



Richland County Council
Interim Administrator Ad Hoc Committee
July 23, 2018 – 1:00 PM
Administration Conference Room
2020 Hampton Street, Columbia 29204

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Norman Jackson, Chair; Jim Manning, Co-Chair, Yvonne McBride, and Calvin “Chip” Jackson

OTHERS PRESENT: Greg Pearce, Dalhi Myers, Bill Malinowski, Michelle Onley and Dwight Hanna

1. **Call to Order** – Mr. N. Jackson called the meeting to order at approximately 1:00 PM
2. **Adoption of Agenda** – Mr. C. Jackson moved, seconded by Mr. Manning, to adopt the agenda as published. The vote in favor was unanimous.

Mr. Manning moved, seconded by Mr. C. Jackson, to reconsider the agenda. The vote in favor was unanimous.

Mr. Manning moved, seconded by Mr. C. Jackson, to adopt the agenda with the Item 3(d) been amended to read, “Review Applications and determine finalists”. The vote in favor was unanimous.

3. a. **Rules for Interview** – Mr. Manning suggested looking at the questions, which will give them an idea of how much time will be needed per interview. And, then decide on the number of people to be interviewed.

Mr. C. Jackson inquired if the committee was going to conduct interviews or are the interviews going to be conducted by full Council.

Mr. N. Jackson stated the committee will conduct the interviews, but full Council is invited.

Mr. C. Jackson stated the number of questions, etc. will vary if the committee is going to conduct the interviews versus if full Council was going to participate.

Mr. N. Jackson stated, his understanding is, the committee will come up with whatever rules, make recommendations, and then conduct interviews. All Council members are invited. The committee will make a decision and report it out at the next Council meeting.

Mr. C. Jackson stated he is fine with that. He stated there are 13 questions, which would equate to 2 or 3 per committee member versus 1 per Council member.

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Mr. Manning stated these are proposed questions. He believes the committee should decide what questions are asked.

Mr. N. Jackson stated, it was his understanding, the committee is going to interview 3 or 4 applicants. In the preferred list there are applicants that have MPAs, one in the medical field, and the other in the military. He stated having a MPA with no experience does not help.

Mr. Manning stated, the one in the medical field, wrote down on her application and resume that she has a Master's in Business Administration, but she bubbled in she had a MPA. He stated he knows the difference, and if he is confused in an application, either he is not perfectly honest, or he did not know the difference. He does not know which this applicant is, but he does not believe the applicant should be interviewed.

1. Time – Mr. C. Jackson stated each interview will be approximately an hour, with the 10 questions the committee has agreed upon.
2. Questions – Mr. Manning stated he liked the 1st question.

Mr. C. Jackson stated the 2nd question may not be a fair because there are some people that have not worked with a Council before, so they would not be able to answer that. It might be better if the question were rephrased to inquire how they handle a situation where they disagreed with a directive. He stated he likes the 2nd question because, as we know, one of our challenges in the past was where there was a concern about staff not following a directive that disagreed with.

Mr. Manning stated he liked the 3rd question.

As an aside, Mr. Manning said he received a call about a person applying for a job. The applicant, for the job, was asked was to give the name and number of someone they had a major conflict with.

Mr. C. Jackson stated, some of the questions, predisposes this person is going to be in this position longer than he believes we want to have an Interim Administrator. For example, questions #4 – 6 are questions that if someone is going to be doing this job for 3 – 4 months, he is not sure how much of this the person is going get into (i.e. budget challenges, long-range objectives), unless there is some vision we are going to be hiring an Administrator beyond 3 – 4 months.

Mr. Manning inquired if the County has contracted with the search firm.

Mr. Hanna stated he will check with Procurement to ensure the contract has been executed to begin the search.

Mr. Manning stated, instead of the challenging part of budgeting, it could be experience in monitoring a budget.

Mr. Pearce stated in 20 years the County has never had an Interim that did not go on to become the Administrator.

Mr. Manning stated his first experience was that it was an Assistant County Administrator, and we did not do a search. The other one, Council was in the process of doing the search, when the Interim

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Administrator was hired.

Mr. C. Jackson stated he has had the experience of working with the firm when they hired the School District Superintendent. If Council is willing to resist the temptation, those much more knowledgeable people, and experienced people will do us far better. He is confident that professional firms know things, see things and ask things. They also make phone calls off the record, and obtain information we will never discover until after we have hired someone.

Mr. Manning stated, in his 9 ½ years, Council has hired 2 County Administrators, and he has not been invited to, or been a part of an interview of either one of them. He stated what he means is, if we bring one of the applicants in as Interim, there will be the question, if they end up being the County Administrator, whether we ever interviewed them for the County Administrator job. When we did this last time, two people told Council they will not apply, and two said they would apply if they became the Interim. Those 2 he asked 2 questions that he did not ask the others. He hopes, if we keep who we get, we interview them for the job because when the committee interviews the applicants for Interim Administrator, he is not interviewing them to be the County Administrator.

Mr. C. Jackson stated he is strongly suggesting, whether we get someone who ends up being the County Administrator, that we use the firm, and go through the process.

