

A special meeting of the City Commission was held on August 17, 2011 at approximately 7:37 p.m., immediately following the 5:15 City Commission workshop meeting, in the Commission Chambers at the Municipal Administration Building. The meeting was called to order by Mayor Michael S. Carter.

**COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:** Jonathan Thornhill; Terrye Y. Howell; John Paul Rogers; Betty Wojcik; Mayor Michael S. Carter

**COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:** None

**CITY REPRESENTATIVES PRESENT:** Judith H. Delmar, City Manager; Clara VanBlargan, City Clerk; Jacquie Hawkins, Deputy City Clerk; Sandra Davis, Human Resources Director

[The minutes are recorded, but are not transcribed verbatim.]

**Agenda Item 1. Roll Call**

**Agenda Item 2. City Manager Candidate Discussion & Direction for Staff**

Immediately following the 5:15 p.m. City Commission Workshop meeting for the purpose of interviewing the two candidates for the City Manager's position, Therese Leary via in person and R. Dale Brown via Skype, the City Commission had a special meeting to discuss the interviews, including those held at the City Commission Workshop meeting on August 8, 2011, and to provide staff with direction as to whether they wished to hire one of the two candidates or reopen it for more applications.

Mayor Carter asked City Manager Judith Delmar to provide her thoughts about the two candidates. Ms. Delmar said both candidates were qualified, had strong traits, and could bring something to the community. She said of the two candidates she would prefer Therese Leary because she had a comfortable presence and appeared to be able to work well with staff and the City Commissioners.

Mayor Carter asked Ms. Delmar if she had an opportunity to visit with Ms. Leary about the job. Ms. Delmar said she did for about fifteen minutes regarding the budgetary problems and the organization, and from that she felt comfortable with hiring her.

Commissioner Wojcik made the following comments:

- Although Mr. Brown seemed knowledgeable in economic development, planning and development, utilities, and all the other areas involved with the City, his experience seemed more focused on smaller communities with less departments and more responsibilities in other areas because they probably didn't have as many department directors.
- She was impressed with Ms. Leary's personality, her global experience, and experience in historic districts, which could be used to help improve our economic condition.
- She said it was most important that we have somebody who works well with people, staff, and the commissioners, who can plan the most effective way of dealing with the problems we are experiencing, and who can take advantage of opportunities as they arise.
- Commissioner Wojcik said for that reason, she thought Ms. Leary was a good candidate for us and she felt that her experience was what the City needed because we are hiring a city manager and not an economic developer.

Mayor Carter asked Commissioner Wojcik if she thought Ms. Leary was the stronger candidate and she said in her opinion, yes.

Commissioner Thornhill commented that:

- Ms. Leary was very personable and despite the problems with Skype, Mr. Brown seemed to be a down-home type of guy; one who doesn't mind talking to you.
- Ms. Leary was historical minded, was in favor of the pay-as-you-go financing, looked for merchant cooperation, and was very enthusiastic about getting the downtown going.
- Mr. Brown had phenomenal knowledge, he had a great resume, he was in favor of the pay-as-you-go financing and the zero-based budgeting, and he has an open door policy.
- If based on a scale, Ms. Leary would just teeter over because she seemed to have a little more enthusiasm than Mr. Brown and took a more conservative view in taking care of the City.
- He thought Ms. Leary had done her homework by checking out what was going on here whereas Mr. Brown seemed to only take a look at our budget and so seemed not to know what was going on in the City.

Mayor Carter said he was impressed that Ms. Leary took the time to visit downtown while she was here to see what it was about and talk with some merchants.

Commissioner Howell commented that:

- Her opinion changed and she was more in favor of Ms. Leary now than she was after the first phone interview, though it may have been because of the fiasco with the computer when interviewing Mr. Brown by Skype.
- She was impressed with Ms. Leary's knowledge of tourism and Lake Wales, which would be helpful in revitalizing downtown in the hope that it will draw people here.
- Ms. Leary would be a good fit for Lake Wales, especially in the area of historic preservation. Without that type of experience it would be difficult.
- She was impressed with Ms. Leary's enthusiasm and her passion for Lake Wales, and hoped if chosen, she would keep that extra effort going.
- Commissioner Howell said if it had to be a choice between the two candidates, her preference would be Ms. Leary, though this in no way was saying it couldn't be opened up for more applications.

