



City of Sanibel

800 Dunlop Road
Sanibel, FL 33957

Meeting Minutes - Final City Council

Wednesday, September 15, 2021

5:00 PM

City Hall

Special Meeting

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting convened at 5 p.m.

2. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE (Councilman Dr. Crater)

Councilman Dr. Crater gave the Invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. ROLL CALL

Present: 5 - Mayor Holly Smith, Vice Mayor Richard Johnson, Councilman Scott Crater, Councilman John Henshaw, and Councilman Mike Miller

4. OVERVIEW OF PROCESS TO DATE (Colin Baenziger)

Mayor Smith gave a brief overview of the process and background for selecting the City Manager from Colin Baneziger and Associates. On May 5th, Judie Zimomra notified Council of her retirement effective September 29th. On May 11th, City Council held a special meeting to discuss the next steps for appointing the next City Manager. City Council unanimously approved Colin Baenziger and Associates to engage in the executive search for the City Manager position. A total of 96 candidates applied, discussing nine semi-finalists today from which a finalist will be selected at the September 30th Special Meeting.

Colin Baenziger from Colin Baenziger and Associates explained the process for assessing internal candidate, Keith Williams.

Mr. Baenziger reported on the process for evaluating internal candidates for the City of Sanibel position of City Manager as follows:

- Determine rather we know the candidate and if the firm can present them as a candidate
- Despite the differences, treating them the same
- Internal candidates know the City, issues with the City, and Staff
- Could have a large support group, but possibly not an accomplished City Manager
- Working for a strong manager can hide candidate flaws
- Typically have track record as a manager to evaluate
- Work is evaluated regularly by the elected body
- If successful there is a track record and longevity to look into

- Internet background checks, and speaking to references, including elected officials that individual may work for, current and prior supervisor, city or county attorney, auditors, executive director of the chamber of commerce, community activists, reporters, peers, employees and Human Resource Director
- Vetting Mr. Williams was through a similar process with the difference being that the firm spoke to more people due to the lack of track record Mr. Williams had as a City Manager, thus a deeper background check was conducted

Mr. Baenziger then spoke to previous experiences with hiring an Assistant City Manager as the City Manager after having worked under the previous City Manager and how this has been both successful and unsuccessful in the past. Further detailing that when this happens and there is a failure, the Community and City could be left in a bad spot with no leader, or second in charge. Concluding that Mr. Williams was evaluated similarly to those already presented and that the firm had discovered a difference of opinion among the community and Mr. Baenziger sought to find what was driving that difference of opinion. The firm spoke to more people as the report was provided and that these conversations did not change the opinion of the firm as reported.

Councilmember Miller inquired to the category of reference in respect to the outside candidates. Noting that the external candidates proposed their own references, where as Mr. Williams had no recommended references of his own, alternatively it was 15 references from council, and 17 from alternate sources. Mr. Baenziger noted the number of references being from council and added additional as part of the same process the firm would use if done for an external candidate.

Councilman Miller explained the process as he understood in that Mr. Baenziger did not submit an opinion on the other candidates suggested, including the 96 applicants or the list of nine presented today. In addition, there being no appraisal for how they would fit the position. Mr. Baenziger explained that if the firm felt they have not met the qualifications, then the firm would not suggest them as a semifinalist. Councilman Miller noted absences of summary of fitness for the position on each candidate and source of references, unlike that of Mr. Williams. Councilman Miller then inquired of Mr. Baenziger if this was the standard process for all executive searches which include an internal candidate. Mr. Baenziger replied typically not in this depth, but noted he was asked by council to do this assessment and felt that Council would want more complete and higher level assessment for the internal candidate. Mr. Miller then noted to speaking with Mr. Baenziger over the phone which he stated he requested that Mr. Williams be treated like every other candidate. Mr. Baenziger then noted the process was unable to be completed like typically done due to the lack of track record of Mr. Williams. Councilman Miller further inquired about another candidates track record only having been assigned as an interim City Manager, which Mr. Baenziger further noted that Mr. Souza is personally known to him due to his many

years in the business and that anyone who is not known to the firm is vetted thoroughly. Councilman Miller concluded by saying that he remains concerned for the treatment of internal versus external candidates.

Councilman Henshaw concurred with Councilman Miller on his concerns for the vetting process for internal versus external candidates and the comparisons being on different scales.

Councilman Dr. Crater spoke to how council decided on hiring Colin Baenziger and Associates and the results of the search being that of the national search which was what the Council had asked for.

Vice Mayor Johnson thanked Mr. Baenziger for attending virtually, shared concerns of internal versus external candidates vetting process, expectations for the process going forward, picking from the best in the candidate pool we are presented, and how he supported this firm to be sure that we knew who was available for the position. Councilman Johnson expressed his awareness of the work of the internal candidate has accomplished as a council and community member and how he supports the idea that all candidates are treated the same. Further noting that contacts were provided to the firm that were not contacted and how he believes this was a missed opportunity to fully vet the internal candidate. Expressing that his concerns were for the unbalanced process. Concluding with noting the goal to acquire the best City Manager possible.

Mayor Smith stated to send the missed contacts to Attorney Agnew so he may forward them to Mr. Baenziger.

Mayor Smith spoke to the process and following the process to pick the best candidate for the island, how the selection could be internal or external, being committed to the process and vetting the candidates who is selected, and the reasons for choosing Colin Baenziger and Associates.

Mr. Baenziger spoke to his recommendation for council to pick five candidates that council would like to interview, five being ideal for meeting face to face and assessing their management skills and abilities.

