

GENERAL MANAGER/CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER PROFILE: WILLOUGHBY GOLF CLUB STUART, FL

GENERAL MANAGER/CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER OPPORTUNITY AT WILLOUGHBY GOLF CLUB

The opportunity to join and lead the team at Willoughby Golf Club, an organization with great stability, an outstanding history of results, and a very cohesive membership. The 15+ year tenured General Manager/Chief Operating Officer (GM/COO) will be retiring in Spring 2025, and the Club has recently undergone significant course and clubhouse renovations. It is poised to continue to elevate member and staff experiences with a vibrant and energized team of professionals.

The Club has long ago adopted a strong model of GM/COO leadership, and continuing in this manner has been reiterated by the Board. As a bundled community in the golf-rich Southeast Florida, Martin County market, Willoughby is looking for a visionary, financially astute, naturally visible and engaged, mentoring-minded leader who has a verifiable history of success, working well with boards and committees and who recognizes the benefits of building relationships both inside and outside the community. This is an outstanding role for a hospitality-minded community club professional.

[Click here to view a brief video about this opportunity.](#)

WILLOUGHBY GOLF CLUB AND COMMUNITY

Willoughby Golf Club (WGC) is an exceptional member-owned community in Stuart, Florida, that offers a full range of active living, playing, and relaxing activities. The community provides a warm and inviting atmosphere, especially for golf enthusiasts who enjoy instant camaraderie on its recently renovated championship Arthur Hills golf course, which features elements of Florida and North Carolina landscapes.

Beyond its primary amenity of golf, Willoughby offers extensive recreational, social, and intellectual opportunities, allowing members to shift from active to relaxed anytime. The recently renovated first-class facilities include tennis courts, a resort-style pool, pickleball courts, and a wellness center. The expansive Clubhouse serves as the social center, hosting a calendar of events and activities for every passion. Stuart, known as the "Sailfish Capital of the World" and named "The Happiest Seaside Town" by Coastal Living, offers the best dining, entertainment, shopping, and event hopping in South Florida.

The Clubhouse is also a premier venue for special events, accommodating weddings, birthdays, anniversaries, and private parties with personalized planning, entertainment setup, custom menus, and complementary wines. Whether opting for an outdoor gala or an intimate indoor gathering, the committed and capable staff ensures every occasion is memorable. The attention to detail in amenities and services reflects the commitment to providing the best for its members, making every experience at Willoughby Golf Club truly exceptional.

WILLOUGHBY GOLF CLUB WEBSITE: www.willoughbygolfclub.com

WILLOUGHBY GOLF CLUB BY THE NUMBERS:

- Initiation Fee - \$50,000 property transfer fee for a Full Resident Member, Plus \$45,000 for Equity Golf Certificate (optional)
- Annual Dues: \$12,900 plus \$3,800 capital fee for Resident Member non-golf; \$23,500 plus \$6,800 capital fee Full Resident Member Golf
- Approximately 26,800 yearly golf rounds
- Approximately 525 members from all categories, including approximately 185 non-resident members in various categories
- Approximate Gross Volume - \$13.0M

- Approximate Annual Dues Volume - \$7.77M
- Approximate Annual F&B Volume - \$1.9M
- Food costs of 46.3% a la carte and 53.7% events & catering
- POS and Club Accounting Systems: Jonas
- There are 11 Board Members, each serving 3-year terms
- The club maintains the following committees: Food and Beverage, Finance, Fitness & Racquets, Golf, Green, Marketing and Membership, Properties and Improvements (Architectural Review) and Security (Ad hoc)
- 69 average member age
- Willoughby is a gated, bundled Florida "Not for Profit" Homeowners Association community governed under Florida Statute 720, a Declaration of Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions, and the By-Laws.

