



MINUTES
SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING
SEPTEMBER 29, 2003 AT 6:00 P.M.
CITY HALL, 116 FIRST STREET
NEPTUNE BEACH, FLORIDA

Pursuant to proper notice a Special Meeting of the City Council of the City of Neptune Beach was held September 29, 2003, at 6:00 p.m., in the Council Chambers, City Hall, 116 First Street, Neptune Beach, Florida.

Attendance

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mayor Richard A. Brown
Vice Mayor James Gilbert
Councilor Harriet Pruette
Councilor Larry Shealy
Councilor John Weldon

ABSENT:

City Attorney Christopher White

STAFF:

Interim City Manager & Public Safety Director William Brandt
Interim Assistant City Manager & City Clerk Lisa Volpe, CMC
Director of Finance Steve Ramsey

Call to Order/Roll Call

The Mayor called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

ICMA Range Riders

ICMA RANGE RIDERS: Mayor Brown introduced Paul Sharon and Thomas C. Kelly from the Range Rider Organization.

Paul Sharon, Range Rider, introduced Thomas Kelly who would be the Range Rider assigned to Neptune Beach.

Thomas Kelly stated that the Florida Range Riders were one of the few in the nation that provided the service of helping cities select city managers. It is a great help to very small cities who cannot afford to hire a search firm. Larger cities would use a search firm who are much more capable of searching out a qualified candidate. The city should first advertise and be specific as to what type of qualities the city is looking for along with a salary range and a description of the city. The first step would be to list characteristics before any ad is placed.

Once applications have been collected Mr. Kelly would go through them and find at least ten that are qualified. It is up to the council to find a match who is technical competent and has a good chemistry with the group. It is up to the city how to interview the final candidates.

It is best not to negotiate the contract yourself but to ask someone either staff or outside help who is experienced in negotiating. Mr. Kelly stated he checks on candidates by using other range riders and people he knows. There is a network of Range Riders throughout the country in twenty-three states. The city should do an extensive background search before they hire a candidate. The Range Riders do fall under the sunshine law there for all communication needs to take place at a meeting. It is also unethical to recruit someone out of another job, which is what a paid consultant could do. The process would take at least a couple of months a paid consultant may be able to accomplish the process somewhat faster.

Mayor Brown questioned where Mr. Kelly had retired from. Mr. Kelly retired from Volusia county for 23 years.

Councilor Shealy asked for recommendations of how to interview and where to advertise. Mr. Kelly stated everyone should pick their top four and see if there is a consensus of 4 or 5 to bring in to interview. The Florida City Managers Association journal. Councilor Shealy asked what the time frame was. Mr. Kelly stated it would take some time but you could put a time limit on the taking of resumes. Sometimes it takes a while if the council does not get along, candidates are more likely to pull out.

Councilor Pruette stated the council gets along pretty good. She asked what the difference was with the Range Riders and a consultant. Mr. Kelly explained a consultant may be able to find someone faster since they can actively recruit. Councilor Shealy asked if it was limiting not being able to recruit. Mr. Kelly answered that the city did not have a bad reputation with too many city managers and if the city were willing to pay a little over the market salary you could get a top notch candidate. Mr. Kelly said military commanders and assistant managers do not have enough experience.

Councilor Weldon asked what the market salary would be. Mr. Kelly did not know. Councilor Weldon asked if the application review was paper only. Mr. Kelly stated it was unless something didn't make sense he would check with someone he knows who would know the candidate. If you have a good quality of applications it is easy to pick an experienced manager instead of asking for an assistant manager.

Councilor Weldon asked why the range riders provided this service in Florida and not in other states. Mr. Kelly stated the managers in Florida felt it was needed especially in the small cities. Also the retired managers wanted to give back to their organization.

Councilor Weldon asked if Mr. Kelly would be managing the process or just advising. Mr. Kelly stated he would be advising. Councilor Weldon asked why they are under the sunshine law. Mr. Kelly said they are basically a committee (unpaid) therefore are subject to the sunshine law.