Mr. Manning stated, if you look at question #11, that might get into stuff we would like to know and hear about, without a specific question about the challenging part of budgeting. He inquired if question #7 was a variation on question #2. We could collapse the questions into one question.

Mr. C. Jackson stated he would use the word keys instead on key in question #13 because he believes there is a lot of keys to success when dealing with the public. He also would expand the question to include dealing with the public and the press.

Mr. Manning stated he does not care for question #12.

Mr. N. Jackson stated ... when your ethics was tested? (i.e. How you handled or dealt with it? Examples).

Mr. Manning stated he is okay with question #9, but does not care for question #10.

Mr. C. Jackson stated one of the things we want to do is to not have all of the questions to appear negative or derogatory. The majority of these questions deal with when you disagree, you were challenged, had an ethics question, had a disgruntled person, or a high stress situation. He knows those are important issues, but he does not want the energy to be shaped by all the negative experiences in the past.

Mr. N. Jackson stated he noted from question #1 that we are expecting the person to have experience in local government. He stated that eliminates some of the applicants already.

Mr. Manning suggested taking out the word "local".

Mr. N. Jackson stated we are striking questions #5, 7, 10 and 12.

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Mr. Manning requested Mr. Hanna to redo the list of questions.

Ms. McBride inquired if we are going to vote on the questions we are going to strike because there are some she disagrees with.

Mr. Manning stated question #1 is, "Tell us about your progressively responsible government experience at the executive level of administration...?"

Question #2 is, "Tell us about a time when you disagreed with a directive, and what was the outcome?"

Questions #3, 8, 9 and 11 remain, as is, and everything down was struck down to question #8. Questions #10 and were struck. Question #13 was reworded to say, "What are the keys to success when communicating with the public and/or the press?"

Mr. N. Jackson stated we can add, delete, or reword.

Mr. Manning stated he always liked the question, "Why have you applied for this position?"

Mr. C. Jackson stated he would like for them to be asked, "What is their current assessment of Richland County Council/Government?" If they pretend that there are not any problems, or they have not read the newspaper, that person would really concern him. He would rather have someone that says, "Yes, I have heard all about it. I'm aware of what has been going on from the press, but here is why I still want this job."

Ms. McBride inquired why question #7, "Describe an experience in which your ability to work well with others and reconcile differences helped your company or employer?" was struck. She stated that is a normal question that is asked during interviews. She stated she looked up some questions also... "Tell me about your time when you were a part of a great team, and what was your part in making the team effective?"

Mr. Manning stated they did talk about combining questions #2 and #7. Then, they just decided to go with question #2.

Ms. McBride stated that was one of the behavior questions, which was similar to some that she had someone to do some research on.

Mr. Manning stated he did not have a problem with Ms. McBride providing a question that would capture questions #2 and #7.

Mr. Manning stated he was fine with striking question #3 and using the question Ms. McBride provided earlier.

Mr. C. Jackson stated he is okay with putting question #7 back in.

Ms. McBride stated question #7 gives us a good understanding of how the person resolves issues, and what they did.

Mr. Manning stated, for clarification, we are going with question #7 and striking #2.

Ms. McBride stated she is fine with keeping question #3, and not using the question she posed.

Ms. McBride suggested asking the applicant what their management style is.

Mr. C. Jackson stated he believes we should be careful when discussing someone's management and budget style. He does not want to give the impression this is more than an interim role. He wants to be sure we are clear, in terms of managing in the interim, as opposed to someone seeing it as long-term position.

Ms. McBride stated, for a short-term position, management style is going to be very important because you can go in and know it all, and mess up being able to manage at all, or you have a more participatory type management.

Mr. C. Jackson stated he agrees it is important. He is just very nervous about asking any sort of question that gives anyone the impression that they are interviewing for anything more than a short-term position. And, that is simply to maintain the course of the ship until the permanent "captain" is hired.

Ms. McBride stated, when they take the position, they know it is for a short-term.

Mr. C. Jackson stated, before Ms. McBride came in, the comment was made that every other person that had been hired in a similar position, ended up being the permanent County Administrator.

Ms. McBride stated she wanted wording where this person would not be because, by default, this usually happens. Not only with Richland County, but in a lot of other organizations.

Mr. C. Jackson stated he was reading the questions with that point of view. Is there anything that sends the message, other than this is a short-term role/position?

Ms. McBride stated, given the history of a lot of entities, we need to know.

Ms. Myers stated they will still have to manage people, whether they are short or long-term.

Ms. McBride stated, personally, she would like to know their management style.

Mr. N. Jackson stated, Mr. Manning's concern is that people who were supposed to apply for the other position, we will interview them because in the past we never did. Council just put them into the position or going through the firm.

- b. Review of draft job description – Mr. N. Jackson stated the job description reflects the responsibilities and duties needed for Richland County.

Mr. Hanna stated that Council, or a Council committee, was working on in 2005. He has checked the minutes, and there is no record where Council took action to officially adopt the document.

