

**NORTH CAROLINA
GRANVILLE COUNTY
CITY OF OXFORD**

**OXFORD CITY HALL, BOARD MEETING ROOM
TUESDAY, JANUARY 22, 2008 AT 7:00 P.M.**

The Board of Commissioners of the City of Oxford met in Special Session at City Hall, 300 Williamsboro Street at the above-mentioned time and place.

Present: Mayor Alvin Woodlief, Jr.
Mayor Pro Tem Howard G. Herring, Sr.
Commissioner Robert Shope
Commissioner Stephen C. Powell
Commissioner Paul F. Kiesow
Commissioner Robert B. Williford, Sr.
Commissioner Walter Cantley

Absent: Commissioner A. Chance Wilkinson

Present also was Human Resources Director Don Jenkins.

All members of the board and local news media were notified of the time, place and purpose of the meeting.

Mayor Al Woodlief, Jr. called the meeting to order.

SELECTING A CITY MANAGER

Mayor Woodlief indicated the Board of Commissioners would like the new manager to live in Oxford and familiar with NC General Statutes.

Hartwell Wright, Human Resources/Employee Relations Consulting Manager of the North Carolina League of Municipalities was present to discuss the process of hiring a city manager. In North Carolina there are approximately 300 cities, towns, villages that have a professional manager/administrator, plus 100 counties who have a manager. There are at least 20 vacancies in NC. Mr. Wright presented an outline on recruiting, accessing and selecting a city manager, which included the following:

A. Roles of the NCLM and City of Oxford

- League – identify positive process to the elected body
- City
 - a) Who will conduct the process? (Select staff/resource person; clerical support will be necessary)

Mayor Woodlief noted Human Resources Director Don Jenkins would receive the applications. He added the City has an Employee Committee made up of Commissioners and other personnel in the City. In the past a police chief and manager from another town and Leon Turner and 1 Board member participated in the actual interviewing. Mayor Woodlief noted the Commissioners and Department Heads need to be involved with the final five applicants.

Mr. Wright advised when an applicant's name is given to anyone other than the appointed committee, the elected personnel and Human Resources Department need to tell the applicant and have a release form signed because it could violate rules of confidentiality and some candidates may withdraw from the process if their name is revealed. Mr. Wright noted Boards in smaller towns perform the entire process of selecting a city manager. He suggests it could be problematic if department heads try to screen out the applicants. Mayor Woodlief noted the Board would select the final five and then involve the departments. Mr. Wright suggested asking the department heads to give the Board feedback before a criteria list is created.

Commissioner Williford suggested allowing the full Board to participate when five candidates have been selected.

- b) Confidentiality? (When does it become public?)
- c) Employee search firm? (determine how much you will do and what you want the search firm to do)

B. Importance of process

- The Manager “manages your City,” this equates the importance.
- Possibly the most important decision in your term in office.

C. Agree on what you want in a manager

- Consider where the city is administratively
 - Look at needs of City
 - Look at strengths and weaknesses
 - Past successes and failures
- Manager should mirror the executive and administrative needs of the City
- Qualifications: education, experience, special qualifications (competence, skill, abilities). Mr. Wright stressed the Board to caution on how the word “must” is used because it is an eliminating word.

Mayor Woodlief noted the Board requests that the manager must live in Oxford.

D. Agree on time frame/procedure of selection

Mr. Wright noted the norm for hiring a city manager is at least 6 months.

- Salary range – recommended \$90,000 - \$100,000
- Publication of vacancy

Mr. Jenkins noted it is an advantage to hire a manager who is from North Carolina because he/she is familiar with the NCLM, School of Government and has a relationship with other managers. Commissioner Herring suggested highlighting this as a preference in the job description for publication. Mr. Wright noted someone with good managerial skills would be able to adapt easily to the NC General Statutes and added to throw the net out to get applicants, then screen the applicants.

- Screening process:
 - a) Use full elected body with staff person
 - b) Use committee of elected body with staff person
 - c) Let search firm screen down to a set number
- Procedure
 - a) Accept resumes
 - b) Acknowledge receipt of each application
 - c) Eliminate applicants who do not meet minimum qualifications or complete an application. Human Resources Director can assist here.
 - d) Another device to assist with the screening is to ask each applicant to answer one to three supplementary questions using no more than one page to answer each question.
 - e) Screen down 5-7 top candidates; each committee member does this individually; meet and compare notes. Alternative: Human Resources Director can screen down the candidates and each committee member review all and concur or not.

