



Town of Southern Shores

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Town of Southern Shores

Recessed Council Meeting

October 8, 2007

2:00 p.m.-Pitts Center

MINUTES

The Southern Shores Town Council reconvened the October 2, 2007 meeting on October 8, 2007 in the Pitts Center at 2:00 p.m.

The following members were present: Mayor Don Smith, Council Members: Jodi Hess, Dan Shields, David Sanders, and Brian McDonald.

Also present were: David Kole, interim town manager; Carrie Gordin, town clerk; Ike McRee, town attorney; Bonnie Swain, finance officer and Hartwell Wright (Human Resources) with the North Carolina League of Municipalities (NCLM).

Mayor Smith called the recessed meeting to order and recognized Hartwell Wright with the NCLM. He stated Mr. Wright is presenting information to council regarding the process involved in hiring a town manager.

Mayor Smith stated there is one item to be discussed from the October 2, 2007 council meeting.

Council Member McDonald presented a draft resolution 2007-10-01 for council's consideration opposing the new proposed rules as recommended by the Division of Water Quality regarding Title 15A pertaining to storm water issues.

Mayor pro tem Shields moved to authorize the mayor to sign the resolution as presented and to send it immediately. Council Member McDonald seconded. The motion passed with Mayor Smith and Council Members Shields, Hess, Sanders and McDonald voting aye; no Council Member voting no; and no Council Member absent.

Mr. Wright stated he is aware council has begun the process by already advertising and are in receipt of resumes. He explained there are 300 cities and 100 counties in the state that is under manager leadership. He stated there is an 8-9% vacancy rate at this time so competition is high.

Mayor Smith stated upon looking at the resumes it seems managers move around. Mr. Wright explained that is not unusual, beach communities are a constant challenge and elections have a part in managers seeking other towns.

Mr. Wright provided council with background material covering many topics for discussion. Some of those topics were: importance of the hiring process, what type of manager are you seeking, time frame

required for selection, salary range, advertising, screening and interviewing processes and final selection.

He stated it is very important to realize the confidentially in the beginning of the process. Mr. Wright stated if the applicants are not to be kept confidential then they need to be told immediately. He stated the only time an applicant's name needs to be given is when they are actually hired and council moves to hire that person during open session of a meeting.

He stated in most small cities the council is the group involved in hiring for the position and this is the most important decision other than the budget. He stated the manager works for the council and is the ambassador to the town.

Council reviewed a list of characteristics they agreed upon with Mr. Wright.

Mr. Wright stated from that list council can filter out applicants once they begin looking at the resumes. He stated the manager does not work for one council member but for all the board. He stated from the list of characteristics council should not restrict their selves by saying an applicant must have all of these characteristics, it is a guideline.

Mayor Smith stated council has already reviewed most of the 40 resumes received and each has prepared a critique list.

Council Member Hess expressed concern that the town may not find a manager during this first process.

Mr. Wright stated that is quite possible especially since the time frame now will be running into the Thanksgiving/Christmas holiday season. He stated overall the process takes six months.

He stated council needs to decide a salary range and any additional benefits for the position. He stated the more experience you require a higher salary is expected.

He provided some per functionary steps to follow like sending a letter, from the mayor, immediately thanking the applicant for their resume and interest. He stated once there is an agreement on those candidates that will not be interviewed a letter should be sent, from the mayor, stating they were not selected.

Council Member Hess asked if an assessment panel, like was used to hire the police chief, be used to hire a town manager.

Mr. Wright stated there are issues to think about if you decide to use this type of process. He stated as you engage more people into the process it is essential they maintain confidentially with your applicants. You must tell the applicants this is the type of process you will be using. He stated you do not want to jeopardize someone's job and then not hire him. He stated in trying to select your panel you many cause someone to feel left out and if council didn't like the panel's recommendation then there is another problem. He stated the citizens expect you (council) to select the best person for the position.

He stated during the interviewing process to allow ample time with no interruptions for each candidate and ask the same questions of each candidate. He stated council should allow time between interviews to fill out the evaluation form immediately following the interview and hold discussion as needed before the next interview.

He stated once a candidate is agreed upon a thorough personal background check is needed. He stated this includes financial, tax, driving, and criminal checks.

Mr. Wright stated this should be done by a professional company, not the police department, and the applicant needs to sign a form to release his personal information.

