to assist the Mayor and City Council, City Manager and department heads to make innovative but defensible decisions to address priorities and adopt sound policies, with respect to what the law allows and requires, as the leader of a nimble and responsive Office of the City Attorney

Ability to cope with a fast-paced, challenging operational environment with constant complex and challenging legal issues, such as large and high profile public events

Willingness and ability to present sound recommendations to the City Council and senior staff about resolution of claims, along with an explanation and evaluation of the position and contentions of opposing parties, and available options and alternatives

Willingness to consult with department directors and work collaboratively with them on selection of outside counsel and handling of claims as appropriate

Politically astute but scrupulously nonpartisan, with demonstrated sound professional judgment and thorough understanding of the appropriate respective roles of elected officials, senior managers and attorneys

Willingness to make a long-term commitment to service in the City Attorney position. Thoughtful, visionary and creative, open to new ideas, able and willing to develop and recommend innovative but sound legal policies

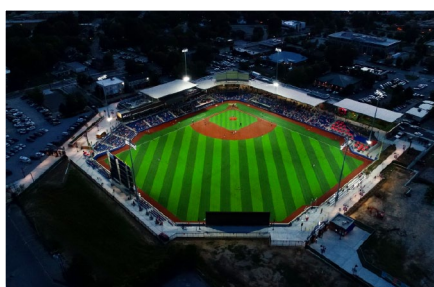
Ability to balance the need for innovation and change of management and operational policies and practices and able and willing to make sound, timely decisions after consideration of relevant information and alternatives

Open minded, active listener, flexible, adaptable and accommodating to constructive suggestions, different leadership styles and citizen viewpoints, and willingness to reconsider and refine previous decisions and policies when appropriate

Strong negotiation and conflict resolution skills to address future opportunities, needs and challenges. Impeccable integrity, committed to the highest ethical standards of the legal profession and transparent government operations







## COMPENSATION & BENEFITS

The starting salary is expected to be in the range of \$160,000 - \$185,000 depending on the experience and qualifications of the selected individual. The City provides an attractive benefits package. The City Personnel Resolution requires that the City Attorney reside within the corporate limits. Relocation expenses negotiable.

## TO APPLY

To apply for this outstanding opportunity, send letter of interest, resume and five job references (include name, email address and phone number) **no later than 5pm on February 23, 2023** by email to [lisaward912@gmail.com](mailto:lisaward912@gmail.com)

**Lisa Ward, Senior Associate, Mercer Group Associates Cell: 706-983-9326**

Mercer Group Associates is a firm that provides executive search and other consulting services to public and private sector clients nationwide, is assisting the High Point City Council with their City Attorney search. For additional information, please contact Lisa Ward or Ellis Hankins: Cell & text: 919-349-8988

*The City of High Point is an Equal Opportunity Employer and values diversity across the work force, in order to serve all citizens well.*



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