

## **3: Stephen Mhere**

**Stephen Mhere**

17514 Buckingham Garden Drive

Lithia, FL 33547

Tel: (316) 680 – 2676

*SMhere@Outlook.com*

September 16, 2023

**RE: CITY AUDITOR**

I am pleased to have the opportunity to apply for the above referenced position advertised on the Association of Local Government Auditors (ALGA) website.

I am currently employed as a senior auditor with the City of Tampa's Audit Department. I have been in this position since November 2013. My department does performance, information technology, and compliance audits, as well as non-audit services. Before that I worked for the Kansas Department of Health and Environment Office of Inspector General (KDHE OIG). KDHE OIG performed audits and reviews of the Kansas Medicaid and State Children's Health Insurance Plan to identify waste, fraud, and abuse, and areas of possible program improvement. I was with the KDHE OIG for about five years. Before that I had worked for the Kansas Department of Revenue as a Management Systems Analyst for over two years.

I am a Certified Internal Auditor (CIA) as well as a Certified Information Systems Auditor (CISA). I hold a Master of Science degree in Health Informatics and a Master of Business Administration. I am also a Public Affairs PhD candidate at the University of Central Florida working on my dissertation and hoping to graduate in the summer of 2024. I am confident that, if given the opportunity to fill this position, I can make a positive contribution to the City of Gainesville's effort to achieve its objectives.

I look forward to the opportunity to discuss this position with you.

Sincerely,

**Stephen Mhere**

**STEPHEN MHERE**

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Lithia, FL 33547

(316) 680-2676

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**OBJECTIVE**

Seeking a leadership position in internal auditing in City or County government.

**COMMUNICATION SKILLS**

Good oral and written communication skills acquired in professional and academic settings through audit report writing, research paper writing, professional presentations such as in Audit Committee meetings, staff meetings, and graduate class settings.

**QUALIFICATIONS**

**Academic Qualifications:**

BS in Computer Science, Pittsburg State University, Kansas.

MBA, Baker College, Michigan.

MS in Health Informatics, University of Missouri.

Public Affairs PhD candidate at University of Central Florida.

**Professional Qualifications:**

Certified Internal Auditor (CIA) awarded by the Institute of Internal Auditors.

Certified Information Systems Auditor (CISA) awarded by ISACA.

**PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS**

Member of the Institute of Internal Auditors, ISACA, and Association of Local Government Auditors.

**WORK EXPERIENCE**

**Position:** Senior Auditor.

**Employer:** City of Tampa.

**Geographical location:** Tampa, Florida.

**Period of employment:** November 2013 to present.

**Duties:** Annual risk assessment. Performance/Operational auditing. Compliance auditing. IT auditing. Post-audit reviews. Audit report writing. Non-audit services. Assessment of performance metrics for all departments of City of Tampa. Training other auditors in the use of process flowcharting during audit risk analysis. Public records request coordinator. Emergency/Safety coordinator.

**Position:** Auditor.

**Employer:** Kansas Department of Health and Environment Office of Inspector General (KDHE OIG).

**Geographic location:** Topeka, Kansas.

**Period of employment:** July 2008 to November 2013.

**Duties:** Risk assessments for Medicaid, SCHIP, and State Employee Health Benefit Plan (SCHIP = State Children's Health Insurance Program). Formulation/presentation of annual audit plans to audit committee. Formulating audit programs. Writing annual audit reports. Conducted risk-based, performance, operations, compliance, and information systems audits of the Kansas Medicaid agency. Audited the Medicaid program, including private contractors and subcontractors (fiscal agents, managed care organizations (MCOs), healthcare providers, etc.). Conducted audit reviews and/or special consultative engagements to evaluate the impact of state and federal regulations and policies on the effectiveness and integrity of Medicaid. Conducted fraud, waste, and abuse investigations involving providers, employees, and beneficiaries. (Note: Standards used in OIG projects include Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards (Yellow Book), Quality Standards for Inspections, Evaluations, and Reviews of the Association of Inspectors General, IIA's International Practices Professional Framework for internal auditing, and ISACA's COBIT framework).

**Position:** Management Systems Analyst.

**Employer:** Kansas Department of Revenue (KDOR).

**Geographic location:** Topeka, Kansas.

**Period of employment:** May 2006 to July 2008.

**Duties:** Tax research, analysis, and reporting. Business intelligence functions through data mining to help. Designed decision analytic scoring models using data mining decision. I participated in cross-functional teams created within KDOR to optimize operational efficiency for the various agency divisions. I performed tax clearance functions for the agency.

**Position:** Quality Improvement Assessment Assistant.

**Employer:** Unified School District 259 (USD 259/Wichita School District).

**Geographic location:** Wichita, Kansas.

**Period of employment:** February 2005 to May 2006.

**Duties:** Analyzed USD 259 (Wichita School District)'s performance in statewide student assessments. Helped evaluate individual schools' performance relative to AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress) requirements. Produced assessment reports for schools. Designed surveys and survey templates for entities carrying out education-based research in Wichita. Coordinated state assessment activities, including meeting with USD 259 test coordinators to discuss State assessment issues.

