

Session 20-09 a Special Meeting of the Homer City Council was called to order on February 26, 2020 by Mayor Pro Tempore Rachel Lord at 4:00 p.m. at the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska, and opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

PRESENT: COUNCILMEMBERS: ADERHOLD, EVENSEN, HANSEN-CAVASOS, LORD, SMITH, VENUTI

ABSENT: MAYOR CASTNER (excused)

STAFF: CITY MANAGER KOESTER
CITY CLERK JACOBSEN

AGENDA APPROVAL (Only those matters on the noticed agenda may be considered, pursuant to City Council's Operating Manual, pg. 6)

ADERHOLD/EVENSEN MOVED TO AMEND TO ADD A PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD FOLLOWING THE INTERVIEW AND BEFORE TAKING UP THE EXECUTIVE SESSION.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT

Motion carried.

The agenda as amended was approved by consensus.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON MATTERS ALREADY ON THE AGENDA (3 minute time limit)

PENDING BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

- a. 4:00pm - Council Interview #1 – Randy Robertson

An interview was held with Randy Robertson.

Mayor Pro Tem Lord opened the floor to public comments prior to going into executive session. There were no comments.

Mayor Pro Tem Lord called for at 30 minute recess at 5:14 p.m. to review written comments. The meeting reconvened at 5:44 p.m.

- b. Memorandum 20-034 from City Clerk Re: Request for Executive Session Pursuant to AS 44.62.310 (A-C)(2) Matters, Subjects that tend to Prejudice the Reputation and Character of any Person, Provided the Person May Request a Public Discussion (City Manager Candidate Deliberations)

Mayor Pro Tem Lord reminded Council that anything discussed in executive session needs to be limited to matters that tend to prejudice the reputation and character of the candidate. They will come back into open session to deliberate and make a decision.

ADERHOLD/VENUTI MOVED TO ADJOURN INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION PURSUANT TO AS 44.62.310 (A-C)(2) MATTERS, SUBJECTS THAT TEND TO PREJUDICE THE REPUTATION AND CHARACTER OF ANY PERSON, PROVIDED THE PERSON MAY REQUEST A PUBLIC DISCUSSION (CITY MANAGER CANDIDATE DELIBERATIONS)

Mayor Pro Tem Lord announced that City Manager Koester would participate.

VOTE: YES: ADERHOLD, VENUTI, EVENSEN, LORD, SMITH, HANSEN-CAVASOS

Motion carried.

Council adjourned into executive session at 5:45 p.m.

Mayor Pro Tem Lord called the meeting back to order at 7:47 p.m.

Councilmember Aderhold reported Council met in executive session and discussed the three candidates Council interviewed from the perspective of topics that would tend to prejudice their reputation or were regarding their character. We're now here to discuss the candidates in a bigger way.

Mayor Pro Tem Lord opened the floor for discussion.

Councilmember Smith commented that he was impressed with all three candidates and in working through the process he agrees with the recommendation of the City Manager Hiring Advisory Committee and clearly through his experience, that Randy Robertson would be a great strength to the organization as a whole and a good addition to the community. That's his first choice. Mr. Bork has a great personality and there's a lot to like about him, lacks the experience for the position at this time. He has capacity and potential, but there's no guarantee we'll get another Katie Koester through a training program. He's more interested in established experience at this point. Councilmember Smith said Adam Hammatt continued to surprise him through the process, he made it to the in person interviews because of his experience. He had hesitations about information in his application, but thought his interviews went well, but there are other questions that overshadow him serving in the capacity of City Manager here.

Councilmember Aderhold agrees with Councilmember Smith on the choice between Randy Robertson and Michael Bork. Mr. Bork has managed over 100 people in Fairbanks and the responsibilities stepping into a City Manager position are very different. Other parts of his career would lend well to stepping into the new role. Whoever they hire will have a different personality, management style, and way of interacting than we have now. She appreciated the time and work the committee put into the interviews and the valuable information the provided, and also the community and staff comments.

Councilmember Venuti thanked the candidates and everyone for all the work that's gone into this. She feels Mr. Bork would benefit the culture we have in this community, she doesn't think Mr. Robertson's military background would be a good fit.

Councilmember Evensen said he was pleasantly surprised by the quality of candidates during the interviews. He's been part of a lot of hiring's for higher level manager positions, and felt Adam Hammatt interviewed very well. He also enjoyed Michael Bork's interview and appreciates that he would fit well in the community. He feel it takes a dynamic person to deal with the legislative and operational sides of the City Manager position. He also feels Mr. Robertson's military background and he saw some cultural things he doesn't think are a good fit for Homer. He supports Michael Bork and Adam Hammatt.

Councilmember Hansen-Cavasos she was pleasantly surprised by all three candidates for different reasons. Her top two are Michael Bork and Randy Robertson. They both have good qualities that would benefit Homer. Mr. Bork would be great to work with and has potential to learn and grow. Mr. Robertson has the know how to run the City. Mr. Hammatt had a great interview also.

Mayor Pro Tem Lord appreciates the process they've been going through and work that's gone into it. Randy Robertson is her top choice based on his experience as a City Manager. In looking at what they have moving forward as a City, like the large vessel harbor and community recreation center, HERC and other facility questions, we have a fairly sophisticated City with a lot going on. Having someone with the breadth of experience he has and proven ideas in strong leadership and management, he certainly came out as her top choice. She really liked Michael Bork his ability to manage his employees at the Fairbanks North Star Borough. He talked about measurable metrics, and a lot of things that speak to what she thinks are good strong leadership qualities. She also appreciated the feedback from the Committee and the people who provided written comment as part of the process. There was a lot of support for Randy Robertson for reasons that resonated with her as well.