The Human Resources Director should perform reference checks.

- Interview Process
 - a) Notify each applicant (letter from Mayor) of the City's interest and notice to interview giving all particulars, such as who will be attending the interview; Human Resources Director to assist here.
 - b) Send with letter, copy of City Charter, budget and organizational chart – craft interview questions from this.

c) Send with letter, personal agenda of interview day activities.

d) Pay travel expenses for the applicant? Spouse? Pay moving expenses?

Have someone show spouse around town.

- Interview Session with Board
- Select/appoint top candidate – Mr. Wright suggested after each interview complete an evaluation on each candidate before exiting the room. The Human Resources Director can create this instrument to evaluate each candidate. A thorough background investigation (criminal, financial, Myers Briggs, etc.) should be done on this person. Make the job offer by phone, preferably from a written document outlining all conditions that are part of the job offer. Confirm the job offer in writing, including a request for written acceptance to which the City Attorney should draft this letter. Mayor Woodlief suggested recording each interview. Mr. Wright agreed this would be a good idea.
- Write remaining candidates informing them of the selection.

Commissioner Kiesow asked when the dates for the publications would be available to which Mr. Wright recommended calling the NCLM for the dates of each publication. Commissioner Kiesow asked about advertising on the Internet to which Mr. Wright noted the publications advertise and advised the City could advertise on their website.

Commissioner Cantley reemphasized the importance of filling out the evaluation form after each candidate. Mr. Wright noted the evaluations would be close together, but there will be things that need clarification.

Commissioner Herring asked Mr. Wright how many applicants should be interviewed each day or how many days? Commissioner Herring suggested doing one in the morning and one in the afternoon or one per day. Mr. Wright suggested one in the morning and one in the afternoon, but this is left up to the Board. Mayor Woodlief commented it is not fair to the applicant to put schedule them between 6 PM – 9 PM; he believes the applicant should come between 9 AM –10 AM in order to meet department heads. The interviews will be recorded. Mr. Wright suggested maybe Saturdays.

Commissioner Powell asked the disadvantages of video conferencing to which Mr. Wright encourages them due to out of state candidates or if too expensive to bring them in.

A Personnel Committee meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, January 29, 2008 at 6:15 PM to be held in the Training Room of City Hall.

It was suggested to host the interviews at the Cobb Center located at the Masonic Home for Children, but showcase City Hall.

Mayor Woodlief asked how to hold the interviews in private. Mr. Jenkins noted interview processes are completely private and continued the name of the candidate is protected information and stressed it is the responsibility to protect the candidates' confidentiality. Mr. Wright noted the only legal requirement is to take a vote in public to hire the manager and stressed this is the only public information.

Mr. Wright explained today's business climate suggests the candidate will ask for a contract with a main provision, other than benefits and salary, wanting a severance agreement if a political reason chooses not to want him/her anymore. This gives them protection. The normal severance is 6 months. The contracts are open ended.

The job description will advertise *open until filled*.

Commissioner Herring asked for clarification regarding the screening process to which Human Resources Jenkins noted he would do this based on the criteria the Board gives him, and the criteria the department heads submit that the Board will agree to. Commissioner Herring asked when the Personnel Committee would come into play and believes the Committee should work on this issue until 5-7 candidates have been selected. The members of the Personnel Committee are as follows: Chairman Bob Shope, Chance Wilkinson, Tom Burnette and Don Jenkins. Commissioner Herring requested an amendment to the Committee by allowing Commissioner Powell or himself to be a part of the committee to fill the seat vacated by Tommy Marrow. All present agreed with the recommendation for Steve Powell to serve as part of the Personnel Committee.

Mr. Wright noted certain information could be given to the public and the media. For example, the Board has established a process and is collecting applications. Mayor Woodlief suggested educating the Personnel Committee on what a manager does. Commissioner Herring requested a written job description for the city manager and suggested the Personnel Committee take on this task.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Mayor Woodlief adjourned the meeting.