

The City Manager Search Subcommittee

City Manager's Conference Room
Date: Friday, April 12, 2019

Portsmouth, NH
Time: 8:00 a.m.

I. Call to Order

Mayor Blalock called the meeting to order at 8:05 a.m.

Mayor Blalock advised the Subcommittee that Assistant Mayor Lazenby and Councilor Roberts felt we should be meeting in Conference Room A going forward, if the room is available.

II. Attendance

Present: Mayor Blalock, Assistant Mayor Lazenby, Councilors Pearson and Dwyer (via conference call)

III. Mission Statement

Mayor Blalock read the Mission Statement:

The four-member subcommittee's charge will be to develop a process to select the next City Manager, and make recommendations concerning the process for adoption by the City Council as a whole. The subcommittee may: draft a schedule for the selection process; review a draft request for proposals for a search consultant; evaluate search firm proposals and develop a short-list for interview; and work with selected firm to further define and schedule the search process.

Councilor Pearson requested that the following words be inserted after short-list – *of search firms*.

Mayor Blalock said that this is a unique situation and none of us have been involved in the hiring of a new City Manager.

Assistant Mayor Lazenby moved to adopt the amended Mission Statement. Seconded by Councilor Pearson and voted.

Mission Statement:

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IV. Search Process

Deputy City Manager Colbert Puff provided the Subcommittee with a binder of information from the International City/County Management Association on recruitment process. She spoke to the possible schedule that would desire to have a City Manager come in by January 2020. She stated it is reasonable to expect that a City Manager will need to provide a 3-month notice, with a final notice in October. She said we will draw up a Request for Proposal (RFP) for hiring a search firm. Deputy City Manager Colbert Puff said approving a final RFP may be a 3 week turn around. She spoke regarding setting a goal on what you want to spend on a search firm and their services. She indicated that it could cost anywhere from \$30,000.00 to \$75,000.00.

Councilor Dwyer said that search firms already have a bank of candidates. She spoke to placing advertisements as well.

Councilor Dwyer said it is important for the search committee to look at defining qualifications and the needs of the community.

Councilor Pearson moved that the Subcommittee recommends hiring a search firm. Seconded by Assistant Mayor Lazenby and voted.

Deputy City Manager Colbert Puff said she will draft an RFP and have it prepared for the May 6, 2019 City Council meeting for approval.

Councilor Pearson asked if the residents would have enough time to review the RFP before it goes forward to the City Council for approval on May 6, 2019.

Councilor Dwyer said residents might want to look at the role of the firm.

Councilor Pearson said we need to make sure to have something available for the public to review with an opportunity to weigh in.

Assistant Mayor Lazenby asked if we should have a report out on the schedule for residents. He would also like to solicit input from department heads. Deputy City Manager Colbert Puff said department heads are part of the interview committee.

Councilor Dwyer spoke to the requirements we may be looking for from a search firm. Deputy City Manager Colbert Puff said this is mainly the qualities of the firm. Mayor Blalock said we need to draw up our own ideas for a firm. He said we want to look at how a City Manager fits when hired.

Discussion followed regarding the various businesses and organizations that would be receiving the RFP.

Councilor Pearson said it is important that the firm engages with the public in the search for a new City Manager.

Deputy City Manager Colbert Puff said many City Managers in New England are accustomed to having a high profile, and in Massachusetts manager interviews are commonly held in public session, viewable on cable television. She explained that if the Council chose, a short list could be interviewed by the community and the Council.

Discussion followed regarding the cost of hiring a search firm, ranging from \$30,000.00 to \$75,000.00 or as high as \$100,000.00 to \$120,000.00.

Mayor Blalock said it is important that we find a good fit.

Councilor Pearson said she would like to look outside the range of New England. Deputy City Manager Colbert Puff said that we have received a call from a firm in California regarding the search.

Councilor Dwyer said perhaps we should look at firms that do executive services and not just City Manager firms.

Mayor Blalock said when we develop the RFP, how will it get out. He also said the sooner we find a firm the better the process will be. He said he feels the focus on searching for a firm is having an emphasis on the process.

Councilor Pearson asked if this Committee would stay through the end. Mayor Blalock said it depends on the process. He said this is decided on at the beginning of the process with all details being brought to the City Council.

Assistant Mayor Lazenby said we need to put a definite number for a search firm. Councilor Dwyer said we would negotiate the price with the firm. Deputy City Manager Colbert Puff said we could request the pricing in a separate sealed envelope when choosing a firm.

Councilor Dwyer said references and background checks will be reviewed.

Mayor Blalock said he would like to find out what some other communities have paid for a search for their City Manager.

Deputy City Manager Colbert Puff advised the Committee that as a member of ICMA she is regulated by rules of ethics so in no circumstance can she speak to the qualifications of a candidate for City Manager.

Mayor Blalock said this Committee is to focus on the process and not the candidates.

Assistant Mayor Lazenby said do we need to comprehend and define who the interim City Manager would be. Councilor Dwyer said we may need to do an interim manager.

Councilor Dwyer said we should list the schedule in the newsletter.

Mayor Blalock said everything we do goes to the City Council. He said the City Council as a whole will make the selection of a City Manager.

The Committee agreed to next meet on Friday, April 19, 2019, at 8:00 a.m. in Conference Room A and to have the meeting taped.

Deputy City Manager Colbert Puff said she would be setting up a website for the Search Committee to review information.

Councilor Dwyer asked if the City Council would vote on the mission of the Committee and should it be adopted by the whole Council at the May 6, 2019 City Council meeting.

V. Adjournment

At 9:00 a.m., Mayor Blalock closed the meeting.

Respectfully submitted by:

Kelli L. Barnaby, MMC, CMC, CNHMC
City Clerk