



TOWN OF ASHLAND CITY
Special Called City Council Meeting
December 09, 2024, 5:00 PM
Minutes

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Greer called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Mayor Gerald Greer
Vice Mayor Chris Kerrigan
Councilman Tim Adkins
Councilwoman Nicole Binkley
Councilman Michael Smith
Councilman Kevin Thompson
Councilman Tony Young

PUBLIC HEARING

1. Public Notice for Special called meeting

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

PUBLIC FORUM

NONE

NEW BUSINESS

2. Applicant # 1

Summarize Work History: Known for building very strong teams. He is not the type of guy that comes into clean house and get rid of people. People are in their positions because they have earned them. He has very high expectations and he will raise the bar on how to operate. He had been in Calloway for less than a year when he experienced his first hurricane. He was able to use his team in the clean up and they were very successful. He has been in this line of work for over 20 years.

Professionally, why are you interested in this position at this time: He has been looking for a change. Fiancé lives in Nashville, and he has been looking in this area for a change. He likes new challenges. He is part of the Tennessee City Manager Association. He is part of the Florida City Manager Association also. He is a District 1 director for the area he is currently in. He has been here and spent an entire day driving through Town and looked at all our facilities. He met with some of the Police officers and explained who he was and why he was there. He was very impressed with the officers and how professional they were. He thought the parks were beautiful and well maintained. He loves the location and was pleased to be able to come and look around.

How did you handle a situation when you needed information from a Department Head for a Council Packet, and they were not responding: He is very dependent on employee handbook, and he will deal with staff accordingly, but the council will never hear about it because it is ultimately his responsibility to get the information that is needed. He has read our handbook and thinks that it all goes back to coming in and assuring the staff he is here to build a strong team and work together. He holds a weekly meeting with each department head to find out what is going on and how to achieve their goals. He has not really had this issue because his team knows that he has their backs, and they usually have his back. Being late on information to go to City Council should never happen.

How do you keep the Mayor, Council, Departments, & Employees informed of what is happening in the organization: He can give information to his department heads and they are

responsible for sending it down to the employees. He referred to the Sunshine laws regarding sharing information. Welcome a weekly or bi-weekly meeting with council members to keep them updated on information. There should never be a time where the employees of the city do not feel supported by the City Council. He sends a lot of emails out to stay informed on all situations and if he does not know the answer he can get it within a few minutes from his department head.

How comfortable are you with public speaking: Being the district Director and other boards and commissions he has had to give presentations. He is very comfortable. He was called for a speaking engagement for the evening of this interview.

Describe your experience providing administrative oversight of Development Services like planning, engineering, building, coding, & utility Administration: Part of his job now is project manager for the city. He is overseeing \$20 million dollars' worth of projects for the city. He loves Grants and if there is a grant available for any project he will go after it. This means that out of the \$ 20 million dollars the citizens money only used about \$ 50,000 dollars. He is a very hands-on city manager and is not the guy that sits behind his desk. He says it is important to lead by example and is always out in the community and all of the employees know him personally.

Describe experience managing a multi-million-dollar capital improvement project identification and prioritizing projects and funding strategies and overall program coordination: He touched on it a few minutes ago with the previous question. There is a project going on right now through the center of his town and has been a project ever since he started there. He has used 4 different lending places through grants that were used for the projects. There was a bridge in the city that was at 88% dilapidation, and he found a grant had been sitting inactive for years and was able to go back to FEMA and get the grant active again and they are now replacing the bridge. He is project manager for 115 different projects right now.

Can you describe your experience managing and over seeing long range planning activities: Transportation and planning organization is something they have in Florida. They have 2 committees under them, the citizens committee and the technical coordinating committee which he is the chairman of the technical coordinating committee. They have to be sure the state money is funded in the correct way.

What is your role in making the budgets each year: Capital outlays are determined by the grant process and what is left to pay after the grants are obtained for each project. He lets the budget write itself with direction from the council.

Give an example of how you demonstrated leadership, positive change and innovation: Using automation is a great way to show innovation. Making sure that employees have the proper equipment to perform their duties.

What qualities do you have that would make you the most desirable candidate for the position: He is very integrated with his employees, and he listens to them and is very hands-on. He has an open-door policy, and he wants the employees to be able to come to him and talk and say what they like and what they don't like. Everything leads back to team building and he prides himself on that.

Do you understand what the pay range is for this position and are you comfortable with that: Yes, it would be a little bit of a pay decrease for me. It is not a deal breaker by any means. He is very much aware of the salary range and is ok with it.

3. Applicant # 2

Summarize Work History: He has 2 ½ years in Georgetown Colorado and this is his current position. It is a resort community surrounded by 15 resorts such as Vale among others. Georgetown gets about 3 million tourists each year. Full-time residents are about 1500. The challenge of this is balance between what the residents want and what the tourists expect. Main role is to enforce the policies. This is a council-led government, so he is used to meeting with the mayor and making sure they have everything covered for the council members. He also has 10 department heads to manage. They hold weekly department head meetings to communicate what each department is doing. He said his goal is to lead and empower his staff. Prior to this

position he was the Assistant coordinator in Brush Colorado. He has a certificate in community development and enjoys that area. Prior to Brush he was in Augusta Georgia. He created a non-profit for community development there. There is where he decided to go back to school and get a degree in public administrators because he could make more changes and help develop an area better from the inside of an administration than outside. He listens to the community's needs and brings back to the council and makes sure that he is meeting their needs in each area. He was the chairman of the downtown development committee in Augusta. He realized that a lot of administrators don't know a lot about planning and so that was his focus, and he has made it a goal to learn about codes and other planning essentials.

