

**CITY COUNCIL
SPECIAL MEETING
NOVEMBER 4, 1998**

CALL TO ORDER BY THE MAYOR

The special meeting of the City Council of Mount Holly was called to order at 7:00 P.M. by Mayor McLean. The following were present:

Mayor Frank McLean

Mayor Pro-Tem Phyllis Harris

Councilman Michael Helms

Councilman Jim Hope

Councilman Bryan Hough

Councilman Bobby Black

City Manager Phil Ponder

City Attorney Kemp Michael

Mr. Bob Crowder, from the League of Municipalities, was introduced, to be heard by Council regarding the process for hiring a new city manager. He said the first step is to get an interim in place. Next, they should come to a consensus as to what qualifications are desired for the individual sought. An outside facilitator could be used for this step if necessary. Then, the Council must decide if it wishes to handle the search itself, or use a search firm. He can provide references for search firms if wanted. A contact person should be selected. A decision about the amount of confidentiality to be used in the process should be made. If it will be wide open, that must be disclosed at the beginning to the applicants.

If the search is done internally, a decision should be made as to whether the whole Council will handle it or if a committee would, and for which steps of the process. He recommended the whole Council so that there is no discomfort later. If done internally, Council must have an application form and determine that no one is an applicant until they have completed one. A resume' should not be allowed to stand alone without an application. You will need to keep a considerable amount of records. EEO will require that you retain all information on all applicants for two years. An acknowledgment or receipt of the application will be sent out. He recommended use of two or three supplemental questions, limited to one page each. A decision must be made as to the point at which personal interviews would be held, and whether or not we would pay for all or part of their costs for coming to the interview. There are a couple of firms that could conduct the interview with prepared questions on videotape. One of the firms also has interactive interview capability via the Internet. The disadvantage to the video is there is no feedback. He had suggested questions they could use for interviews.

At some point, Council must decide a salary cap and benefits package. It does not have to be in the ad, but a starting range may be. The ad may state salary depends on qualifications.

One of the most important parts of the process is to have a thorough background check on your final two or three applicants. The League has references for firms that do that.

During background checks, criminal checks should be made, as well as DMV, credit reports, and verification of diplomas and certifications.

The League offers a document called a Position Profile, which has been prepared by a committee, to outline the traits and qualifications that a Council would look for in a city manager. Experience and people skills were highlighted.

When the final candidates are brought in, an outline is provided for use by the Council to aid in screening during the personal interview. It uses a point value system, and should be filled out immediately after the interview, independently.

Next, Mr. Crowder discussed the time frame for the selection process. If it will be advertised in a trade paper, it may be December or January before the ad would run. Council should decide how far an area to cover with ads. He said to expect at least 50 applications. Screening will take a minimum of 30 days. At least another month would be necessary for interviews. A final candidate would most likely have to give notice. He said to expect around six months for the process.

Mr. Crowder offered to answer any questions now, or at a later time.

Councilman Black asked for Mr. Crowder's observation about whether or not cities our size usually use search firms. Mr. Crowder said he finds that the larger the city, the more likely it is to use a search firm. He said use of a search firm will shorten the process, but it depends on the amount of time the Council members have to devote to the process. He said the Council should expect to pay about \$8,000 plus expenses. If a search firm is used, they usually agree, and it should be required, that if it does not produce a satisfactory candidate in six months, they will do it again for no more charge. Mount Holly's good reputation will be helpful in getting good applications.

Mr. Ponder asked about the videotape interviews with regard to how long they have to be kept, being mainly concerned about confidentiality. He said he did not know if EEO considers it part of the application, and that he knows those companies send the video to you not to be returned.

Mayor McLean asked for the list of search firms, which was provided to him.

Councilman Hough asked if this outline is a good basis for the Council to follow in its selection process; Mr. Crowder said it is. Mr. Hough asked if the Council decides to keep the process confidential, who would get to see the video. Mr. Crowder said it would be considered part of a personnel matter, and could be closed. He deferred to the attorney on that question. Councilman Hough asked when the Council must make things public. He said that you do not have to make anything public until the final candidate is hired, if you choose a confidential process. The attorney agreed.

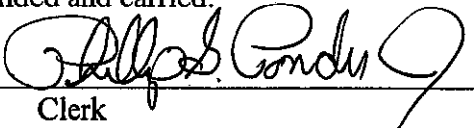
Councilman Helms **MOVED** to go into Closed Session pursuant to G. S. 143-318(a) 5 and 6 for personnel matters, seconded by Councilman Hope, with all in favor. The Council invited Mr. Crowder to stay during the closed session.

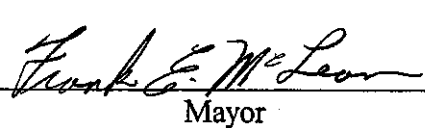
Council returned to open session upon **MOTION** by Councilman Helms, seconded by Councilman Hough, with all in favor. No action was taken as a result of the closed session.

Council discussed whether or not to use a search firm. Phil said that the League will help but would not act as search firm. CCOG will act in the capacity of a search firm if you wish, and the City has free hours available. Councilman Helms wants to also look at information from the City of Lincolnton about their use of a search firm. Councilman Hope said he feels this is an on-hands Board, and the Council needs to go on with this process themselves. Councilman Helms agreed, but wants a facilitator. City Attorney Michael said he went through this process before with Council and a facilitator from CCOG and it worked out well. Councilman Black asked the procedure for the committee and if the committee members are willing to spend the time it will take. Councilwoman Harris and Councilman Hope said they are fine with it. The Mayor said he is prepared to participate as well. Councilman Hough said he will not be here Monday when CCOG comes and wants specifics on their assessment center, etc.

Councilman Black reminded Council that there is a joint meeting with the planning commission on the 16th.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned, upon motion duly made, seconded and carried.


Clerk


Mayor

cpm