City Council Special Meeting
Wednesday, March 28, 2012, 3:30 p.m.
City Hall Conference Room
Department Director Recruiting Process

CALL TO ORDER Mayor Dudley called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Mayor Scott Dudley
Five Members of the Council,
- Rick Almberg
- Tara Hizon
- Beth Munns
- Danny Paggao
- Bob Severns

Steve Powers, Interim City Administrator
Cathy Rosen, Public Works Director
Jessica Neill Hoyson, Human Resources Director

Council Member Jim Campbell and Council Member Joel Servatius were absent and formally excused from this meeting.

Interim City Administrator Powers summarized this meeting's intent to:

- Review materials which were already provided.
- Address Council's comments and questions which were provided to staff by email.
- Discuss other Council comments and questions.

Human Resources Director Jessica Neill Hoyson reviewed the recruiting process' seven steps:

1. Preparation for posting
2. Posting and processing
3. Panel interviews
4. Social event
5. Mayor interviews
6. Selection and negotiation
7. Council confirmation

COUNCIL DISCUSSION

Councilmember Hizon: Will we identify our key sets of employment criteria for each job?
Ms. Neill Hoyson: Each position has a job description which outlines that position. Input will come from key stakeholders - Council, Department Director(s), and how we foresee the needs of the position into the future and identify them in recruitment materials.

Councilmember Munns: Within the process outline, the section on panel interviews - we need more than three people on each panel. Mr. Severns had mentioned (in the March 6, 2012 Council meeting) that there had been two panels of seven in a past Police Chief recruitment. Are seven panel members too many?
Ms. Neill Hoyson: The process outline is not identifying a panel number which may be dependent on the position.
Mr. Powers: Ms. Neill Hoyson makes a good point; not all recruiting processes are the same. Some may be more high-profile or technical; there can be a lot of flexibility tailored to the position and situation.
Councilmembers Severns, Paggao, and Munns recalled a past panel, or two panels, of seven members.
Mr. Powers: With the past City Attorney's position, one panel was internal, the other panel was external, so each could bring different perspectives. I am hearing the Council's desire is to go to a larger panel size.
Councilmember Paggao: Mr. Paggao, in reference to Exhibit A from the last Council agenda packet, asked about the review process - there are two reviews, one by Human Resources and the other by the hiring manager.
Ms. Neill Hoyson: The recruiting process you are looking at could be used for positions ranging from an executive assistant to an engineer. For a position in the Finance Department, the hiring manager would be Finance Director Doug Merriman. In the department head process, the Mayor (as hiring manager) conducts the final interviews and selection at the end of the process. Human Resources reviews application packets for minimum qualifications and specific qualifications, then gives appropriate applications to the panel, and the final candidates (for department heads) are forwarded to the Mayor.
Councilmember Munns: If we advertise for a month and receive twelve applications and only two fit the bill, would we interview those two or readvertise the position?
Ms. Neill Hoyson: This would vary with the position. I feel that two may not be an adequate number but, it would also depend on the qualifications of the two applicants.
Mr. Powers asked Ms. Neill Hoyson to explain the first review.
Ms. Neill Hoyson: A first review can happen if the position hasn't closed yet; a first review of what has been received. It allows for latitude regarding receipt of more applications if the response is minimal.
Mr. Powers: I have seen no direct relationship between the length of time a position is open and the number of applications received. A longer period may not necessarily net more applicants.
Councilmember Munns: I still think four weeks is a lot better than two weeks and the perception would be better with four weeks. A panel number - three to six or five to seven.
Councilmember Hizon: Explain the social event.
Ms. Neill Hoyson: It provides an informal atmosphere (for a candidate) to speak with Council, key community stakeholders, and City employees. It can provide input you may not get from a more formal environment.
Councilmember Paggao: The City has done this in the past with a prior Police Chief.
Mr. Powers: A social event was also used for the City Administrator position during Mayor Cohen's administration.

