



July 15, 2020

MEDIA RELEASE

The City of Thomasville has announced the upcoming retirement plans of City Manager Kelly Craver. Craver's last day as manager will be December 31, 2020. He has served in that capacity since 2005.

Craver began his career with the city in 1986 as waste water lab supervisor. In 1990, he moved to private industry, to return in 2000 as utilities manager, and was named Assistant Manager in 2001. In 2005, city government implemented an early retirement incentive package that saw Manager Roger Bryant and several department heads leave, creating vacancies that needed to be filled in a short period of time. Craver was named interim Manager as the council set about hiring for the position. Current Mayor Raleigh York was only a few weeks into his first term on council when he was faced with the task of hiring a new City Manager. As a member of the Personnel Committee, he was thrown into the process immediately.

When asked his feelings about the success of the hire, Mayor York said, "When I was elected to council in 2005, we had two major issues facing us. One of those was the task of hiring a new City Manager and the other was dealing with the worst financial condition the city had ever experienced. We hired Kelly, and after 15 years in the Manager's position, through his ability to work well with council and lead staff, we are now in the best financial position we have ever experienced."

Craver has led the city through some other difficult times. In 2007, after decades of a ward system, the first at large election saw a majority of council in their first term. Neal Grimes, Pat Shelton, David Yemm and Scott Styers were new to the job, creating a majority of first timers. With York in only his second term, council members have acknowledged that the Manager had to "hold their hands" through the learning curve. In 2009, the city, in the throes of a major national economic recession, had a large waste water spill. Thomasville has spent close to fifty million dollars in a major effort to replace aging water and sewer infrastructure.

The ensuing years have seen tremendous economic growth with many new employers and others increasing capacity. Retail merchants have prospered, especially in the downtown area, with the city's creation of the Downtown Strong effort. Craver oversaw several recreation improvements and the planning and construction of a new police headquarters. And then the COVID-19 pandemic hit.

Perhaps Craver's biggest challenge during his tenure has been navigating the constantly changing landscape of health concerns and economic loss. The Manager heads up the city's response team and is charged with implementing the Governor's executive orders, while protecting the economic vitality of the community.

10 Salem St., Thomasville, NC 27360  
T: 336.475-4210 W: [www.thomasville-nc.gov](http://www.thomasville-nc.gov)

---

Council Personnel Committee Chair Scott Styers cites Craver's steadying influence as a major factor in the city's success over the past 15 years. "Kelly came into his role during the turmoil of early retirements, shortly after major annexations, a majority new council, a worldwide recession and a significant infrastructure challenge. He has guided the city through all of those with dedication and exemplary leadership. We have been lucky to have one of the state's best managers during some really tough times and some really productive ones. It's unfortunate that he is going out during another crisis. But Kelly has been up to the task and I have no doubt he'll be working hard for the city through his last day. I speak for the entire council in saying that we can't begin to thank him enough for his leadership."

City Council will begin an immediate search to replace Craver, and hope to have someone in the role by November 1<sup>st</sup> to allow for an orderly transition before his retirement takes place. The position will be posted on the city's website and in municipal publications.