5. DISCUSSION AND SELECTION OF FINALISTS

a. Memorandum

b. Candidates

i. Almond, Stacey

- ii. Barton, Alexa
- iii. Durbin, Jeffery
- iv. Garside, Matthew
- v. Kimball, Yvonne
- vi. Klein, Kenneth
- vii. Souza, Dana
- viii. Staab, Lee
- ix. Williams, Keith

Mayor Smith spoke to speaking with each of the candidates, each for about one hour. Mrs. Smith expressed not hearing back from two candidates which did not call back, Mr. Staab and Mr. Garside. Candidates that she did not move forward with were Mr. Klein and Mr. Garside. She then explained her process and how she further familiarized herself with the external candidates.

Councilman Miller spoke to reviewing the limited to the material provided and internet searches. He then detailed his research on Alexa Barton in which she has been in several controversies in a previous role. Further noting he did not speak with Mrs. Barton.

Councilman Henshaw spoke to not speaking with any of the candidates, and how he alternatively did research on each. He also concurred with not considering Mrs. Barton,

Mayor Smith corrected names she is not considering, Mr. Staab and Mr. Garside. Councilman Henshaw continued regarding the seven areas of criteria he was looking at:

- Capabilities
- Tenure
- What difficulties faced previously and challenges they may have overcome
- Years in a job position or title
- Connection to community (Florida in particular)

- Language used to express how candidates portrayed their value to the island
- Involvement with professional associations
- Size of the organization including the budget from the city they came from and number of employees.

Councilman Henshaw listed the candidates he did not wish to consider: Almond, Barton, Souza and Durbin. Mr. Henshaw noted the military background and education of Mr. Staab. He then expressed his desire to talk and meet with each candidate. As well as looking at Mr. Williams under these same criteria.

Councilman Dr. Crater spoke to reading the 50 page plus report on each candidate. Expressing that the reports were very in depth and encouraged the public to read all of the materials provided. Dr. Crater spoke to looking at environmental background, time in government positions overall and time in most recent job position. He concluded by stating the need for institutional experience and a new culture. With his top three candidates chosen as Mr. Williams, Mr. Souza and Mr. Durbin.

Mayor Smith spoke to looking at the state in which the candidate comes from, management, budget and number of employees. Mrs. Smith noted Mr. Souza's location being relevant to Sanibel, how he was successful in his previous Parks and Recreation as well as Community Services positions, how he referenced the Florida League of Cities and interviewed others for their honest opinions. She expressed how she was impressed with Mr. Souza's growth and time spent in the positions he has held. Mayor Smith then spoke of Mr. Durbin and the challenge he faced with a new development in his previous city, having long term leadership for many years, and his controversy with leaving that City. She further expressed how the conversations were important in understanding the story in going deeper than the newspaper. Ms. Smith spoke of Ms. Almond in that she comes from a small town with similar "Mainstreet". She noted a gap in her resume and found through conversation that she furthered her education after leaving the Military. Mayor Smith expressed her favorable candidates as Mr. Williams, Mr. Souza, and Mr. Durbin. She further noted she would support Councilman Miller's findings regarding Mrs. Barton and take her off the list. Adding that she was also impressed with Mrs. Kimball, and Mr. Klein as well.

Vice Mayor Johnson spoke to not being able to speak outside of the dais due to Sunshine regulations and thanked Councilman Miller for sharing thoughts on Mrs. Barton. Mr. Johnson then spoke to looking at documentation put together by Colin Baenziger and Associates on each candidate and thanked the firm for providing it. He encouraged all to read it, looking at points like education, environmental stewardship, interpretation of the Sanibel Vision Statement, sense of Community, levels of service, communication, accomplishments that fit this community, and for the uniqueness and specialness of this island. Taking a further look at mentorship from supervisors, number of staff, population size, and the size of budget. Noting that he too had not spoken with Mrs. Barton but thanked Councilman Miller for his findings.

c. Selection Form

Mayor Smith stated her Candidate Selection as follows:

- Stacey Almond, Jeffrey Durbin, Yvonne Kimball and Keith Williams

Vice Mayor Johnson stated his Candidate Selection as follows:

- Keith Williams, Lee Staab, Dana Souza, Matthew Garside and Jeffrey Durbin

Councilman Dr. Crater stated his Candidate Selection as follows:

- Keith Williams, Dana Souza, Yvonne Kimball, Jeffrey Durbin and Stacey Almond

Councilman Henshaw stated his Candidate Selection as follows:

- Keith Williams, Lee Staab, Yvonne Kimball, Matthew Garside and Jeffrey Durbin

Councilman Miller stated his Candidate Selection as follows:

- Keith Williams, Ken Klein and Stacey Almond

d. Selection Summary

Mr. Baenziger stated the majority of the votes were for the following:

- Stacey Almond
- Jeffrey Durbin
- Yvonne Kimball
- Dana Souza
- Keith Williams

6. OVERVIEW OF REMAINING PROCESS**a. Revised Schedule**

Mayor Smith spoke to the revised schedule.

- Wednesday September 29th

Council meeting with finalists individually, afternoon special meeting to speak with council so public may be present

Colin Baenziger suggested adding a public reception for candidates to informally meet and greet the community

- September 28th to meet and speak informally at a public reception

Discussion ensued regarding interview and meeting times as well as the appointment of an interim City Manager while the selection process is finalized.

7. PUBLIC COMMENT

Public Comment:
- Tommy Williams

8. DISCUSSION OF NEXT STEPS

Vice Mayor Johnson expressed his appreciation for time to come together to have transparency in the selection process of the city manager. Councilman Henshaw thanked Colin and his team for the work he has done to find all available options. Mayor Smith echoed the comments by Council.

9. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 6:14 p.m.