Councilmember Smith responded to the comments about the militant kind of mindset. Spending 25 years in the forces, that's likely how one expresses themselves, but it doesn't mean that's how he carries everything out. To make that translation is a bit of a leap in his mind. He also noted the amount of positive feedback given in his background check. He

encouraged not making assumptions based on personal experiences but look at the product of their work. That speaks more loudly to him.

Councilmember Aderhold agreed with the notion of setting personal bias aside by sharing an experience of working with the Alaska District Commander of the Corp of Engineers that came to work at company she started working for at same time, and became very good friends with. He was career military and there were military things about him, but is one of the kindest people she knows.

Councilmember Evensen feels the Parks and Recreation experience Mr. Bork has will be very beneficial to Homer, and will be a solid fit. Councilmember Venuti agreed and recognized his locker room renovation response to the question about capital improvements highlighted his ability.

Mayor Pro Tem Lord also recognizes the challenging nature of the City Manager position, as they work for the Council, and also manages the organization as a whole. As elected officials the Council and Mayor are the champions of the people, and the City Manager works within the bounds Council sets and also provide the reality of what's on the ground of how things work, next steps on projects, and so forth. Mr. Bork could grow in the position, but in looking at hiring for the City, Mr. Robertson has the experience with navigating the role of the difference in being the Manager of the City, and navigating the political sphere. She appreciated Mr. Robertson's answers on a lot of that, and that's born out of experience of how that process works.

Councilmember Evensen noted Adam Hammatt brought qualifications to the table others didn't have, like an advance law degree, experience with emergency training response, and a host of successful capital improvement projects, noting the affordable housing project. He thinks he's the most qualified candidate. Mr. Bork is a good candidate and his experience in Alaska is very beneficial.

Councilmember Hansen-Cavasos noted Mr. Robertson's experience in working with the rec center in Cordova and facilitate other needs in the community. He would be on board with our vision for Homer.

EVENSEN/VENUTI MOVED TO OFFER THE ROLE OF CITY MANAGER TO CANDIDATE MICHAEL BORK.

Councilmember Smith expressed his opposition to the motion, reiterating his lack of experience.

Councilmember Aderhold agrees likes Mr. Bork but he lacks City Manager experience.

Mayor Pro Tem Lord agreed with need for an experienced City Manager.

Councilmember Evensen noted we have great staff, strong departments, a community of leaders and having a good Manager to keep a good working environment to allow everything to move forward, delegating early on.

Councilmember Venuti commented everyone has to start somewhere and she wants to take a chance on him.

Discussion continued regarding the candidates experience and the possibility to hold follow up interviews.

VOTE: YES: VENUTI, EVENSEN

NO: SMITH, ADERHOLD, LORD, HANSEN-CAVASOS

Motion failed.

ADERHOLD/LORD MOVED TO REMOVE ADAM HAMMATT FROM CONSIDERATION.

Councilmember Evensen commented in support of maintaining Adam Hammatt as a candidate.

Other members commented in support of removing him from consideration based on the recommendation of the City Manager Hiring Advisory Committee and employee and public comments who did not recommend him.

VOTE: YES: ADERHOLD, HANSEN-CAVASOS, LORD, VENUTI, SMITH

NO: EVENSEN

Motion carried.

There was discussion about what to do next including hiring an interim and re-advertising.

EVENSEN/SMITH MOVED TO BRING IN AN INTERIM CITY MANAGER AND PUT THE POSITION OF CITY MANAGER BACK OUT FOR ADVERTISEMENT.

Councilmember Smith said he's ready to offer the position to someone tonight, but there isn't consensus tonight.

Mayor Pro Tem Lord agrees they have a qualified candidate and feels torn.

VOTE: YES: EVENSEN, SMITH, VENUTI

NO: LORD, ADERHOLD, HANSEN-CAVASOS

Motion failed.

ADERHOLD/LORD MOVED TO OFFER THE CITY MANAGER POSITION TO RANDY ROBERTSON.

Councilmember Smith reiterated that Randy Roberson is the most qualified candidate for the City Manager position.

Councilmember Evensen continued to suggest there was more support at the table for Mr. Bork than Mr. Robertson.

VOTE: YES: HANSEN-CAVASOS, LORD, ADERHOLD, SMITH
NO: VENUTI, EVENSEN

Motion carried.

ADERHOLD/SMITH MOVED TO DIRECT THE MAYOR PRO TEM TO WORK WITH THE CITY MANAGER TO BRING A CONTRACT TO COUNCIL.

Mayor Pro Tem Lord asked for a recess at 9:19 p.m. The meeting resumed at 9:24 p.m.

COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE (3 minute time limit)

ADJOURN

There being no further business to come before the Council Mayor Pro Tem Lord adjourned the meeting at 9:30 p.m. The next Regular Meeting is Monday, March 9, 2020 at 6:00 p.m., Worksession 4:00 p.m. Committee of the Whole at 5:00 p.m. All meetings scheduled to be held in the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska.

Melissa Jacobsen, MMC, City Clerk

Approved: _____