Professionally, why are you interested in this position at this time: He and his wife are tired of the snow. They are ready to head back to the south since that is where they are from originally. Ashland City is very similar to what he is used to because it is not too large but not small and it is growing.

How did you handle a situation when you needed information from a Department Head for a Council Packet, and they were not responding: He gives grace for each situation, however if it became a pattern, I would have to address it. I think that if you set clear expectations, it avoids some of this from happening. If we need to make an improvement plan then we could do that to help the department head prioritize this step for the meetings. He leads by example to set the expectations with the department heads.

How do you keep the Mayor, Council, Departments, & Employees informed of what is happening in the organization: Started with staff and addresses them with weekly meetings. We should be addressing upcoming events or projects and things we need help with. He does not like to create culture; he likes to learn what the culture is and improve it. We use P.A.R. in Georgetown and that stands for Professionalism, Accountability, and Respect. I implement principles that we can work on together and the last is emotional intelligence. He believes that being transparent to the community and council is very critical. Tries to follow an open-door policy.

How comfortable are you with public speaking: He is very comfortable and likes to talk. It is important to be prepared. He has spoken at conferences and small panel and council and is comfortable in any of those situations. When speaking he follows this pattern needs, supply, response. This means what is the need, what is the answer to that need, and what is my recommendation for a solution.

Describe your experience providing administrative oversight of Development Services like planning, engineering, building, coding, & utility Administration: He was planning and zoning Commissioner in Augusta for 4 years and in Brush Colorado he was codes and building commissioner. The most important in this position is planning and being familiar with the codes and writing reports. Doing a lot of research and getting very comfortable with codes and making sure everything is up to date.

Describe experience managing a multi-million-dollar capital improvement project identification and prioritizing projects and funding strategies and overall program coordination: Capitol improvement plans are very important to him. Takes a lot of thought on how to prioritize them depending on how many years plan they are on 5, 10, or 15. Every part of the project is important and must be thought out including utilities and equipment needed for the project. Make sure the council is always prepared to talk about strategic plans for the projects. Staying on track and preparing the council if things change because the longer the project priorities change the changes in the needs of the projects.

Can you describe your experience managing and overseeing long range planning activities: Long range projects are essential for where your community is going in the future. Long term projects guide all of the short-term projects. It will change and things will need updates throughout the process.

What is your role in making the budgets each year: He has a lot of experience working with all the Department heads and getting their budgets made out for the year. He does research and works with other administrators as well. He goes after grants to lessen the spending each year.

Give an example of how you demonstrated leadership, positive change and innovation: Hands on leadership but more of an orchestrator. Meets with the community and incorporates their input. He holds meetings to make sure he is very involved and informed.

What qualities do you have that would make you the most desirable candidate for the position: He is a people person. He empowers his team and does not micromanage his team. He is very educated. He creates a positive work environment. He is a visionary. He is a servant at heart.

Do you understand what the pay range is for this position and are you comfortable with that: He understands the pay range and is willing to take a pay decrease.

He asked if there was time for him to ask questions and Gary advised it was only 2 minutes and he started he would save them for the next round.

4. Applicant # 3

Summarize Work History: He was a utility worker in Kissimmee Florida for 6 years. Went back to college and got a bachelor's degree in government. He went to the city of White House where he was the public service director. He currently works for Jacob's Engineering.

Professionally, why are you interested in this position at this time: Great foundation and attitude. He is local and if he got the position, he would be able to hit the ground running and would not have to worry about relocating. Small town atmosphere and friendly people.

How did you handle a situation when you needed information from a Department Head for a Council Packet, and they were not responding: He has had experience working with department heads. He still keeps in contact with many of them from the city of White House. Keep in constant contact with them and make sure you are all working together but I never really had that issue.

How do you keep the Mayor, Council, Departments, & Employees informed of what is happening in the organization: Active listening and mutual respect. Talking with staff and transparency without holding anything back. Building trust and strong relationships with the employees and the council members.

How comfortable are you with public speaking: He is comfortable speaking in public and has done it very often. The White House board meetings are an example since his department had the biggest budget and he was in front of them every month asking for the biggest expenses. Trying to break down the topic for people to understand who are not in the field is the hardest part of the presentation.

Describe your experience providing administrative oversight of Development Services like planning, engineering, building, coding, & utility Administration: He has looked over our budget and made references to some of the line items. He is familiar and has relationships with CSR Engineering and knows some of them from working with them in White House.

Describe experience managing a multi-million-dollar capital improvement project identification and prioritizing projects and funding strategies and overall program coordination: He works closely with the project managers on each development. He is always looking for ways to save money and improve the quality of the work being done.