GENERAL MANAGER/CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER POSITION OVERVIEW

The Board desires a GM/COO who is "solutions-oriented," functions proactively, is naturally engaging and approachable, works very closely with the Board of Directors, and is actively involved with several Club committees. The GM/COO will be considered the "face" of Willoughby Golf Club and, in partnership with key volunteers, is a primary "visionary" to ensure that WGC consistently executes at an exceptionally high level of personalized service. With this "lead by example" and "huge open door" mindset, the GM/COO will be coming into a role and Club that is committed to continuous improvement and will seek to enhance and elevate the overall membership and staff experience and to be an "employer of choice" within a highly competitive hospitality community. The Board desires to work with a GM/COO who handles all operational matters, is an active thought partner on strategic and policy matters, is approachable, actively listens, and engages while providing transparency to direction and operations.

Significant to the new GM/COO's success is the ability to understand the unique nature of residential community clubs, likely through current or previous first-hand experience. A key to his/her success is putting residents/members first and recognizing the foundation of providing staff support, mentorship, clear direction, "walking the talk," and "being present" in his/her natural, sincere, and engaging style. "Exceptional communication skills" with both members and staff are a critical success factor and priority for the new GM/COO, as is easy approachability and recognizing that the entirety of the WGC operation is his/her responsibility and time spent in each operating department is important. Additionally important is being able to effectively and diplomatically enforce necessary rules required under WGC documents and/or Florida statutes. Residents, staff, and members are used to a calm, relaxed demeanor from a proactive, "solutions-based" leader and desire continued style in this manner.

Listening and responding diplomatically is essential to success at Willoughby while overseeing Club and Community operations. Over the past few years, the Club and Community have enjoyed many new residents and completed several key renovations and enhancements. The GM/COO will be a crucial player in the orientation, onboarding, and introduction/transition of these and future members/residents into Willoughby and ensure continuous evolution to excellence in experiences. Additionally, clearly understanding and being able to epitomize and promote a culture of "non-pretentious, respectful and highly interactive presence" is a critical success factor.

It is especially important to manage expectations at a high level of dynamic leadership with exceptional "EQ." However, a fair amount of that can be accomplished simply by being present, approachable, accessible, and diplomatic and by having the necessary "gravitas" to be viewed with confidence and trusted by all constituencies. Additionally, and of great importance, is putting appropriate urgency on responding to residents/members and staff.

Attention to maintenance details, SOPs, the overall member experience, staff culture, and other key areas of success is critical. The club and Community have excellent curb appeal and have been well-maintained throughout.

Direct reports include the Assistant General Manager, Director of Finance, Director of Facilities, Director of Membership and Marketing, Director of Golf, Director of Golf and Grounds, and Administrative Assistant.

The GM/COO will have full operational responsibility for WGC and will be responsible and accountable for developing, monitoring, and managing the Annual Operating/Business Plan and Budget. He/she must be someone who can establish appropriate benchmarks for staff management success and who can articulate the reasons "why" to both senior staff and the Board.

He/she must be someone who understands relevant club and community industry metrics to success and comparable clubs of high performance and who has demonstrated the capability of instituting operational standards of consistent success. Clearly, we need someone who is expected to be a “consummate hospitality professional” with a servant’s heart and strong operational management skills, who, in collaboration with the Board, Member Committees, and Senior Staff, can define and strategically execute plans to ensure the WGC is viewed as one of the premier club communities in South Florida, with a strong focus and core of golf.

Additionally, he/she must be a disciplined and visionary leader who can impart an appropriate culture of quality service and attention to detail. Someone who is “hands-on” but who works strategically and can communicate his/her strategy and expectations to the team for whom he/she is a natural mentor. Ideally, the new GM/COO will have had prior involvement in conceptualizing, developing, coordinating, and executing capital projects of some magnitude, including gaining member and staff support and understanding current trends and member/staff expectations.

Additional expectations of the new GM/COO include:

- Possessive of a strong record of selecting and developing talent in club senior leadership roles and helping those departmental leaders continuously develop themselves and their respective staffs in a desire to create a culture of continuous evolution to excellence in execution and delivery. Being a natural mentor and understanding the dynamics of seasonal operations and staff is important.
- A record of results in governance/leadership partnership with active resident/member Boards and committees.
- Active involvement in CMAA, CAI, or similar organizations where he/she has a strong network of peers and can stay abreast of the industry, trends, and opportunities for WGC to remain relevant and proactive for its members and staff.
- Ability to lead in a very busy operation. The Club plays over 26,000 rounds of golf each year, has a vibrant F&B program, an exceptional number of ‘clubs within the club’ that need focus and attention, and consistently executes at a high level.