Ms. Neill Hoyson: Our job descriptions are a standard format (job summary, essential job functions, associated job functions, performance requirements, working environment and physical demands, and experience and training requirements) which are also legally defensible and driven by Federal law. Certain language in the job description addresses ADA requirements and Labor and Industry standards. The sentence at the bottom of the job description: A combination of training and experience that provides the requisite skills will be considered. Negotiable experience can offset requirements - what is the position going to do and what are the industry standards. The use of the word "required" will make a experience factor inflexible.
Mr. Powers also talked about the kind of job description needed for a planner position as another (and different) example.
Councilmember Almberg: My emailed comments related to all departments: Add a minimum credit score rating of 680 by an industry-recognized credit rating bureau. Is that permittable by law?
Ms. Neill Hoyson: With a credit rating and criminal record check, when attached as a requirement, you have to show how they are relational to the work. Personal credit may not indicate ability in job performance. We do pull a credit report on every employee of the Finance Department, but we do not set a score limit. If there is problem in the report, we would review it with the applicant. I cannot ask for a special credit rating.
Councilmember Almberg: Can you add, "must pass credit check"?
Ms. Neill Hoyson: You could create a nexus in relation to the job. I would not be supportive of a credit check for every position since it may be difficult to create a nexus relating to job performance. We do have a release in every employment application packet for criminal background and credit checks.
Mr. Almberg: Would the review panel have access to that information?
Ms. Neill Hoyson: With a criminal background check, the first review would be with the Legal Department.
Mr. Almberg: Then, this can be vetted between the Human Resources and Legal Departments. And finally, I suggest a minimum of a Bachelor's Degree. We need the best people who have a good combination of education and experience.
Ms. Neill Hoyson: In my opinion - this educational requirement for senior management positions - a degree would be appropriate. We could add the word "required" right after the educational language, but this is also why job descriptions end with the sentence: A combination of training and experience that provides the requisite skills will be considered.
Councilmember Hizon: Even though it says "experience and training requirements" in the job description.
Mr. Powers: We are in a challenging recruiting environment. You want the flexibility to bring in candidates with the use of this combination (training and experience) which gives us latitude.
Councilmember Severns: In the Police Chief job description, experience and requirements, the third sentence reads: Master's Degree in business, public administration, human resources related field is highly desirable. I think it may need to say, "required."
Mr. Powers and Ms. Neill Hoyson addressed the topic of command experience, noting it would be tough to measure, but a résumé will show job and command experience. Ms.

Neill Hoyson also noted that an application packet will ask for supplemental information, too.
Councilmember Severns: I do believe we should add "required" for Bachelor's Degree for all department heads (new hires).

MOTION: Councilmember Almberg moved to require a Bachelor's Degree for department head positions. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Munns and carried unanimously.

Councilmember Severns: Are we going to be able to post for five weeks?
Councilmember Munns: In experience and training requirements, the third sentence: Experience must demonstrate outstanding command leadership and customer-focused management with regulatory, budget and proactive, forward-thinking and strategic planning skills. Could we ask how many employees they have supervised or led. Create a little PR work on behalf of the City; demonstrate that you are the cream of the crop.
Councilmember Hizon: Is there a provision asking that department heads not have a criminal record?
Ms. Neill Hoyson: As discussed with Mr. Almberg, we conduct background checks and there is Washington Administrative Code (WAC) and L and I language that calls out how you can use criminal information. Any information would be reviewed with the applicant first before taking action to remove the applicant from the recruiting process. The application packet release forms are standard and use standard language.
Councilmember Munns: As said earlier, the Human Resources and Legal Departments would handle this review.
Ms. Neill Hoyson mentioned again that credit checks are currently run on Finance Department employees. With reference to credit checks, Mr. Powers noted that a change could be by motion or remain informal. Ms. Neill Hoyson also added that, in today's world, an applicant could have a lesser credit check through no fault of their own and emphasized that, if a credit report was unfavorable, Human Resources would meet with the applicant to discuss the situation.
Councilmember Paggao: In military service, a credit check is critical.
Councilmember Munns: I would feel comfortable with a note that it was done, not the result of the credit check.
Mr. Powers: This could be added as a normal step in the department head recruitment process.
Councilmember Severns: The timeline - I want to verify that the plan is to post for five weeks rather than four.
Ms. Neill Hoyson will be on vacation in that time period so the Police Chief position will be posted for five weeks to allow for her absence. The timeline is prepared with "real world" dates to allow for potential shifts. Mr. Powers asked Ms. Neill Hoyson to review the timeline. If it is difficult to find a candidate, then the salary's competitiveness would be reviewed. Any salary adjustment would have to come before Council before advertising the position at a higher rate. With a larger panel or two panels, and panelists' busy schedules, it can be difficult arranging a single day when everyone would be available. This could cause a variable in the timeline. Other areas of the

