

City Manager Search Task Force

Thursday March 10, 2022 6:00 p.m.

Minutes -- Draft Until Approved

Attendance

- **Staff Present:** Rikk Taft
- **Members in Attendance:** Amanda Gustin (Vice-Chair); Paul Cook; Michael Sitton; Sue Higby; Jake Hemmerick
- **Members Absent:** Rich Morey (Chair); Tracie Lewis (Secretary)
- **Guests:** Jessie Baker, South Burlington City Manager; Peter Anthony; Bern Rose

Call to order

- Acting Chair Gustin called the meeting to order at 6:02.
- The meeting was held online (via ZOOM).
- Jake Hemmerick offered to take the minutes on behalf of Secretary Lewis.

Adjustments to Agenda

- There were no adjustments to the agenda.

Approval of Minutes

- Committee members noted that the minutes did not come by email.
- Hemmerick shared a link to the minutes on the website.
- **Motion** to approve by Hemmerick, **second** by Sitton. No changes by members. **Approved unanimously.**

Agenda Items

Guest Speaker: Jessie Baker – City Manager of South Burlington

Jessie Baker introduced herself and walked through what she found has been most helpful in her past interviews talking about the merits of citizen involvement:

- Keep first-round candidates confidential in Executive Session for career and employer reasons.
- Ask about characteristics in terms of pros and cons and stay away from questions that are all or nothing, or 'should we hire this candidate or not'.
- Allow time for meet-and-greets with formal and informal community leaders, school leaders, staff, and other partners in the city.
- Ending a day of meet-and-greets with a community meeting and presentation on a problem to solve -- such as diversifying revenue streams, comprehensive planning, capital improvement planning – can demonstrate the endurance it will take to do long hours as a City Manager, as well as analytical and problem-solving skills.
- Consider involving staff in the process meet-and-greets (not interviews) and allow staff to share what you see as candidates' key assets. This is more important for candidates outside the State

or Region, with whom staff and others may be less familiar. Very important for a manager to know it has staff support on day-one.

- Make sure people who are involved in the selection process are aware of how words may be heard by women or minority candidates. Exclusionary or sexist language sends a negative message to candidates.
- Ask staff what assets or characteristics they see as important.
- Clearly communicate what's expected of the candidate by the Task Force and Council in terms of organizational objectives and change.
- Candidates are likely to reach out to sitting City Managers in the area and will be interviewing you and doing their homework.
- Out-of-area need to understand that it's a Dillon's Rule State (not Home Rule); knowing that Barre is 10 minutes from the State Capital will be appealing; understanding that the manager pool is small and there is a strong support network in Vermont is attractive.
- Important that the Mayor and Manager work hand-in-glove. Mayor was with the candidates all-day in some of Jessie's past interviews and that was a good relationship builder.
- Municipal government is only as strong as the residents who support it.

Review of feedback from job posting

- Baker suggested that the ICMA ad be edited to provide an introductory paragraph selling how cool Barre is, noting that its an attractive opportunity.
- No comments on the ads to this point.
- Taft has received two applications and several came in during the meeting.
- Taft reported that Rich would be doing some outreach to UVM's network of public administrators.
- In terms of ads, postings have been made on NLC, ICMA, VLCT, Leagues of ME, NH, CT, and MA.
- He has also posted to zip-recruiter, Indeed, and Seven Days. Working on NY League. May do an extension to 7 Days past 2 weeks. Total spent is \$5,900. Leaving some room.
- Rikk asked about salary range, which is required for input. Jake suggested that this can be a discussion item for Council.
- Taft asked about communications with candidates. The task force supports responsive, proactive and transparent communication.

Discussion on reach out to recent city manager hires

- Gustin has reached out to a total of four current city managers or deputy managers, leaving three still to speak with the group.

Discussion on City Manager Contract

- Committee agreed that a review and discussion of the existing contract provisions is not in order tonight.
- Hemmerick recommended that this be done in Executive Session to avoid any adverse impact to the City's negotiating position, and Taft suggested that this is an item for Council's consideration.

Update on council liaison

- Gustin reported that the Chairs are tentatively on the Council agenda for March 22nd to provide an update to the New Council.
- Higby recommended that the Chair and Vice-chair serve as liaison. Hemmerick clarified that the liaison position was established to be a member of Council without voting privileges.
- Hemmerick recommended the Task Force discuss shared expectations of officers in terms of meeting scheduling, attendance, materials, and coordination with Council at a meeting when all officers are in attendance.

Next Steps and Timelines

The group discussed the timeline steps below. Gustin will share that out and will update Council with this on the 22nd.

City Manager Search Task Force Schedule

- Ongoing - Notifications within 48 hours of applications, continuing update on next steps once finalized.
- March 17, 2022 – Manager informational interview, discuss applicant criteria & interview question ideas
- March 31, 2022 – Begin reviewing applications
- April 7, 2022 – Task Force finalizes interview questions, and interview scheduling
- April 16, 2022 – Task force Interviews begin
Interviews will each have to be warned as a public meeting, the agenda of which is to immediately go into executive session, in order to comply with public meeting laws. Many interviews will not have a quorum but will contain at least some task force members.
- April 21, 2022 – Task force meeting, discussion of candidate visits
- May 5, 2022 – Task force meeting, discussion of ongoing candidate pool
- April 30, 2022 – (Saturday) Finalist Selection – full task force with quorum, executive session – Saturday morning?
- May 9, 2022 – Reference checks for finalists
- May 16, 2022
The following action items proposed to occur within a 48-hour period for each candidate when they are able to visit Barre.
 - Council Interviews
 - Community (to include city staff) meet & greets, community presentation
- May 19, 2022 – Task force meeting
- June 3, 2022 - Offer by Council (Wednesday morning after Council approval), begin background check
- June 3, 2022 - Contract Negotiation
- [Council Meeting to approve contract]
- June 17, 2022 – New City Manager starts
- July 8, 2022 – current manager contract ends

Round Table

- Cook mentioned that he will have additional responsibilities after May 15.
- Higby suggested morning meetings for Saturday interviews.
- Taft mentioned that on the 22nd, he will see about adding some Executive Session items for salary, contract, travel expenses, and relocation fund.
- Hemmerick said he would attend as many meetings as he can, even not as liaison, to support a smooth and successful process.

Adjournment

- **Motion** to adjourn by Hemmerick, **second** by Higby. **Unanimously approved.**

Next Meeting Thursday March 17th 6:00pm

Respectfully submitted, Jake Hemmerick, Mayor