Councilor Pruette asked what Mr. Kelly has to offer if the city should go with him or a paid consultant. Mr. Kelly stated they could probably do the search faster and the city should call them in and see if that is what they want. Mr. Kelly emphasized that as a board you want to feel comfortable with whomever you hire.

Mayor Brown asked if the city was in a position to find someone who was moving up in their career. Mr. Kelly stated some just want to make a change.

Chief Brandt asked what cities Mr. Kelly had worked with in the past. Mr. Kelly listed Sanford, Fernandina Beach. Chief Brandt also asked if he could help with the ad and salary negotiations. Mr. Kelly said he could be of some help with the ad but the council should be able to come up with characteristics and he was not experienced with negotiations.

Vice Mayor Gilbert stated he understood the functions at the Florida League of Cities Conference.

Councilor Weldon asked when he had worked with Fernandina Beach. Mr. Kelly answered three years. Councilor Pruette asked if there were a salary range would there be a lot of negotiating. Mr. Kelly said there work to be done in this area and should not be taken too lightly.

Paul Sharon stated they had many years of experiences to help in the search. Consultants are basically ex managers and have more resources. As Range riders and not paid consultants they can be more candid if they see the council is going in the wrong direction. Mr. Sharon commented there are times when a person will go to a city to work on something they do not have experience with.

Mayor Brown thanked Paul Sharon and Thomas Kelly for an informative presentation. Councilor Weldon felt it was best to allow someone who specializes in these matters to help the city find a city manager.

Recess/Reconvene

Mayor Brown called a recess at 6:55 p.m. and reconvened at 7:05 p.m.

Mayor Brown stated there needed to be discussion as to which way the council wanted to go with a paid consultant or with the Range Riders.

Councilor Weldon liked the idea that the Range Riders could be more blunt with the council and they have many years of experience as managers. He felt the negatives were no recruitment of working managers, no extensive background searches, no help with negotiating or management of the search. He concluded by stating he was not afraid to spend \$20,000 to find a qualified manager.

Councilor Pruette felt the consultant had a lot more to offer than the Range Riders. She wanted to know where the \$20,000 would come from.

Mayor Brown liked both but felt the paid consultants had more to offer the city and had given some really good ideas.

Councilor Shealy had a background in using headhunters and felt it was a more professional way to hire someone in that position. A consultant could hire someone in a timely way. He did question where the \$20,000 would come from.

Mayor Brown commented that the timeline would probably be the same with Range Rider or the consultant.

Vice Mayor Gilbert felt that the management firm would be the best option but felt the council should listen to at least one more presentation to decide on a firm. He felt \$14,000 was a lot for a professional fee. He thought the consultant could do a much more thorough job. He did not like the sunshine law having an effect on the Range Riders and felt they did not do as much as he had understood. He wanted to know if there was any guarantee with the consultants if the new manager left in a very short amount of time. The council commented that Mercer Group did say something about a guarantee.

Chief Brandt stated the Range Riders do call to check on certain candidates but do not call the city they are working at which agrees to the way the consultant. He was disappointed the Range Riders did not do any background search.

The council discussed city manager characteristics briefly. Mayor Brown wanted someone with a good amount of experience. Councilor Pruette wanted someone who knew how to find grants.

Consensus: **TO INVITE SLAVIN MANAGEMENT CONSULTANTS TO SPEAK AT THE OCTOBER 6TH CITY COUNCIL MEETING.**

Councilor Weldon stated he would not be at the October 6th meeting but he only wanted to be sure that council did not have the meeting to decide characteristics until he could be there.

Ballistic vests

Chief Brandt told the council he received a 50% grant for ballistic vests. He needed their ok to use forfeiture funds to pay the rest of the cost, which would be approximately \$12,000.

Consensus: **TO PLACE THE PURCHASE OF BALLISTIC VESTS ON THE CONSENT AGENDA FOR OCTOBER 6TH COUNCIL MEETING.**

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Richard A. Brown, Mayor

ATTEST:

Lisa Volpe, CMC, City Clerk

Approved: _____