Mr. N. Jackson inquired if the job description will be a part of the contract.

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Mr. Hanna stated there was some discussion among Council, or a question about a job description, so in doing research, this is the only document that he found. He stated there is also a copy of the SC Code of Laws, which talks about the County Administrator's responsibility. In addition, there is a section from the County's ordinance that talks about the duties and responsibilities of the County Administrator.

Mr. N. Jackson stated the committee can review the job description, but the main thing is the contract.

Mr. Hanna stated there is also a draft of the contract that was used by the previous Interim Administrator.

Mr. Manning stated he is good with going what the law says. He stated he is hopeful that in the process, and with the firm we have for the County Administrator, that we will have a document that says, "Richland County – County Administrator Job Description".

Ms. Myers stated, on the duties and responsibilities, on the last sentence where it says, "Employee shall have general supervision and direction over the affairs of the County, subject to the advice and consent of Council", she thinks we would be more restrictive of what they could do if we used the language in the statute that says, "The employee shall be the administrative head of Richland County government, and shall be responsible for the administration of all the departments that are subject to Council's control." Otherwise, it looks like they can make these decisions, and come back and get Council's approval, but Council gives instructions, and they implement them.

Mr. Manning requested Ms. Myers ensure Mr. Hanna has the proposed language.

- c. Review of draft contract – Mr. N. Jackson inquired if there is anything different, or the committee should know about, or any suggestions regarding concerns discussed in the past.

Mr. Hanna stated he left the amounts in for the automobile allowance.

Ms. McBride inquired if it was and/or, in terms of the automobile allowance.

Mr. Malinowski stated he can see if we are paying the person for using their personally owned vehicle, but if they are going to go out and lease one, why don't we give them a County vehicle.

Mr. Manning stated, he believes the issue becomes, if the government assigns you a vehicle for your personal use, it starts getting strange in how you have to report that, as income and benefits. When you give them money, and they do not have to turn in mileage. It is just here's the money. They drive their car everywhere, all the time, .and that settles it. One of the things that is beneficial to us is, if they have a County car, especially if it has any markings on it, we are going to get calls about it.

Ms. Myers stated, in Sec. 2: Terms, she thought Council agreed the term would be 2-3 months. She thinks the terms should reflect that, and say it can otherwise be extended by the Council. The way it currently reads is, "for a term not to exceed 12 months" and she does not know that everybody agreed to that.

Mr. Manning stated he would say "not to exceed 6 months".

Ms. Myers inquired if we have the authority. If you say, "...60 days with the ability to extend it by Council

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approval.”

Mr. Manning stated he is willing to put 6 months here, instead of 12 months. One of the problems we are having, and we asked this earlier, nobody knows whether we have the firm contracted yet.

Ms. Myers stated she thinks it is going to take a year, but she knows at the Township there was a lot of debate back and forth about the term.

Mr. Manning stated 3 months seems too short to him. He is fine to come in and adjust this. There is absolutely no reason it should be more than 6 months. Again, he does not know who is driving, and has a priority about getting it done. In an ideal world, after we clinched the vote, somebody on Wednesday morning would have been saying, “Who is doing that for us? And, do you understand we want this to happen quickly?” Right now, all we know there may some people sitting around in this building, waiting for more direction on contacting those people.

Mr. Malinowski inquired if they want to change the termination to 30 days.

Ms. Myers inquired as to why we are giving ourselves a 60-day notice.

Mr. Hanna stated he changed Sec. II(c) to 30 days, Sec. III to 30 days and Sec. II(a) to 6 months.

Ms. Myers inquired as to why we are requiring ourselves to give a month’s notice if we want to terminate somebody. If we get a viable candidate, that we would like to hire immediately, we are basically boxing ourselves in for the permanent Administrator position. The whole point of this, is that it will be temporary. Now, we are saying we are requiring ourselves to give that person 60 days’ advance notice before we can fully hire an Administrator.

Mr. C. Jackson stated, if we are going to hire the kind of Administrator, that we are thinking is going to come in, the person is probably not going to be able to come in with less than a 60-day notice from their current job, and it may even be longer than that. He stated, when they hired Superintendents, they typically wanted 6 months’ notice.

Ms. Myers stated you can find excellent people, and it does not take 90 days to get them in, or even 60 days.

Mr. C. Jackson stated, jobs at that level, they are not going to be able to leave a current job with a 30-day notice.

Ms. Myers stated she disagrees because she was a headhunter with JP Morgan, and we hired people all the time. Some are locked in because it would cause stock fluctuations, but you can definitely get rid of people.

Mr. Manning stated, worst case scenario, the new person, for whatever reason, is available to start tomorrow, and we want them to start tomorrow. Then, we give this person a 29-day overlap.

Mr. C. Jackson requested that Mr. Hanna ensure everything throughout the document is gender neutral.

The remainder of the meeting was held in Executive Session.

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d. Review of Applications and determine finalists

e. Determination of Venue

4. **OTHER BUSINESS** – N/A.

5. **ADJOURN** – The meeting adjourned at approximately 3:00 PM