timeline would remain fairly set. Mr. Powers added that this is a "best case" scenario demonstrating how the process is completed. Then, the agenda bill process must be considered since Council has a single Council meeting in each summer month - July and August.
Councilmember Almberg: With June 30th as the exit date for Chief Wallace, will the Mayor make a staff appointment to fill the position on an interim basis?
Councilmember Munns: Could Chief Wallace's retirement slide another month to allow time to have a new Chief in place?
Mr. Powers: It takes two willing parties (the City and Chief Wallace).
Councilmember Almberg to Mayor Dudley: Currently, we know his last day is the end of June. Is an option on the table to have Chief Wallace stay on? Is it a possibility?
Mayor Dudley: If we turn to Lt. Dyer or Lt. Sterkel, we have qualified individuals on a short-term basis who have acted in his (Chief Wallace's) place when he has been out of town. The big question is whether there would be a significant delay or need.
Mr. Powers: I think this will be a function of the length of time. I will say at the staff level, we anticipated beginning earlier in March than where we are today and held off in consideration of Council's concerns. I think it is something we would monitor as we start this process.
Councilmember Severns: The June 2, 2012 date (social event) is a Saturday.
Ms. Neill Hoyson: We wanted to limit the amount of travel for candidates. It could also be a Friday; need a date close to the interview.
Mr. Powers then reviewed the Council emails which were presented with this meeting's packet. Councilmember Servatius' email was read into the record by Mr. Powers (as per Mr. Servatius' written request). A number of items have been addressed in this meeting, and Mr. Powers commented on each of the Council Members' emailed remarks. Covering a number of points in this meeting and the emails, **Council has emphasized education, background checks and credit checks, a four-week minimum posting time, and larger panels.**
Councilmember Almberg: With a choice of three Council Members on a panel, I think for the Police Chief recruitment, the three Public Safety standing committee members would be appropriate.
Councilmember Hizon: The most relevant standing committee would be on the panel for any position then.
Both Councilmember Hizon and Councilmember Servatius had expressed concern about the panel's make up and who selects the panel, the Mayor or Human Resources.
Ms. Neill Hoyson: I would give recommendations for both an internal and external panel, and the Mayor would also make recommendations. It would be a team effort.
Mr. Powers: As a technical point, you create a public meeting with three Council Members which would not be fair to an applicant. It is problematic to put all three Council Members on one panel, but you could split the number with two on one panel and one on the other. Specific staff or community leader members may not be the same for each recruitment process.
Councilmember Munns: It could be two and one or also two and two for Council Members on two panels.

Councilmember Almberg: I never thought about two and two. I would want people with a technical background rather than more Council Members for the purpose of more Council Members.
Mr. Powers: You are all very busy people. Two groups of seven with each panel having two Council Members may be difficult. You may be better off not increasing the Council Member numbers.
Ms. Neill Hoyson also noted that she acts as a facilitator, but she is not present during the panel interview.
Councilmember Almberg: Just say a panel of five, with two Council Members on one panel, and one Council Member on the other.
Councilmember Hizon: This is going to vary depending on who we are hiring. I am comfortable giving Ms. Neill Hoyson a range of five to seven for the panel size. Let Ms. Neill Hoyson have some discretion in this choice, but no less than five on the panel.
Mr. Powers appreciated the recognition of letting staff's expertise lead this process and Ms. Neill Hoyson noted that the panel interview will be on a single day within a week's timeframe depending on participant availability.
Councilmember Almberg: With a job offer date (negotiate employment offer) is the candidate given a template of salary and benefits then?
Ms. Neill Hoyson: Applicants know what the standard benefits and salary range are. Usually the offer is a verbal offer.
Councilmember Almberg: This occurs after the Mayor's interview. Isn't that out of sync?
Ms. Neill Hoyson: Negotiation is with the final candidate.
Councilmember Almberg talked about the newspaper's article which said Mr. Merrill had been selected and Ms. Neill Hoyson clarified that the paper saw the agenda packet as the public saw the agenda packet (online packet).
Councilmember Almberg: To negotiate employment seems odd after the decision has been made.
Ms. Neill Hoyson: We need to close the deal with the top candidate before informing the other candidates.
Councilmember Paggao had questions about the job posting and Ms. Neill Hoyson clarified that the posting directs the applicants to a complete application packet which provides full information about the position.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

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Connie T. Wheeler
City Clerk