



# City of Homer

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## Human Resources

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## Memorandum 20-076

TO: City Council  
FROM: Andrea Browning, HR Director  
DATE: June 7, 2020  
SUBJECT: City Manager Candidate Background Information

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Background investigations have been completed on three of the City Manager candidates: Robert Dumouchel, Melissa Jacobsen, and Ernest Weiss

No information found would disqualify any of the applicants from employment as City Manager for the City of Homer. Summaries below include information on strengths and weaknesses, as well as a synopsis of employment interviews and interviews with family, friends, and coworkers.

\*Applicant Kelcey Young has withdrawn her application, effective 06/07/2020.

Applicant John Mejaski has not replied to the investigator's requests for information. He signed the initial Background Authorization document, but has not returned my subsequent emails regarding the background check. I will follow up with a call on 06/08/2020 to inquire further on the background information, and to find out if he still plans on interviewing for the position.

### **Background Investigation Summary: Robert Dumouchel**

**Strengths:** The candidate is well respected by supervisors, peers, and employees for his ability to communicate and relate to a wide variety of individuals. He is commended for being approachable, well-liked, and successful in every task and responsibility given to him.

**Weaknesses:** Limited experience in some facets of city government.

**Employment Interviews:** Current and former supervisors and peers said he was thoughtful, approachable, and remained calm regardless of the pressure or workload. He is described as a people person, who genuinely likes people and takes the extra step to call and ask how subordinates and peers are doing with COVID-19 restrictions and home quarantines. He was repeatedly praised for his superior intelligence, visionary approach, and planning ability, that he would be far ahead of others in the same meetings.

**Interviews with Family, Friends, and Coworkers:** They cited his intellect, ability to handle pressure, being "even keeled" and "quiet and thoughtful." They stated that he has been working toward this goal of being city manager and believed he was more than up to the task.

### **Background Investigation Summary: Melissa Jacobsen**

**Strengths:** The candidate has a documented history of being a reliable and trustworthy employee and supervisor. The candidate's former supervisors give the candidate extremely high marks for tact, ability to diplomatically communicate with councilmembers, citizens, and co-workers. Every person contacted commended the candidate for being organized, efficient, and trusted to always follow through on time with whatever task she is assigned.

**Weaknesses:** Limited experience as a supervisor with significant budgetary responsibilities.

**Employment Interviews:** Current and former supervisors said she was trustworthy, reliable, conscientious, and especially commended her ability to work with a wide variety of personalities that are encountered in the council and committee meetings. One related that she was the "best employee" they ever had. Several spoke about her ability to tactfully redirect councilmembers and citizens to follow rules of order. She was also praised for having excellent ethics, and an example given was her maintaining confidentiality with her responsibilities handling complaints.

**Interviews with Family, Friends, and Coworkers:** They cited her organizational skills, ability to communicate, and being "cool-headed" and "level-headed" no matter the situation or circumstance. All of them believed she was more than up to the task of city manager.

### **Background Investigation Summary: Ernest Weiss**

**Strengths:** The candidate received mixed reviews regarding his work performance in prior managerial positions. He received very positive reviews for his performance as a music teacher and in his current position as the Natural Resources Director for Aleutians East Borough. He was praised for being calm and steady while working with very diverse people.

**Weaknesses:** Conflicting reports regarding performance in prior managerial positions in Pilot Point and King Cove.

**Employment Interviews:** The candidate received overall good reviews from references related to his current positions and while he was the music teacher at King Cove. He was commended for his knowledge of the fishing industry and ability to remain calm during divisive meetings involving parties with conflicting interests. He received mixed reviews regarding his employment at Pilot Point and King Cove, with two references expressing doubts regarding his qualifications for the position of City Manager for the City of Homer.

**Interviews with Family, Friends, and Coworkers:** He was praised for being very personable, a good communicator, a valued member of the community, and missed by the people of King Cove.