

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

The special meeting of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly was held on September 14, 2010, at the Borough Assembly Chambers, 350 E. Dahlia Avenue, Palmer, Alaska. The meeting was called to order at 3:03 p.m. by Deputy Mayor Woods for the purpose of discussing filling the vacancy of the Borough Manager.

**II. ROLL CALL**

Assembly members present and establishing a quorum were:

- Ms. Lynne Woods, Assembly District No. 1 (*Deputy Mayor*)
- Mr. Pete Houston, Assembly District No. 2
- Mr. Ronald Arvin, Assembly District No. 3
- Mr. Mark Ewing, Assembly District No. 4 (*arrived at 3:55 p.m.*)
- Ms. Cindy L. Bettine, Assembly District No. 5
- Mr. Jim Colver, Assembly District No. 6 (*arrived at 3:10 p.m.*)
- Mr. Vern Halter, Assembly District No. 7

Staff in attendance were:

- Ms. Lonnie R. McKechnie, Borough Clerk
- Ms. Elizabeth Gray, Acting Borough Manager
- Mr. John Aschenbrenner, Deputy Borough Attorney
- Ms. Sonya Conant, Human Resources Manager

**III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Deputy Mayor Woods inquired if there were any changes to the agenda.

GENERAL CONSENT: The agenda was approved as presented without objection.

**IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mr. John Aschenbrenner, Deputy Borough Attorney.

**V. ITEMS OF BUSINESS**

- A. EXECUTIVE SESSION: (*for subjects that tend to prejudice the reputation and character of any person provided the person may request a public discussion.*)
  - 1. FILLING THE VACANCY OF THE BOROUGH MANAGER: REVIEW OF APPLICATIONS, DISCUSSION OF QUALIFICATIONS AND INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Ms. Conant:

- spoke to re-writing the job description of the Manager for the advertisement in July at the request of the Assembly;
- stated that things such as population size, fiscal responsibility, and economical development was added to the advertisement;
- noted that the new advertisement was placed nationally, as well as within Alaska;
- related that through the recruitment efforts there is now an active candidate pool of 70 applicants;
- noted that she has sent a supplemental questionnaire to the active candidate pool, which was very helpful in determining what qualifications an applicant would bring to the table; and
- spoke to researching research firms that charge a reasonable cost to vet the candidates, should the Assembly want to go that route.

Assemblymember Bettine queried the reasonable cost.

Ms. Conant:

- stated that it would cost \$25,000 or less;
- further added that in private industry employers would be paying a third of the first year salary in addition to expenses; and
- related that there are four firms that are at less than \$25,000, which would include expenses.

Discussion ensued regarding:

- the possibility of using a research and recruitment firm to screen potential applicants; and
- the role of a research and recruitment firm.

Assemblymember Bettine queried if there was a list of applicants that could be removed from the applicant packet, as they do not meet the necessary criteria.

Ms. Conant:

- spoke to scoring the applicants with the supplemental criteria; and
- stated that it is one tool that the Assembly could use to determine which applicants they would like to remove.

Mr. Aschenbrenner:

- spoke to concerns with the Open Meetings Act; and
- stated that if applicants are going to be discussed in executive session that they need to be notified beforehand.

Assemblymember Houston queried if that would only apply if the Assembly was going to discuss interview questions or if they were going to be discussed in executive session.

Mr. Aschenbrenner requested a moment to do further research on the issues.

Assemblymember Bettine:

- stated that she did not recall having to notify applicant when hiring the Borough Clerk;
- opined that the Assembly needs to be able to move forward and should place phone calls immediately if necessary; and
- noted that the Assembly needs the ability to remove applicants who are not qualified.

Ms. McKechnie:

- stated that letters were sent notifying the applicants regarding the executive session for a previous meeting; and
- related that this did not happen this time and that Mr. Aschenbrenner is correct, applicants have to be notified.

Mr. Aschenbrenner:

- spoke to a case where notice was sent to applicants that they would be discussed in executive session;
- opined that it is unlikely that candidates would object to being discussed in executive session;
- stated that it is incumbent upon the Borough to mail a notice to them;
- further added that providing notice to the applicants allows them the right to object; and
- reiterated that the notice is required under the Open Meetings Act.

Assemblymember Colver:

- noted that the School Board conducted a different practice; and
- stated that the Assembly does not necessarily need to go into executive session to discuss the candidates.

Assemblymember Halter queried if it would cost a full \$25,000 for the research firm to rank the applicants by super candidates, good candidates, poor candidates, and unqualified candidates.

Ms. Conant:

- stated that it would depend on the spectrum of service; and
- explained the scoring matrix of the candidates.

Discussion ensued regarding:

- scoring criteria; and
- requirements of the job description.

**MOTION:** Assemblymember Houston moved to delete the candidates who scored a six or less on the matrix.

**MOTION:** Assemblymember Colver moved a primary amendment to strike "6 or above" and insert "4.5 or above."

Assemblymember Arvin:

- spoke to reviewing the candidates within the applicant packet;
- related that his list closely mirrors the matrix; and
- opined that maybe the number needs to be higher so that the Assembly is not at this task for a long period of time.

Assemblymember Bettine stated that she is in favor of keeping applicants who score 6.5 or above.

VOTE: The primary amendment failed with Assemblymember Colver in favor.

MOTION: Assemblymember Bettine moved a primary amendment strike “6 or above” and insert “6.5 or above” and to include “any new applicants that are received that score 6.5 or above.”

VOTE: The primary amendment passed without objection.

VOTE: The main motion passed as amended without objection.

Ms. McKechnie queried if the Assembly would like a copy of the most recent application received or wait for the Human Resources Manager to score the application.

Assemblymember Bettine stated that she would like to see the application.

Assemblymember Houston stated that he felt that question was already answered, as it was advised that the applicant did not meet the qualifications.

Discussion ensued regarding:

- what applications to review and when;
- applicants that score 6.5 or higher;
- the need for the applicants to have the right personality for the position; and
- relevant information.

Assemblymember Houston opined that the next step in the process would be to make a determination as to what types of degrees the Assembly feels are pertinent to the Borough Manager position.

Assemblymember Arvin opined that would not change an applicant’s scoring.

Assemblymember Halter queried the education minimum for applicants.

Ms. Conant:

- responded that applicants are required to hold a Bachelor’s degree in Business or Public Administration; and
- further added that there is the ability to substitute education with work experience up to a maximum of 36 months.

Assemblymember Bettine requested that Human Resources provide a list of unqualified applicants.

Deputy Mayor Woods stated that it is necessary to reduce the number of applicants in order to move forward.

Assemblymember Bettine queried if applications will be ranked as they come in.

Deputy Mayor Woods affirmed the query.

Assemblymember Bettine stated that she would like to schedule a meeting for September 21, 2010, at 3 p.m.

Ms. Conant advised that she is unavailable for that day.

Assemblymember Halter queried the applicant close date.

Assemblymember Bettine advised that it is open until filled.

Discussion ensued regarding setting a meeting for executive session and discussion regarding candidates.

Assemblymember Bettine proposed an alternative date of September 27, 2010, at 4 p.m. with an executive session to discuss candidates.

There was no objection noted.

## **VI. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION**

The following person spoke in support of Mr. John Thomas, applicant for Borough Manager: Mr. Chris Lingren.

## **VII. MAYOR, ASSEMBLY, AND STAFF COMMENTS**

*(There were no comments provided.)*

**VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

The special meeting adjourned at 4:10 p.m.



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RONALD ARVIN, Deputy Borough Mayor

ATTEST:



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LONNIE R. McKECHNIE, CMC, Borough Clerk

Minutes approved: 10/19/10