

**MINUTES OF THE CITY COMMISSION MEETING
MONDAY, JUNE 24, 2013**

The City of Leesburg Commission held a special meeting Monday, June 24, 2013, in the Commission Chambers at City Hall. Mayor Knowles called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. with the following members present:

Commissioner Jay Hurley
Commissioner John Christian
Commissioner Bill Polk
Mayor David Knowles

Commissioner Dennison was absent. Also present were Interim City Manager (ICM) Ray Sharp, City Attorney (CA) Fred Morrison, Deputy City Clerk (DCC) Andi Purvis, the news media, and others.

Commissioner Christian gave the invocation followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

PRESENTATIONS: COLIN BAENZIGER
CITY MANAGER SEARCH UPDATE: RECOMMENDED CANDIDATES:

ANGELO, HENRY J.
COOPER, DONALD B
GABOR, JOHN M
HENDERSON, NATASHA L
IRBY, GLEN A
MCDOUGAL, BRIAN E
OLSON, ROSS C
SMITH, DOUGLAS E

Mayor Knowles stated the commission is here tonight select the finalist for the new City Manager.

ICM Sharp stated with permission Commissioner Dennison asked her choices and comments for the interview process be read into the record:

Brian McDougal would like to bring in for an interview;
Ross Olson has potential and has done community development work;
Douglas Smith has experience with a lot of what is located in Leesburg, has experience with larger city experience, and may be worthwhile for an interview.

ICM Sharp stated Colin Baenzinger who has been guiding the City through this process is present.

Colin Baenzinger, of Colin Baenzinger & Associates, stated he is the search consultant working diligently to try and find the right person for Leesburg and did present materials electronically on eight candidates. He stated what they typically find are some candidates everyone may like and some no one likes so rather than spend a lot of time talking about the candidates, he suggested to start with a straw poll and see where the Commission stands in terms of the candidates presented.

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Commissioner Hurley arrived at 5:05 p.m.

Mayor Knowles stated a straw poll sounds like a very good idea and asked Mr. Baenzinger if he will tabulate the results.

Mr. Baenzinger stated he will collect the ballots; give the scoring sheet to the Mayor and read the results for the tally so everyone will know who the leading candidates are.

CA Morrison stated the ballots and scoring sheet will need to be given to the City Clerk as public records.

Commissioner Hurley apologized for running late and asked Mr. Baenzinger if it is his opinion because of the package Leesburg is offering this is the best candidate selection.

Mr. Baenzinger stated there may be some disagreement, but he thinks these are some very good applicants and thinks one of the things sometimes cities look for is someone coming from a larger city or a city similar in size and the odds are that is not going to happen. Usually people want to step up to the next level and of course, there are always exceptions. In answer to your question, if Leesburg offered more money yes, it may get a better candidate pool. He said he is very happy with this pool.

Commissioner Hurley asked Mr. Baenzinger what excites him about these candidates submitted. There were some pretty deep one on one sessions between the consultant group and the Commissioners on what each was specifically looking for and he thought there was continuity. He stated there was some concern in the last commission meeting and when he reviewed the candidates submitted, out of the one hundred and one he looks at time served and the experience they have in smaller agencies, with budgets and he is not sure what he is missing. Commissioner Hurley asked Mr. Baenzinger if he could shed some light on what it is in these candidates that made them one of the outstanding stars.

Commissioner Christian also asked Mr. Baenzinger if he could expound on his top four choices.

Mr. Baenzinger stated when looking for City Manager candidates what he typically looks for is; have they done the job and been successful, do they have good longevity, understand politics but not participate, and have they been able to accomplish things for whatever their Commission may desire. Over a five or ten year period, there is likely to have been some change in the council so when you see someone who has done a job for eight or ten years then you have some comfort level they can deal with different personalities, deal with council change and can be successful in managing the business of the city. He stated someone in place for two or three years then moves again, again and again, and there are always exceptions, but he feels they are usually climbing the ladder which may be good for them, but not good for City because they probably will not stay in Leesburg very long before climbing to the next level.

Mr. Baenzinger stated if he were to look at this candidate list, his top people would probably be:

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- 1) Don Cooper – basically took Port St Lucy from a population of 63,000 to over 150,000; has been there for nineteen years and has obviously dealt with a variety of elected officials; has dealt with utility issues; he is one of those people who understands management and how it is done.
- 2) John Gabor – has been the City Manager in Marine City, Michigan for six years; population only 5,000 people; he has experience with Police, Parks and Recreation, Fire assessment, Public Works, Water and Sewer; has been in the private sector; he has taken private sector practices and applied them to government and has obviously been fairly successful in doing it and saving the city a lot of money.
- 3) Brian McDougal – has been in Shawnee, Oklahoma for only about four years now, but was in Georgia for five years; has had to deal with nature disasters, i.e. tornados; population of about 32,000 and 285 city employees; experience with Water and Sewer; a capable guy.
- 4) Ross Olson – has been in Sauk Rapids, Minnesota for thirteen years; population of 13,000; has done some very nice economic development projects; had situation when City had to redo a bridge and they used the bridge to basically redefine their downtown and upgrade development opportunities; has created a thriving downtown; has a lot smaller community in terms of staff, but is someone who has been through thirteen years of multiple council people, he is still there and still successful; he is looking for a city like Leesburg where he can help create, revive, and make a vibrant City to be proud of; this is someone who is ready to step up and go to the next level; very capable.
- 5) Doug Smith – known for probably fifteen years; has been an assistant in Delray Beach for eight years; frankly whenever an assistant City Manager moves to the next level there is always a risk and I think he is ready and understands the next level; hard to go from one boss to five but believe he is very capable.