He stated typically the mayor calls the selected candidate and then a letter should be prepared making an offer. He stated the town attorney should review it before sending to the candidate. He recommended at some time a staff member be assigned to the spouse of the selected candidate to take the opportunity to show them around town.

Mr. Wright stated a contract should be prepared addressing specific terms to include salary, separation pay and any other conditions that apply. He stated normally there is a six month evaluation and if acceptable additional compensation is in order.

Mayor Smith asked what is appropriate in interviewing candidates from out of town. Mr. Wright stated that council can use today's technology and hold phone conferences if they would like. He suggested the council can offer expenses for such items as mileage, food, hotel accommodations and even air fare for the second and final interview of a candidate.

Mayor Smith asked can a candidate from another state be a good manager here.

Mr. Wright stated a good manager is a good manager anywhere but there is a learning curve for someone from out of state.

Mayor Smith asked if there is a problem that a candidate has a good business background but no local government experience.

Mr. Wright stated the training curve would be longer, six months to a year. He would highly recommend the new manager take the eight month municipal government course.

Mayor Smith asked if Mr. Wright or the League have any suggestion on finding a canal dredging project manager.

Mr. Wright offered we contact Anita Watkins of the Environmental Department.

Council Member McDonald asked if the town has advertised for a dredging project manager. Chief Kole said no.

Mr. Wright asked if council felt this workshop was useful. They all gave positive feedback and thanked him for coming.

Council continued the discussion regarding the dredging project manager position.

Mr. McRee stated council can discuss in general the position and qualifications but if they discuss specific candidates then they need to go into closed session.

Council Member McDonald asked do we know what compensation Quible would ask in hiring the project manager. He stated it shouldn't matter who the person is if they are not on the town's payroll, just that they are doing a good job.

Chief Kole stated a figure of \$50,000 has been suggested as a salary for phase one and then a separate salary as we move into phase two.

Mayor Smith stated council has not seen a job description. He stated in talking to George Wood he was told usually the project manager gets ten percent of the project costs. He stated we should get a job description and a salary range and go through the process by advertising for the position. He stated the town manager should talk to the two people we have and contact the League representative for her suggestions.

Council Member Sanders supports asking Quible to put together a proposal and let Quible hire the person.

Mayor pro tem Shields agrees with Council Member Sanders.

Council Member McDonald stated he agrees with the mayor that the town manager should contact the person who worked for the Army Corp of Engineers and ask them to contact Quible.

Council Member Hess moved to authorize the town manager to contact Quible to prepare the contract to hire the project manager and to let council know the cost. Mayor pro tem Shields seconded.

Council Member Hess withdrew her motion. Second withdrawn.

Council Member Hess moved to authorize the town manager to contact Quible to prepare a contract to hire the project manager and to provide the council with a job description with a salary and a work schedule. Mayor pro tem Shield seconded. The motion passed with Council Members Shields, Hess, Sanders and McDonald voting aye; Mayor Smith voting no; and no Council Member absent.

Chief Kole requested council consider approving the expenditure of \$6150 for a pay classification study with the MAPS Group. He stated the last study was done in 2003 and several employees have no current job description.

Bonnie Swain stated this expenditure would be made over three payments from January to April of 2008.

Mayor pro tem Shields moved to authorize executing the contract with the MAPS Group for a pay classification study to begin in January 2008. Council Member McDonald seconded. The motion passed with Mayor Smith and Council Members Shields, Hess, Sanders and McDonald voting aye; no Council Member voting no; and no Council Member absent.

Chief Kole requested council go into closed session to discuss a personnel issue.

Mayor pro tem Shields moved to go into closed session under N.C.G.S. 143.318 (a) (6). Council Member Hess seconded. The motion passed with Mayor Smith and Council Members Shields, Hess, Sanders and McDonald voting aye; no Council Member voting no; and no Council Member absent.

Mayor pro tem Shields moved to enter into open session and adjourn the meeting at 4:20 p.m. Council Member Hess seconded. The motion passed with Mayor Smith and Council Members Shields, Hess, Sanders and McDonald voting aye; no Council Member voting no; and no Council Member absent.

ATTEST

Don Smith, Mayor



Respectfully submitted:


Carrie Gordin, Town Clerk