

Session 15-08 a Special Meeting of the Homer City Council was called to order on March 3, 2015 at 4:00 p.m. by Mayor Mary E. Wythe at the Homer City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska, and opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

PRESENT: COUNCILMEMBERS: BURGESS, LEWIS, REYNOLDS, ROBERTS, VAN DYKE, ZAK

STAFF: CITY MANAGER YODER
CITY CLERK JOHNSON
CITY PLANNER ABBOUD
COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
COORDINATOR KOESTER
FINANCE DIRECTOR LI
IT MANAGER POOLOS
LIBRARY DIRECTOR DIXON
PORT AND HARBOR DIRECTOR KOESTER

AGENDA APPROVAL (Only those matters on the noticed agenda may be considered, pursuant to City Council's Operating Manual, pg. 5)

Mayor Wythe called for a motion for the approval of the agenda.

LEWIS/ZAK – SO MOVED.

REYNOLDS/BURGESS - MOVED TO AMEND THE AGENDA TO MOVE COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE TO COME DIRECTLY AFTER INTERVIEWS.

BURGESS /REYNOLDS – MOVED TO AMEND THE PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE AGENDA TO ADD PUBLIC COMMENTS AFTER COUNCIL DISCUSSION.

VOTE: (amendment) YES. NON OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

VOTE: (main motion as amended) YES. NON OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

INTERVIEWS FOR CITY MANAGER CANDIDATES

Jeffrey Trinker was interviewed by the Council.

Mayor Wythe called for a recess at 5:09 p.m. and reconvened the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

Carey Meyer was interviewed by the Council.

Mayor Wythe called for a recess at 7:24 p.m. and reconvened the meeting at 7:31 p.m.

COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE

Larry Slone, city resident, commented on the strengths of both candidates.

Mary Griswold, city resident, commented on the strengths of Carey Meyer.

Michael Armstrong, Homer News, asked Council to reconsider the motion to meet in Executive Session.

Kathy Hill, city resident, commented on the strengths of Carey Meyer.

Memorandum 15-026, from City Clerk, Re: Request for Executive Session Pursuant to AS 44.62.310 (c)(1)-(2) Matters, the Immediate Knowledge of Which Would Clearly Have an Adverse Effect Upon the Finances of the City, and Matters Which by Law, Municipal Charter, or Ordinance are Required to be Confidential (Determine Parameter of Public Discussion of City Manager Candidates).

Mayor Wythe called for a motion for the approval of the recommendations of Memorandum 15-026 to meet in Executive Session to determine parameter of public discussion of City Manager candidates.

LEWIS/ROBERTS - SO MOVED.

Councilmember Burgess questioned the need for an Executive Session to discuss the process. Mayor Wythe explained the City Manager and attorney have requested the Executive Session to determine the parameter of public discussion on the candidates. The candidates' strengths and weaknesses will still be a public discussion.

VOTE: YES. LEWIS, ROBERTS, ZAK

VOTE: NO. BURGESS, REYNOLDS, VAN DYKE

Mayor Wythe broke the tie with a YES vote.

Motion carried.

LEWIS/ROBERTS - MOVED TO ADJOURN TO EXECUTIVE SESSION.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: YES. ROBERTS, LEWIS, ZAK, BURGESS, VAN DYKE

VOTE: NO. REYNOLDS

Motion carried.

The Council adjourned to Executive Session at 7:42 p.m. and reconvened the Special Meeting at 7:55 p.m.

Mayor Pro Tempore Roberts stated the Council discussed the parameter of public discussion of city manager candidates with our attorney and acting city manager.

Councilmember Zak enjoyed the process and applications of both candidates and the opportunity to provide a tour of the city and to see the new candidate's view of why we've chosen to live here. Both candidates provided excellent answers to a lot of the questions. His scoring wasn't super high for anything. Extra points were given to economic development, teamwork, and leading the rest of the employees. During the tour he was impressed to see city employees jump right in and feel comfortable meeting their potential manager and being proud of their city.