**HOBBIES:** Soccer refereeing – I am a licensed Grassroots soccer referee with the United States Soccer Federation.

## **REFEREES**

### **Su-I Hou, Dr.PH**

Professor & PAF-PhD Health-Specialization Liaison, School of Global Health Management & Informatics  
College of Community Innovation & Education, University of Central Florida

E-Mail: [Su-i.Hou@ucf.edu](mailto:Su-i.Hou@ucf.edu)

**Robin Kempf, PhD, JD**

Assistant Professor, John Jay College of Criminal Justice, City University of New York

E-Mail: [rkempf@jjay.cuny.edu](mailto:rkempf@jjay.cuny.edu)

**Candidate Questionnaire**

<b>Name</b>	Stephen Mhere	<b>Primary Phone</b>	(316) 680-2676
<b>Email</b>	SMhere@Outlook.com		
<b>Education</b>	Graduate (MBA/MS)		

	<b>Current (Most Recent) Position</b>	<b>Previous Position</b>	<b>Previous Position</b>
<b>Title</b>	Senior Auditor	Auditor	Management Analyst
<b>Dates of Employment</b>	November 2013 to present	July 2008 to November 2013	May 2006 to July 2008
<b>Organization &amp; Location</b>	City of Tampa; Tampa, FL	Kansas Department of Health and Environment; Topeka, KS	Kansas Department of Revenue; Topeka, KS
<b>Reason for Separation/Desire to Separate</b>	I really enjoy my current position, but I am ready to separate to make a career move.	Separated after accepting a position with the City of Tampa	Separated to accept a position with the KS Department of Health and Environment
<b>Jurisdiction Population</b>	Approx. 400,000	125,000	125,000
<b>Reports To (Title)</b>	Audit Director	Inspector General	Tax Compliance Officer
<b># of Department Staff</b>	5	9	25
<b># of Direct Reports</b>	0	1	0
<b>Department Budget</b>	\$900,000	\$1.2 million	\$5 million
<b>Organization Budget</b>	\$2.2 Billion	\$1 Billion	\$1 Billion
<b>Explain any Employment Gaps</b>	N/A		

**Instructions:**

The purpose of this questionnaire is to provide us with additional information about you as a candidate and to gather examples of professional work that illustrate your background and experience. This information will be shared with hiring officials and others involved in making decisions about candidates selected to move forward in the selection process.

Please respond to each of the following questions by providing pertinent information. Some questions ask you to provide examples; please be sure to describe your direct level of involvement in the project or initiative. **Please be succinct – limit your responses to 300 words per question.**

1.	<b>Why are you interested in this specific position at this specific time?</b>
I have reached a point in my auditing career where I believe I am adequately equipped and ready, in terms of experience and education, to take on a leadership role. This specific position, being within a municipal government, is within the bounds of experience I have acquired over almost 10 years.	

2.	<p><b>Describe your current scope of responsibilities and explain how these responsibilities prepare you to take on the leadership and management responsibilities of the City Auditor position.</b></p>
<p>I conduct audits of activities of various departments the municipal government of the City of Tampa. Scope of work includes performance, information systems, financial, compliance, and performance audits. Tasks include formulating and recommending work plans, developing and conducting work programs, preparation of reports, and presentation of recommendations. I serve on audit teams when undertaking major projects. I ensure that assignments are conducted thoroughly and objectively and that recommendations are developed and presented with a sound basis for corrective action. My work is performed in accordance with professional standards issued by the United States Comptroller General. Use of tact and diplomacy is a requirement as I have considerable contact with employees and management of other City departments, Council officials, and representatives of other governmental agencies and private businesses. I present audit findings to appropriate managerial personnel and high-level municipal officials. I train other auditors to perform data reliability assessments. I also train them to use flowcharting techniques in process mapping as a means to perform more effective risk analysis.</p>	
3.	<p><b>Describe an experience where you demonstrated strong leadership in promoting governance, accountability, transparency, and diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) in your work as an Auditor.</b></p>
<p>My organization has a hotline for employees to call in anonymously to report any issues relating to diversity, equity, and inclusion. In each of my audit projects, I discuss with top management about their dissemination of DEI policies within their functions. I also make sure that management has the DEI poster posted on notice boards for all employees to see. I do it by personally taking those posters to my meetings with top management so they can put them up.</p>	
4.	<p><b>Provide an example of how you've established and maintained effective working relationships with individuals from various backgrounds, including government officials, colleagues, and the general public.</b></p>
<p>My basic principle is to always maintain a cordial relationship with all people I interact with in my work. The way I do that is to make sure I know where professional boundaries are. With government officials, particularly those that have a defined interest in my work (e.g., Audit Committee members), I simply ask what they expect of me. As for colleagues I treat them with professional courtesy and seek and/or provide help whenever necessary. With the general public I make sure to treat them with human courtesy as well as provide them with any help they might need.</p>	
5.	<p><b>Because of the nature of internal performance auditing, employees and those responsible for the operations targeted for a review can sometimes feel threatened. What techniques do you employ to minimize resistance by employees and a specific operation or department?</b></p>
<p>I always make sure that when I undertake a performance audit, people responsible for operations under audit understand that I am not coming in with the objective of finding what they are doing wrong. I let them know I am coming in to help them identify areas where improvements can be made, if any. I let them know they are the experts in the operations under review, and that I learn as much as I can from them in order to make appropriate recommendations.</p>	
6.	<p><b>Describe a challenging situation where you had to make a difficult ethical decision. How did you navigate this situation while maintaining the independence and objectivity required for internal auditing?</b></p>
<p>I was performing a technical review of an audit report written by an auditor I was training. The auditor had completed a project of a functional area managed by an individual that was about to complete their six months of probation on the job. The auditor had identified an issue with all the elements of a finding but had decided not to include the issue in his report so as not to jeopardize the manager's prospects in the upcoming job performance evaluation. I discussed with the auditor how his decision was a violation of professional ethics on his part and how it would compromise not only his own standing as an auditor, but also that of the whole Internal Audit Department. Although it appeared that including the audit finding in the report would, indeed, be a blemish on the record of the new manager, I advised the auditor to report it and let those tasked with completing the performance evaluation make their own decision.</p>	
7.	<p><b>Describe your approach to building and maintaining relationships with members of your organization's management team.</b></p>