INITIAL PRIORITIES OF THE NEW GENERAL MANAGER/CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

Observe, ask lots of questions, and listen. The strong view is that the Club functions well in almost every area, but elevating certain experiences would be appropriate.

- Learn the make-up and “pulse” of Willoughby, its strengths and weaknesses, and develop a strong vision of where you see operations and facilities moving in the future to be relevant, competitive, and highly desirable. Share your thoughts transparently with the Board, the leadership team, and members as they develop, and spend time getting to know each of these key constituency groups before instituting changes.
- Spend time with the team (staff in all areas of operations), getting to know them, their abilities, and aspirations, consistently using this time to communicate Willoughby’s vision and mission further. Understand how processes and procedures have been developed, if in place, being followed, and whether they are appropriate or in need of modification.
- Develop board and committee relationships, working to create strong bonds and encourage open communication.
- Meet and sincerely interact with and engage as many members as possible, including creating a series of ‘by invitation’ focus group sessions to listen, hear, learn, and develop relationships.
- Understand the status of projects and significant current and upcoming capital plans. Ensure that those underway are well-conceived and running as planned.
- Willoughby’s staff faces extreme competition from other clubs and growing local businesses. Maintaining or improving this staff’s competitive edge has been a big part of Willoughby’s long-term success; ensuring it is a differentiator is critically important.

CANDIDATE QUALIFICATIONS

- Extensive experience is required in business management and administration, with particular emphasis on the country club and HOA/POA operations. He/She must have an informed working knowledge of golf, tennis, related country club operations, and POA/HOA operations and be or quickly become an expert in F.S. 720 homeowner association requirements. (Note: There are other CAM license holders on staff but being the ‘go to’ person for key decisions regarding documents, adherence to F.S. 720, etc., falls primarily on the GM/COO.)
- Exceptional financial business acumen and proven strong financial acuity are critical success factors.

- WGC will consider non-club industry hospitality professionals who meet the above-noted skill sets and style and non-current general managers (AGMs) who have been verifiably mentored, possess keen club and community knowledge, and have a strong network.

EDUCATIONAL AND CERTIFICATION QUALIFICATIONS

- A bachelor's degree is preferred, with a focus on Hospitality Management or business.
- Industry certifications such as CCM, CCE, CAM, PCAM, LCMA, CMCA, and AMS are encouraged but not required, although CAM certification will be required within 60 days if it is not currently possessed.

EMPLOYMENT ELIGIBILITY VERIFICATION

In compliance with federal law, all persons hired will be required to verify identity and eligibility to work in the United States and to complete the required employment eligibility verification form upon hire.

SALARY AND BENEFITS

Salary is open and commensurate with qualifications and experience. The club offers an excellent bonus and benefits package, including association membership.

INSTRUCTIONS ON HOW TO APPLY

Please upload your resume and cover letter in that order using the link below. You should have your documents fully prepared to be attached when prompted for them during the online application process. Please be sure your image is not present on your resume or cover letter; that should be used on your LinkedIn Profile.

Prepare a thoughtful cover letter addressed to the WGC GM/COO Search Committee and clearly articulate why you want to be considered for this position at this stage of your career and why Willoughby Golf Club and the greater Stuart, Florida area will be beneficial to you, your family, your career, and the Club if selected.

You must apply for this role as soon as possible but no later than December 20, 2024. Candidate selections will occur in early January, with the first interviews expected in mid-January and the second interviews at the end of the month, with a desired start before Easter 2025.

IMPORTANT: Save your resume and letter in the following manner:

"Last Name, First Name - Resume"

"Last Name, First Name - Cover Letter – Willoughby"

(These documents should be in Word or PDF format)

[Click here](#) to upload your resume and cover letter.

If you have any questions, please email Patty Sprankle at patty@kkandw.com

Search Executive:

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