Councilmember Reynolds appreciated Mr. Trinker's answers on economic development and diversification. He picked up on the arts, maritime, and regional medical hub. She liked his broad based approach to the opportunities and the issues he could advance. Mr. Meyer focused on the port and harbor, commercial fishing, and LNG; everything else was negated and brushed aside.

Councilmember Burgess commented it is a challenging hiring process because the public deserves accountability from its representatives as to their inside thinking and rational. Characteristics or skill sets of a city manager include interacting, making people feel good about the perspective they are offering, and being open and clear. It includes talking to legislators and citizen groups and part of the job is actual real work. It needs to be someone who can put people at ease and someone very good at taking a position on an issue without alienating someone down the road. Carey is already a city employee which gives him the opportunity to be a known entity. We are basing a decision on Mr. Meyer who has worked for the City over 16 years. Carey has done an outstanding job as Public Works Director. If he is hired as the city manager we will be losing him as the public works director and there will be several other jobs to fill with a lot of projects in public works. Either applicant is not ideal for the position. Mr. Trinker presented better as someone who could take a rational meticulous look, whereas Mr. Meyer has extremely valuable insights into our organization. Carey's thoughts about economic development within the city were spot on.

Councilmember Lewis commented we have the choice of someone new and fresh with new perspective on the city, but no real experience and understanding of the uniqueness of Homer. It will be a learning curve. We then have Carey who could come in and start running with no learning curve. Carey brings baggage of having worked here 16 years; some believe he does a great job and there are those that are not so happy with him.

Councilmember Roberts commented the city manager should be an excellent communicator. Speaking with legislators and citizens is super important. Mr. Trinker was eloquent and thought well on his feet. He had no idea what the interview questions were. When Mr. Meyer was interviewed on the telephone he had written down his answers and read them. He had the questions in front of him tonight and she would hope he would answer more eloquently and speak clearer. She would give the position to Mr. Trinker instead of Mr. Meyer.

Councilmember Van Dyke commented both candidates are qualified. One candidate outshines one in one area; the other outshines in the other area. When it comes down to voting it will be a gut feel as to what will have the interests of the City at heart.

The Council discussed the option of reopening the application process.

Mayor Wythe commented there was a distinct set of questions for the candidates, each valued at 10 points. She came out with a 12 point advantage for Mr. Trinker. He has significant achieves and accomplishments. She has a great regard for Mr. Meyer completing his masters degrees, but he didn't expand on his work accomplishments. Mr. Trinker provided career benchmarks and is continuing his education to maintain city and public management skills. Mr. Meyer reads book and has access to all of the same things and has not availed himself to them. A continual lifelong learner is important. The only strategic doing experience Carey was doing today at the workplace is because that is what the Council is doing. Strategic planning is a key component to project management. Neither candidate had great depth on labor relations, but Mr. Trinker was able to articulate his more clearly. On risk management there is so much more than safety protocol; Carey spoke about that for a long while and ultimately got around to some other things. Most people would be able to identify it right away. On economic development Mr. Trinker took a much broader picture of economic development. It was intuitive of him to see all of that in a short time while in Homer. Limited experience is not a frightening thing. Mr. Meyer has a lot of experience in the area that he works in, but it is not easily transferable from project engineer to manager. She is much more in favor of Mr. Trinker than Mr. Meyer.

Councilmember Burgess added that most lawsuits are not created when there is a disagreement. It is when a contract is worded poorly, permitting is not filled out right, legislation is set up poorly, or planning and zoning is not thoroughly thought through. He liked Mr. Trinker's comment that the best approach is prevention. He comes from a city where they have only had two lawsuits in the last year. On the role of government, Mr. Meyer was explaining what the situation was instead of his opinion. Mr. Tinker's comments were

straightforward in saying government exists to do what the private sector cannot. He echoed the Mayor's comments on strategic doing and risk management. Mr. Meyer hit the nail on the head about community attitudes about economic development. There is potential for diversification, but it is more about providing the framework where someone can start a business. He scored Mr. Trinker 11 points ahead.