<p>The best approach to maintaining good relationships with management team members is objectivity. Auditors should always make certain they have their facts right. If not sure, program associates and/or their managers should be consulted. Managers should not have to defend themselves and their departments against findings that are based upon assumptions. My philosophy is interpretations may be debatable, not facts. Objectivity is built upon factual observations.</p>	
8.	<p><b>Describe an instance where you collected, assessed, and blended information from various sources to make informed recommendations or decisions.</b></p>
<p>I often use synthesis of information from various sources when I perform data reliability assessments for audit data involving major applications systems. I gather the system’s pre-production testing data from records maintained by the technology department. I also gather data from some of the larger departments that utilize the application systems. I then also go into the system myself and collect data that I will assess independently. I then use these three sources in a triangulation process to increase reliability of my results.</p>	
9.	<p><b>Describe your philosophy and approach to employee development, motivation, and performance evaluation.</b></p>
<p>I believe that employee development is anchored on education, and that employers should consider facilitating and encouraging employees to enroll in educational programs that help them in that regard, whether those programs lead to a degree or a certificate in a relevant area. I also believe that people in leadership positions should motivate employees by providing public verbal and/or written recognition when they do well, and providing timely and confidential feedback when they underperform. I believe that performance evaluation requires constant feedback between supervisor/leader and employees. That approach means that when formal face-to-face performance evaluation is done, the employee will not be surprised by anything positive or negative.</p>	
10.	<p><b>What steps have you taken in your organization to build a culture that fosters teamwork, communication, and an appreciation for diversity?</b></p>
<p>We often fundraise for the American Heart Association in our organization and some of the activities include participation in baseball or other activities. I have encouraged teamwork, communication, and diversity by encouraging members from my department to join teams from different departments to develop familiarity with different people and break perceived barriers that might exist between our respective departments.</p>	
11.	<p><b>Tell us about the feedback you have received from peers, supervisors, and subordinates with whom you work regarding both your strengths and areas for improvement as a professional leader and manager.</b></p>
<p>The strongest feedback from people I work with is my ability to connect and communicate with people at all levels, from lower-level associates to executive management. I have received positive comments regarding my analytical approach to finding solutions to problems, and my ability and willingness to listen to alternative viewpoints. Although I have been praised for my attention to detail, a few times that has impeded on the expeditious completion of my analyses. I have learnt over the years to put strict schedules on such analytical reviews to make sure my projects are completed on time.</p>	
12.	<p><b>Describe any other areas of expertise or experiences that are relevant to this position that have not been addressed in previous questions.</b></p>
<p>I am currently the Department of Internal Audit’s public records liaison. My duty is mainly to see that any requests for public records made by outside entities are processed accordingly and expeditiously in accordance with the law. I am also the emergency response monitor for departments of the City of Tampa that are located on the Old City Hall’s 1<sup>st</sup> floor. My responsibility in this role is to help employees and/or any people visiting the 1<sup>st</sup> floor of Old City Hall safely vacate the building in case of a fire or any other emergency. This includes accounting for all employees during such emergencies to firefighters when they arrive at the scene.</p> <p>I am currently in candidacy for a PhD in Public Affairs at the University of Central Florida. This program places much emphasis in public service and has prepared me for leadership in a governmental entity such as Gainesville’s City Auditor’s Office.</p>	