

**Item # 48<sub>(10)</sub>**

**ADDITIONAL MATERIAL**  
**Regular Meeting**  
**May 4, 2021**

**SUBMITTED AT THE REQUEST OF**  
**MAYOR STEVE GELLER**

**From:** [Bob Swindell](#)  
**To:** [Geller, Steve](#)  
**Cc:** [Geller, David](#)  
**Subject:** Letter of Support for Selection of Monica Cepero as County Administrator  
**Date:** Friday, April 30, 2021 1:33:31 PM  
**Importance:** High

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Dear Mayor Geller,

Thank you for attending our recent Alliance Board meeting – I am grateful for your consistent support and engagement with our Board; having our County Mayor be actively involved is an honor and sends a very important message to the business community. I also appreciate your ask to the Board to reach out to you and your fellow commissioners regarding the process for the next County Administrator. I have been copied on several eMails sent to you and your colleagues from Alliance Board members. Colin Brown, Keith Koenig, Sam Robbin and Dr. Germaine Smith Baugh are just a few. From what I have seen, the support to promote Monica Cepero has been unanimous with their full support.

Until you asked, I had been reluctant to weigh in on a decision reserved for our county commissioners, but since you asked the business community to share its insight on one of the most important decisions a commissioner is asked to make, I'm happy to share my thoughts. We have a rapidly recovering economy, driven in large part by one of the nation's fastest recovering international airports, a port that is equally strong in its ability to rebound post pandemic, and a new Visit Lauderdale branding campaign to promote the traveling public's confidence in a safe and fun-filled vacation to Broward County.

I had never really thought about it, but I was surprised that we are the only large county in the United States that operates all three. The Broward County Administrator has unique responsibilities, unlike other large urban communities in providing leadership to these economic engines.

We know our county is doing well when impartial bond rating agencies award Broward their highest credit worthiness rating of Triple A. It provides taxpayers independent validation that our county is fiscally sound and well run.

This is a great reflection on the work done by a committed and talented County Administrator surrounded by a strong Team and a supportive Board of County Commissioners. While we know Bertha Henry is a nationally respected, award-winning administrator, one of her lesser-known skills that I have learned by working with Ms. Henry over the past twelve years is her ability to build and coach the talented team around her. She does this quietly, but with full intention. With similar intention as when she hired Monica and promoted her to be her Deputy, always with an eye to the

future and the continued success of Broward.

So, why not conduct a national search? – according to a six-year research project at Stanford University Graduate School of Business, Jim Collins, author of *Good to Great* and his Team discovered that promoting the CEO from within had clearly more successful outcomes.

To quote the report: “Visionary companies have shown, time and again, that they do not need to hire top management from the outside in order to get change and fresh ideas. Equally important, our research shows why it is extraordinarily difficult to become and remain a highly visionary company by hiring top management from outside the organization.”

“In seventeen hundred years of combined lifespans, we found only four individual incidents of going outside for a CEO—and those in only two companies. Homegrown management rules at the visionary companies to a far greater degree than at the less-successful comparison companies (by a factor of over six times).”

In my unique role at the Alliance, I have observed local examples of promoting the CEO from within. NSU President Ray Ferrero hired George Hanbury to be his EVP with the intention for a successful leadership transition, Kelley Shanley was promoted from within at the Broward Center when Mark left; Colin Brown promoted Brent Burns to CEO of JM Family Enterprises as part of his intentional leadership succession planning. When Mason Jackson retired from Career Source Broward last year, he fully endorsed his EVP Carol Hylton to become the new CEO; there are dozens of other examples I could share. Including myself, my Executive Board gave me the opportunity to be promoted from within to the CEO position back in 2009. They gave serious consideration to a national search for a new CEO, but in the end, the business leaders who govern the Alliance felt confident in my ability after working with me for the previous six years. I also knew if I didn’t perform, the national search was an option – it made me work that much harder as the new CEO.

I have had the benefit of working with Monica Cepero for most of the time I have served as CEO of the Alliance. We have worked together bringing new high-wage jobs to Broward, she understands the sense of urgency and effort required to successfully compete for good jobs and she has instilled confidence in executives considering a new location in Broward. Monica Cepero will build on the successful foundation that she inherits, and she will be an exceptional County Administrator.

With warm personal regards, I remain  
Sincerely,

Bob

**Bob Swindell, President and CEO**

**Greater Fort Lauderdale ALLIANCE**

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