Councilmember Zak scored 14 points ahead on one candidate. He learned a lot from both candidates. There are strengths for each. He is leaning more on going back out for recruitment.

Councilmember Reynolds had a 37 point split with Mr. Trinker coming out ahead. Mr. Trinker saw the need for strategic doing and motivated staff and his supervisors into creating strategic planning. Mr. Meyer's words were the Council's attempts at strategic planning. It needs to have buy-in at the city manager level.

Councilmember Lewis scored Mr. Trinker higher as he was much more articulate and to the point. Each one has his strengths and weaknesses so it is a toss-up. We can always go back out, although he doesn't know if we would find any other candidates. Anyone who would want to apply probably has already done it.

Mayor Wythe commented if we went back out we may want a professional headhunter.

Councilmember Roberts commented Mr. Trinker scored a little ahead, although neither candidate scored too high. Mr. Trinker kept mentioning what a city manager does and it is a career he is pursuing. She didn't hear that as much from Carey, but she liked Carey's answer to economic development. If we went back out we could go back out with a different salary.

Councilmember Reynolds noted neither candidate had experience as a city manager. A city manager has to start somewhere and someone else that has done a good job will be able to move to a larger community unless they are looking forward to retiring to a small community.

Councilmember Burgess the two people tonight were the best choices still available to us. It is a matter of balancing position and lifestyle for a small group of people. He cautioned about going back out as the longer we go without a long term city manager the more autonomous and off in their own way department heads will go. There are certain city projects that are not getting done. He had a personal issue that he wanted to work on with Carey but was not able to do so. It is a risk to open the candidate pool.

Mayor Wythe told the Council we could advertise and offer more money, but it is not a bottomless pool. We could hire someone with the incentive for a raise. There are good things with hiring some with more experience just like there is hiring someone with less qualifications. We could nurture and train someone to give them a great platform for learning a lot. Fresh perspectives bring fresh results.

ZAK/ROBERTS - MOVED THAT WE THANK THE TWO CANDIDATES THAT WE HAVE AND NOT SELECT EITHER ONE AND GO BACK OUT.

Mayor Wythe commented we may not come up with better candidates as the pool is driven by size and financial incentives. It is not the easiest thing hiring into Alaska. We are going to spend more money to do this and it may not be a greatly different outcome.

VOTE: YES. ROBERTS, ZAK

VOTE: NO. REYNOLDS, VAN DYKE, BURGESS, LEWIS

Motion failed.

LEWIS – MOVED TO MAKE AN OFFER TO MR. MEYER.

Motion failed for lack of a second.

VAN DYKE/REYNOLDS - MOVED TO EXTEND THE OFFER TO JEFFREY TRINKER.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: YES. VAN DYKE, LEWIS, REYNOLDS, ROBERTS, BURGESS

VOTE: NO. ZAK

Motion carried.

A Special Meeting was scheduled for March 9th at 5:20 p.m. to discuss the range of salary for the city manager.

COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE

Katherine George, city resident, is stunned that the Council has not yet decided on a salary. She noted Mr. Trinker said when identifying strengths and weaknesses that you don't always have to be perfect, you just have to be good.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Council, Mayor Wythe adjourned the meeting at 8:42 p.m. The next Regular Meeting is Monday, March 9, 2015 at 6:00 p.m., Committee of the Whole 5:00 p.m., and Worksession 4:00 p.m. A Special Meeting is scheduled for Monday, March 16, 2015 at 6:00 p.m. All meetings scheduled to be held in the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska.

HOMER CITY COUNCIL
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 3, 2015

JO JOHNSON, MMC, CITY CLERK

Approved: _____