

PRESCOTT CITY COUNCIL
WORKSHOP
TUESDAY, APRIL 5, 2011
PRESCOTT, ARIZONA

MINUTES OF THE WORKSHOP OF THE PRESCOTT CITY COUNCIL held on April 5, 2011 in the COUNCIL CHAMBERS located at CITY HALL, 201 SOUTH CORTEZ STREET, Prescott, Arizona.

◆ **CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Kuykendall called the meeting to order at 10:00 A.M.

◆ **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Mary Jacobsen led the Council and audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

◆ **ROLL CALL:**

Present:

Mayor Kuykendall
Councilman Blair
Councilman Hanna
Councilman Lamerson
Councilwoman Linn
Councilwoman Lopas
Councilwoman Suttles

Absent:

None

1. Discussion of process for selecting permanent City Manager.

Mayor Kuykendall noted that there would be no public discussion, but they would allow for public discussion in a week.

Ms. Jacobsen distributed a packet. She noted that the needs for Prescott would be less than \$20,000, depending on how the Council wanted Human Resources to handle the search.

Councilwoman Suttles asked if the money would come out of the General Fund. Ms. Jacobsen said yes. Councilwoman Suttles asked if the money that was spent for Mr. Norwood's pay came from the General Fund. Ms. Jacobsen said yes.

Ms. Jacobsen noted that she put a timeline together beginning a search immediately. She noted that it would take 3 ½ to 4 months to get someone there. She said that there were three main issues that Council was thinking about. She said that anyone coming in was going to want to know who they would be

working for. With the election coming up there would be at least one change. They would also want to know what the goals of the new Council would be and how that would fit in with the new budget.

She discussed the benefits of the search firm. She said that the biggest advantage was that they targeted better quality candidates and that they were in touch with potential candidates who were looking to change jobs and they targeted aggressively. She noted that the City's recruitment would be more passive. She said that the goal of search firms was to make the client happy. She said that it would speed up the hiring process and would broaden the scope of the search.

She said that a big part of what they did was interacting with candidates all the time and could respond to inquiries and questions immediately. She noted that the higher the professional level the more maintenance it was for recruitment. It would take a lot of time away from Prescott staff in talking to people that may never even be chosen for an interview with the City.

She also noted that it would insure complete confidence and objectivity since they had no stake in the personalities and agendas of the applicant. She said that they would try to fit the person with the criteria that were given to them. She also said that they may assist with preliminary negotiations, although it was for the Council to decide who would be on that panel.

Ms. Hadley said that as a potential applicant, when a City Manager was looking to relocate and find a new job, having a search firm was huge to them. She said that they could be assured that their confidentiality would be respected. She said that it would attract a better pool of candidates.

Councilwoman Suttles asked if it was normal for city managers to look for a better job in better climate while working with a current council. Ms. Hadley said yes. Councilwoman Suttles asked when the council would know that the manager was looking for a job. Ms. Jacobsen said that it would be at the interview process.

Mayor Kuykendall said that it would mean that once they had reached the final five, they would tell their council. Ms. Jacobsen said yes. Mayor Kuykendall asked if the search firm normally got a fee from the prospective employee. Ms. Jacobsen said not necessarily, but sometimes. If they were actively looking they may pay a flat fee. She said that each firm was different. She said that firms were getting away from that now and charging more by service.

Ms. Jacobsen said that when they got more guidance from the Council, they could go to the firm and tell them what they wanted and get a price.

Councilwoman Linn asked if they had to do a Request for Proposal (RFP) because it was potentially over \$20,000. Ms. Jacobsen said that they would if it went over 20,000 but she doubted it would. She said that it would add about a month of time.

Mayor Kuykendall said that they were looking in the range of \$20,000 and asked if anyone knew why Yavapai College spent \$60,000 and then kept adding to it.

Ms. Hadley said that it may have been more difficult to find a college president than a city manager. She also noted that they did not have their Human Resources department do any of it. She noted that if it looked like it was going to go over the \$20,000; the City would have to do a Request for Qualifications (RFQ).

Councilman Hanna noted that Ms. Hadley said that a city manager would like to know who he was working for. He said that he did not think that any city manager knew who he was working for because the regime changed every two years. He said that he did not believe that they would get better qualified candidates going through a search firm because of the economic times that they were in today. He said that Prescott was a great place to live and work and he did not think that the City should spend money to try to find someone. He said that he did not think Mr. Norwood was hired through an agency. Ms. Hadley said the City hired Lloyd Harrell who ran the search for Prescott. She said that he was acting as interim Manager and they paid him about \$120 per hour.

Councilman Hanna said that he cannot go for spending the extra money and that the life expectancy of a city manager was five to seven years.

Councilwoman Linn said that because of the economic times, the City was down to the bare minimum. She said that \$20,000 was nothing compared to some of the expenses approved this last month. She agreed that they should hire a professional search firm to be objective and that they would have top quality talent. She said that because of some of the things that they were looking at in the budget, the City would be laying off people. She said that the City needed to find a good leader.

Ms. Hadley said that if she were applying for a job and four people were up for reelection, she would not take the job until those people were seated. She noted that one council could hire her and a new council could get appointed and they could get rid of her. She said that she would at least want a primary (election) to be decided. Councilman Hanna said that if a council hired her and she did not live up to her potential, that same council could get rid of her the next week.

Ms. Hadley said that they would lose qualified candidates if they started the process in the middle of an election. She noted that the best candidate may be someone who was not looking but the search firm knew that their profile fit with

what the Council was looking for. She said that the time they did not use a search firm and tried to do it on our own it was not a good process. She said that she had seen the difference between using a firm and not and it was like night and day. Councilman Hanna said that was in times past and not in the present day. He suggested that Prescott call Round Rock and ask for their top five candidates. Ms. Hadley said that it would be illegal because they had signed confidentiality contracts.

