



**CITY OF NEW BEDFORD**  
JONATHAN F. MITCHELL, MAYOR

OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK  
NEW BEDFORD, MA

2022 JUN 16 PM 3:17

CITY CLERK

June 16, 2022

City Council President Ian Abreu and  
Honorable Members of the City Council  
133 William Street  
New Bedford, MA 02740

Dear Council President Abreu and Honorable Members of the City Council:

I am pleased to submit for your confirmation the appointment of Gary Lunsford as Director of Zoological Services with the City of New Bedford Buttonwood Park Zoo. Mr. Lunsford is a seasoned professional in the zoological field and the current Director of Animal Management and Health at the Milwaukee County Zoo.

Mr. Lunsford has over thirty years of experience in animal care and over twenty years of experience in accredited zoological parks. In his current position, he has implemented strategic initiatives and provided executive leadership to a 190-acre zoo that houses over 2,100 animals and 348 species.

Mr. Lunsford is an active member of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, the Zoological Registrar's Association, as well as several other groups. In sum, Mr. Lunsford is the most qualified candidate for the job, having amply demonstrated his in-depth knowledge of zoological practices and animal care, his leadership experience, and his passion for preserving the future of wildlife.

At this time, I am also respectfully requesting that Mr. Lunsford be established at Grade M-16, Salary Step 6 (\$107,476) on the Unit C Salary Schedule. Please be advised that the Buttonwood Park Zoological Society has committed to helping the City defray the cost of the Director's position by funding the difference between Grade M-16, Step 1 (\$93,616) and the Grade M-16, Step 6 salary being proposed--or approximately 12.5% of the Director's salary. This same arrangement served the City well during the former Zoo Director's tenure, and I am pleased to report the continuation of the Zoological Society's funding commitment.

Due to the fact that Mr. Lunsford currently resides in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, he will be available to answer any questions via telephone; however, he will be available in person should his appointment be sent to the Committee on Appointments and Briefings.

Sincerely,



Jonathan F. Mitchell  
Mayor

Enclosures  
(Cover Letter & Resume)

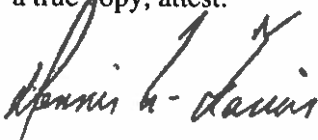
cc: Gary Lunsford

**IN CITY COUNCIL**, June 23, 2022

Referred to the Committee on Appointments and Briefings.

Dennis W. Farias, City Clerk

a true copy, attest:



Dennis W. Farias

City Clerk

Gary Lunsford, B.Sc.

---

April 8, 2022

Judith Keating  
Personnel Dept. Director  
City of New Bedford  
133 William St. – Room 212  
New Bedford, MA 02740  
(508) 979-1444

To Whom It May Concern:

Your recent posting for the role of Director of Zoological Services for Button Park Zoo is of great interest to me. The organization's mission of preserving the future of wildlife is a passion that we share. I would be honored to lead the organization's strategic plan for a thriving organization, culture and community.

My well-rounded career includes over thirty years in the world of animal care and stewardship, twenty-six years in accredited zoological parks and twenty years of team leadership. Over this time, I have actively developed skills in leadership, zoo operations, conservation, research, sustainability programs, animal husbandry, human resources, financial management, educational programming, customer service, retail operations, fundraising, marketing, policy development, and corporate strategy.

I am quite amicable by nature, an effective communicator, and a well-organized strategic, critical thinker. I have demonstrated success across multiple organizational structures, cultures and funding models, providing me with a rich and diverse portfolio of zoo development and business strategy. I offer results shaped from an accomplished career focused on organizational development and change leadership, with expertise in establishing operational structure, building strategic partnerships, and driving continuous improvement while balancing the health and welfare of the people, animals, organization and community. I feel that my career success will contribute significantly to your mission, particularly through strong vision, strategy, team development and business acumen.

My resumé is appended for your review and consideration. Should you wish to discuss my qualifications further or to answer any questions you may have, I can be reached at References  
are available upon request. I look forward to hearing from you to further discuss this opportunity.

Sincerely,



Gary Lunsford

Enclosure

## Gary Lunsford, B.Sc.

### **Tulsa Zoo Management, Inc.**

*Tulsa, Oklahoma, USA*

*TZ is an 85-acre facility with 150 team members, 580K visitors, an annual budget of \$18M, having transitioned from municipal to corporate governance in 2010.*



**Interim Curator of Education**

2010 - 2011

**Zoo Registrar**

2006 - 2012

**Curator & Supervisor – Aquaria & Children's Zoo**

2003 - 2006

**Zookeeper – Aquaria & Children's Zoo**

2002 - 2003

- Selected by the CEO for leadership of the Education team, 200+ volunteers and programs through transition from municipal governance to public-private partnership and new team leadership.
- Vision casting and capital planning for Helmrich Sealion Cove (2011); Tulsa Zoo Master Plan (2011); and Zoo mission, vision and core values (2011).
- Developed policies and procedures, providing leadership and facilitation for numerous parallel teams and committees, including: Animal Welfare Practices (AWPC), Dive Control Board, Animal Care & Use Committee (IACUC), and Zoo Emergency Response Team (ZERT).