Commissioner Hurley asked what kinds of options are available if the Commission does not feel these individuals met the criteria we are looking for in candidates.

Mr. Baenzinger stated the interviews are scheduled for July 25 and July 26 so he could go back to the candidate pool, but before leaving today would like to talk again about what the Commission is seeking. He stated he would like to know what is missing from this group so could go back and better look at the other candidates as there are some other very good people and we may be able to bring back two or three more names in two weeks for the Commission's review. Mr. Baenzinger stated the second alternative would be for them to go back out and do another full search. He stated they will do what they have to do to make their clients happy.

Commissioner Hurley stated he thinks the applicants are outstanding individuals based on everything you see on paper, but when looking at Leesburg's budget and an applicant who has only had a three million dollar budget or Leesburg's umpteen employees to their thirteen he stated he does not see how Leesburg is the next step. His concern is there should be some steps in between these ranges as Leesburg has some really pressing issues with economic development and it is real critical as to which road the City chooses. ICM

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Sharp has been leading very strongly and Leesburg has had some good things happen this year and the Commission stepped up with the pension and salary package because it really wants a candidate who sees potential for Leesburg and themselves together.

Mr. Baenzinger read the ballots into the record:

Commissioner Hurley voted for Cooper and Smith;
Commissioner Polk voted for McDougal and Smith;
Mayor Knowles voted for Gabor, McDougal, Olson and Smith;
Commissioner Christian voted for Angelo, Henderson and Smith;

Mayor Knowles recapped the votes saying Douglas Smith received four plus votes; Brian McDougal received two plus votes; Ross Olson received two votes; Natasha Henderson received one vote; John Gabor received one vote; Henry Angelo received one vote; and Donald Cooper received one vote. He stated basically there are two candidates right now the Commission is motivated to look at and asked Mr. Baenzinger to bring the Commission at least three more candidates within the next two weeks.

Mr. Baenzinger said they will do their very best, but said he would like to better understand what Commissioner Hurley said about wanting someone who has already done a lot and will fit in with what is already happening in Leesburg.

Commissioner Hurley stated if you said these are the best nine and then going to pick number ten and eleven. If I am already disappointed with these nine why would I not be disappointed with number ten and eleven? Commissioner Hurley asked what is keeping Leesburg from drawing the best.

Mr. Baenzinger stated he would imagine it varies from candidate to candidate and he does not have the answer in terms of what is preventing people from wanting to come to Leesburg.

Commissioner Hurley asked what kind of search was performed.

Mr. Baenzinger stated they did networking, advertising, and used an email list of over seven thousand people. He stated there are only about four thousand cities in the country with a population of more than twenty-five hundred people and a city manager form of government.

Commissioner Polk reminded Mr. Baenzinger the Commission stated he did not have to draw from another city; he could also draw from the private sector if the person was qualified to do the job.

Mr. Baenzinger stated that was something he really did not consider as carefully as he should have, but will look at now. He stated there is at least one other candidate he can think of, Thaddeus Collins, who might be of some interest. Mr. Collins has not been a city manager but has done some other things that are interesting; he has been the Secretary for the Department of Community Affairs, has private sector experience, ran his own architectural firm for about twenty years and then became an assistant city manager in Pensacola.

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Commissioner Christian stated when he looked through the list, he did not see a lot of community networking or electric experience but did see some downtown and sewer work. He stated for him he wants someone to come in who is from a population where they have dealt with a diverse population of individuals. Commissioner Christian stated downtown is great but Leesburg is made up of more than just downtown it also has three Community Redevelopment Agencies so would like to make sure someone coming in can help plan in those areas. He stated the talk is to look to the future, but Leesburg needs someone to come in and hit the ground running with a fresh set of eyes.

Commissioner Polk stated if taking all the Commissioners original wants and they were all pretty much on the same page it was to find someone who was heavy in utilities and none of these candidates are. He stated the Commission does not want anything different than what it originally wanted.

Commissioner Hurley asked what the possibility was of just going out and stealing someone who is really doing well from another city.

Mr. Baenzinger stated it is hard to steal someone from the same size city with the same services because why do they want to move unless the next city is going to offer a lot more money. He stated if they can find someone in the fifteen to twenty thousand population range without electric it might be a possibility. Mr. Baenzinger stated he will go back into the pool of applicants and it may be difficult to get all background material together in two weeks but he will do his best.

Commissioner Polk asked if the City is responsible for the expenses of the candidates coming in for interviews.

Mr. Baenzinger stated yes.

Commissioner Polk stated if the candidates are not top of the line, he does not want the City to pay the expense of \$2,000 or whatever for them to come all the way from Michigan or wherever for an interview but if they live in Florida they can drive.

Mayor Knowles stated there is an agreement on two candidates right now; McDougal and Smith.

Commissioner Polk stated yes.

Commissioner Christian stated he is not excited about these two either so would like to see more names.

Mayor Knowles asked Mr. Baenzinger to bring several more names.

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ADJOURN:

Commissioner Polk moved to adjourn the meeting and Commissioner Christian seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 5:32 p.m.

Mayor

ATTEST:

Betty M. Richardson
City Clerk

J. Andi Purvis
Recorder