Councilwoman Suttles said that she thought it would come to a vote as to whether they would use a firm or not. She said that they were a town of almost 40,000 and had always had a city manager who came in and did the job he needed to do. She said that if they wanted to quibble over \$20,000 to do a search she wanted to go back a few weeks to go over what the Council had spent. She said that it was something that needed to be done professionally and it was something that they were doing for the City.

Councilwoman Linn asked how Councilwoman Lopas liked working for the search firm for Yavapai College. Councilwoman Lopas said that she was not part of the process that involved the salary. She said that they got over 40 candidates and said that they got a higher quality of people in. She said that the recruiting firm could match the qualities with what the college was about. She noted that Dr. Horton was leaving big shoes to fill and she would have been nervous about doing that if they did not have a big pool of candidates.

She noted that when candidates saw that the City was using a search firm, it elevated the City in their eyes and gave the City a level of professionalism.

Ms. Jacobsen noted that when they hired Mr. Norwood, they started the recruitment in 2002. She said that they aborted the recruitment because there were not enough good candidates. Mr. Harrell came in and upgraded the recruitment; they received 85 applications. She said that it cost a lot of money but if they did not hire the right candidate they would also pay a lot.

Councilman Hanna noted that Prescott was a city of 40,000. He said that he talked to eight general managers, bankers and other business people in the City. He noted that five people said that Prescott would be crazy to use a professional firm. He agreed and said that his decision was made by talking to the people.

Councilman Lamerson said that it was not his role to hire a City Manager for a government. He said that it was his responsibility as a steward for the taxpayers to invest their money in the most intelligent manner they could. He said that taking the advice of the City Manager and Human Resources people made more sense than to take a shot gun approach. He said that they need to set a budget for what they would be willing to spend. He said that the Council needed to put together what they expected the team to provide for them. He noted that the

sooner it was done, the better. He said that it did not matter that an election was coming.

Councilman Blair said that it was heartwarming to hear it might cost less than \$20,000. He noted that the City paid money to the League of Cities and asked if they might have a list of candidates. Ms. Jacobsen said that the City would post on their employment website.

Ms. Hadley noted that the City paid about \$21,000 per year which was mostly for lobbying services. She said that they would assist a small town like Snowflake and they would help interview, but that was all they did any more due to budget cuts.

Councilwoman Linn said that she went to their website and the only city manager jobs she had seen were for the really small towns. Councilman Blair said the Mr. Norwood was hired off the B list. He noted that all the A list people were sidestepped. He noted that even if they used the headhunter and had the cream of the crop it would not mean they would get the right candidate. He asked if it would be a waste of time to do the search in house.

Mr. Kidd said that once the City got to the final interview process, the information would become public.

Ms. Jacobsen went through the timeline for hiring.

Councilman Blair asked if the applicants would have an understanding of Arizona water law or operating an airport and a golf course. Ms. Jacobsen said that she had never known of a City Manager without a Masters in Business Administration or Public Administration and at least five years of experience for a city the size of Prescott.

Councilman Blair asked if you could ask if they agreed or disagreed with unions. Ms. Jacobsen said that they could couch that in an interview question by asking if they had labor or conflict resolution experience. She said that they had to ask everyone the same questions.

Councilwoman Linn asked if the headhunters could do a personality assessment. Ms. Jacobsen noted that the City could do that. She noted that it would be more efficient if she were the liaison with the search firm. Ms. Hadley said that they may want to put a Council subcommittee together to work with Human Resources, but it would not be all seven Council.

Councilman Blair asked if a headhunter was used when hiring Mr. McConnell. Mr. McConnell said no. Councilwoman Suttles noted that he was not applying for a city manager position.

Ms. Jacobsen mention two search firms that they had been in contact with since Mr. Norwood gave his resignation. She suggested that the Council let them do the up front work.

She suggested that they hire a search firm up to the screening process and then the City would take it from there. She said that they would be recruiting the best people and weeding out those that would not fit, and the City would do the leg work from there.

Councilman Blair said that it seemed that when they go to a point of five finalists, they would involve the Council and community leaders to give back a cut sheet about each candidate. Ms. Hadley said that they had hosted a community reception and invited a variety of people for the last hiring of a city manager. She said that each candidate also met with the staff.

Councilman Blair said that Ms. Jacobsen had a good hiring process and it got down to how much they wanted to pay a professional search firm.

Councilwoman Linn said that they wanted to make sure they met that statutory deadline of one year. She said that if they waited until after the primary, she was not sure how close they would be. Ms. Hadley said that she would not wait until after the primary. She noted that they would have another meeting for public input and Ms. Jacobsen could contact some small firm to get ballpark prices.

Councilman Blair said that he supported going forward. Councilman Lamerson said that it was a prudent approach to move on it sooner than later. He said that the longer they put it off, the harder it would be. Councilwoman Suttles said that she would like to get started on it soon as well. Mayor Kuykendall said that they had to make enough time for the public and that their input was critical.

Councilwoman Suttles said that she would not be there the next week but she appreciated that they were making it a community decision. She said that it was extremely important to get buy in from citizens.

Ms. Hadley said that Ms. Jacobsen did a great job outlying the information and suggested that the Council write up some of their thoughts. She said that she would gather their information the next week. She noted that Ms. Jacobsen would start to update the brochure and job description.

2. Adjournment

There being no further business to be discussed, the Prescott City Council Workshop of April 5, 2011, adjourned at 11:05 a.m.

MARLIN D. KUYKENDALL, Mayor

ATTEST:

ELIZABETH A. BURKE, City Clerk