### **Oklahoma City Zoo and Botanical Garden**

*Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, USA*

*OKCZ is a 200-acre facility with 340 team members, 975K visitors, an annual budget of \$18M, and governed by City of Oklahoma City with Society partnership.*



**Volunteer – Aquaticus**

2002 - 2003

**Supervisor & Zookeeper – Aquaticus & Island Life**

1995 - 2001

- Introduced innovative new species programs, including the green sea turtle head-start program of Sea Life Park Hawaii and husbandry of moon jellies.
- Championed the Species Survival Plan® (SSP) programs for Lake Victoria cichlids (*Yssichromis ishmaeli*, *Haplochromis guiarti*, and *H. argens*) and Malagasy cichlids (*Paratilapia polleni*).
- Took initiative for professional development and training with assignments in Island Life, Carnivore Row and a seasonal Black-footed Penguin exhibit.

### **PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS**

#### **Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA)**

AZA Polar Bear Species Survival Plan® (SSP)

AZA Bear Taxon Advisory Group (TAG)

AZA Accreditation Commission

AZA Annual Conference Program Committee

#### **Bear Care Group (BCG)**

#### **Canada's Accredited Zoos and Aquariums (CAZA)**

CAZA Board of Directors

CAZA Accreditation Commission

#### **International Polar Bear Conservation Centre (IPBCC)**

Polar Bears International (PBI)

#### **Zoological Registrar's Association (ZRA)**

ZRA Data Standards Committee

Professional Member

Management Committee Member

Vice Chair

Accreditation Inspector

Animal Track Committee Member

Board Member

Professional Member

Board Member

Commission Chair & Accreditation Inspector

Board Member

Arctic Ambassador

Professional Member

Committee Member

### **EDUCATION**

University of Phoenix – Tulsa, Oklahoma

Bachelors in Business Management

Rose State College - Midwest City, Oklahoma  
Associate in Science-Biology

## Gary Lunsford, B.Sc.

### PERSONAL PROFILE

Experienced leader in animal stewardship, conservation, education and business operations throughout a dynamic career in professional animal care. Extremely well organized with demonstrated success in corporate strategy, critical analysis, financial management and multi-media communications in a diverse portfolio of management roles, organizational models and cultures. Accomplished change agent, successful in transforming operations through strategic planning, vision and accountability. Life-long learner, explorer and naturalist with a passion for leadership, conservation and biodiversity. Sharer of exciting adventures with great people.

### SKILLS & STRENGTHS

- Vision & Strategic Planning
- Business Process Improvement
- Policy & Procedures Development
- Team Building & Leadership
- Accreditation & Best Practices
- Conservation & Green Practices
- Capital Project Development
- Budgeting & Fiscal Management
- Organization Change Leadership

### PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

#### **Milwaukee County Zoo**

*Milwaukee, Wisconsin, USA*

*MCZ is a 190-acre facility with 315 team members, 1.25 million visitors, an annual budget of \$23M, and municipal governance with Society partnership.*



#### **Director of Animal Management & Health**

2018 - Present

- Executive leadership of County's Division of Animal Management & Health. Deliver on County's strategic plan and KPI's with a primary focus on community health, diversity and inclusion. Operational oversight of Zoo Animal Care; Veterinary Services & Nutrition; Conservation, Research, & Sustainability programs; the Zoo's public Library; and Wild Connections tour programs.
- Zoological Society operational liaison. Develop, coordinate and manage joint operations, serving as the liaison for the CFO, Education, Conservation, Development, Membership Benefits, Volunteer Services, Creative (Interpretive), and IT Departments.
- Capital planning, fundraising and project management for Humboldt Penguins (2024), Rhino Habitat (2023), Hoofstock Quarantine (2021) and Hippo Haven (2020).

#### **Assiniboine Park Conservancy**

*Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada*

*Assiniboine Park includes a 90-acre Zoo with 115 team members, 420K visitors, an annual budget of \$10M, and Conservancy governance with municipal partnership.*



#### **Executive Senior Director of Animal Care & Conservation**

2016 - 2018

#### **Director of Zoological Operations**

2015 - 2016

#### **Head of Animal Care**

2012 - 2015

- Executive leadership of multiple business units with independent budget lines, contracts and diverse revenue streams. Responsible for Zoo operations, the International Polar Bear Conservation Centre, and Park conservation and sustainability programs.
- Transformation of culture, standards and protocols to achieve accreditation by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums, focusing on leadership development, inclusion, accountability, and recruitment. Restructured, re-defined roles, and balanced a payroll budget that had been historically deficit.
- Commissioned the Journey to Churchill – an award-winning \$90 million transformation of 10 acres of the Zoo to an immersive experience of northern culture and biodiversity. Cultivated a Zoo identity as a recognized leader in polar bear rescue, welfare, conservation and research.