Can you describe your experience managing and overseeing long range planning activities: He follows the budget very closely and prioritizes the projects to see that they are completed close or under budget and time spent. He would have meetings with the City Administrator to make final cuts and improve the project development. He makes sure the city is not responsible for any costs that were left out of the original planning of the budget on the projects.

What is your role in making the budgets each year: He holds meetings with the department heads and goes over their capitol outlay for all projects for the department. He makes sure that the city is having growth and not just looking at the tax revenue.

Give an example of how you demonstrated leadership, positive change and innovation: He follows the term SWOT and that stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunity, Tools. He looks for ways to use the available money to get the most work for the money that is available.

He utilizes active listening to the needs of the departments as well. He learned to understand the trends and ways to improve.

What qualities do you have that would make you the most desirable candidate for the position: Experience, Strong communication skills, Enthusiasm, integrity, Trustworthy and has great connections, and willingness to improve.

Do you understand what the pay range is for this position and are you comfortable with that: He said that it would be a pay decrease for him, but money is not always everything his family lives in Hendersonville and he would like to be back with them. He advised Gary he had a power point made of some of his accomplishments and Gary advised him to email it to him.

5. Applicant # 4

Summarize Work History: He has a bachelor's in political science. He has been improving communities for over 20 years now. He started out as a water treatment plant operator, and he was the public works director in Ashland City. He then went to the City of Portland and had a short term in Marytown Florida. He realized that he was not knowledgeable of the Florida regulations and decided to come back to Tennessee. He came back and became the City Manager of the Town of Oliver Springs. He is now the City Manager of the city of Maynardville. He is certified in every utility available, and he is also a CMFO. He is currently working on his certified public manager degree now. He is on the US Department of Energy board right now. He is on the storm water management board and in the city of Laverne he is on the water board as well.

Professionally, why are you interested in this position at this time: He likes being a city manager and making positive changes. He remembers working in Ashland City many years ago and it holds a special spot in his heart. He said that many towns have been modeled after the Town of Ashland City.

How did you handle a situation when you needed information from a Department Head for a Council Packet, and they were not responding: It all comes down to accountability. He has never really experienced a department head that is not accountable and mostly everyone he has worked with is above board and has done a good job. He will not yell at anyone but if there was a case where this occurred, he would have the department stay all night if needed to get it done. No one goes home until the work is done. If this was unsuccessful, he would handle it through disciplinary action within the policy. If they can't get it done, they do not need to be a department head.

How do you keep the Mayor, Council, Departments, & Employees informed of what is happening in the organization: The most important thing to remember is what to leave in and what to leave out because there is so much that goes on within the city. Emails and phone calls and meetings. Not giving out useless information.

How comfortable are you with public speaking: For the last 15 years he has done public speaking whether in a group or in front of the council. He relies on power points and he thinks he is a good speaker. Speaking is never a problem for him.

Describe your experience providing administrative oversight of Development Services like planning, engineering, building, coding, & utility Administration: We go from meeting to meeting and make sure that everyone is aware of the plans and what part they each have in the development project.

Describe experience managing a multi-million-dollar capital improvement project identification and prioritizing projects and funding strategies and overall program coordination: He has experience making asset management plans. He is his own CMFO and knows what is going into and out of the project. He has the ability to change directions very easily to manage all parts of the project. He uses a lot of grants to fund some of the project and save on costs. Form a committee and put your minds together on how to run the project.

Can you describe your experience managing and overseeing long range planning activities: There is a grant available now if you are not aware of it. It is called the SS4 and that

stands for Safe Streets 4 all. He has created a spread sheet to evaluate all of the streets in need and it ranks them as the most important to complete first. This way he knows every year what the budget is and what streets he can get completed.

What is your role in making the budgets each year: Look at last year's budget and make small changes and the budget will write itself.

Give an example of how you demonstrated leadership, positive change and innovation: Physical Responsibility, Responsiveness – No one goes home until the job is done.

What qualities do you have that would make you the most desirable candidate for the position: He is here for the community, and it is up to the council who they want to work with.

Do you understand what the pay range is for this position and are you comfortable with that: He is aware of the pay range and is comfortable with it because his family is here.

Gary Jaeckel: Asked that the council members email the choices of the returning candidates for an in-person interview by Wednesday December 11th. and he will be able to bring them in Wednesday December 18th.

Mayor Greer: Stated that he wants the council members to be sure that if they are asking someone back, they are sure the person is a good fit for the position. If they decide that no one is a good fit, he is fine with not moving forward with any of the candidates and continuing the search.

Councilman Smith: Feels like we don't need to hire anyone and is fine with keeping things the way they are now.

Councilman Thompson: Feels that Allen is doing a fabulous job, and he is fine with keeping Allen in the position if he would like to accept it.

Allen Nicholson: He is staying the way we are right now until the council finds the right person.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Councilman Thompson, Seconded by Vice Mayor Kerrigan, to adjourn the meeting. All approved by voice vote and the meeting adjourned at 8:24 p.m.



MAYOR GERALD GREER



CITY RECORDER MARY MOLEPSKE