Ms. Delmar said it was interesting that Ms. Leary took the time to visit the Legoland website and that she seemed genuinely disturbed that Lake Wales was not listed along with Winter Haven and Haines City as a nearby city.

Commissioner Rogers commented that Mr. Brown did not get a fair shake because half of what he said could not be heard due to the poor Skype reception and problems with the cell phone and telephone. Because of that, he said he would not be able to vote for or against him. He said he was a fair man and that is what he felt about it.

Mayor Carter asked for Commissioner Roger's impression of Ms. Leary and Commissioner Rogers commented the following:

- Ms. Leary had a good sense of humor, was very pleasant to talk with, dressed well, and presented herself well.
- Her focus seemed to be more on the downtown, which concerned him.
- He is not interested in streetscapes; he is only interested in this community getting on solid financial footage.
- He liked Mr. Brown's experience and background in economic development because economic development is what brings in the money for good roads, parks, recreation facilities, and water and sewer. Without an economical sound base you can't have a downtown.
- The whole state is in terrible shape and it cannot be cured overnight.
- He would rather have somebody more in tuned to the business community as a way of bringing money in, and the only way to do that would be through economic development.

Commissioner Howell made the following comments:

- Commissioner Rogers had a good point about Mr. Brown being an economic development person, but the City Manager does not need to be involved with economic development because the City pays an Economic Development Director to do that.
- The City Manager only needs to make sure the Economic Development Director is doing his job.
- Ms. Leary focused more on the downtown because the questions directed to her were about the downtown and revitalization.
- The City Manager would not be paid to revitalize the downtown.

Commissioner Wojcik made the following comments:

- It would be the overall package and Ms. Leary's ability to manage those who deal in those various areas is what we have to look for.
- If they were hiring an Economic Development Director, she would agree whole heartedly with Commissioner Rogers that Mr. Brown's economic development involvement and experience would be more important. But, whoever is in the position of City Manager has got to manage the person who is doing economic development to make sure he or she is working with the City Commissioners, staff, and all areas of the community.
- She felt that after the last interview with both candidates by phone, she did not care whether they talked to Mr. Brown again or not. If he was able to be interviewed in person it might have made a difference. But as far as she was concerned she was just interested in talking more to see if Ms. Leary was as good as what she seemed to be over the phone.
- She does not think that the problem with Skype and the phones going in and out really affected her decision one way or the other.

Mayor Carter made the following comments:

- The technical difficulties they had were unfortunate but he was able to get out of the interview with Mr. Brown what he was looking for.
- Although Mr. Brown is very solid on paper, for he has some credentials and a background in education, he thought Ms. Leary was the stronger of the two candidates.
- Ms. Leary brings the experience that we need and she has the right education.
- He was very impressed that Ms. Leary seemed to have a lot of common sense especially with the idea of a Christmas club account because that kind of thinking could be good for the City when the economy starts to turn around.
- He was pleased that Ms. Leary was as personable tonight as she was on the phone. Her personality was sincere with no fabrication.
- Ms. Leary would make an excellent City Manager.

Commissioner Wojcik said she was impressed that Ms. Leary didn't mind saying something even if she thought it was not what they wanted to hear.

Mayor Carter said we need to be aware that this is not a lifetime commitment because neither one of the candidates will most likely be around ten years from now. The Commission's decision for City Manager would probably be one of the most important decisions the five of them could make during their tenure on this Commission.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Linda Kimbrough, 307 Florida Avenue, agreed with Commissioner Rogers that Mr. Brown did not get a fair shake because she could not see him and heard very little of what he said. Ms. Leary seems like the perfect person because she could be seen and heard in person. If she had to make a decision based on those interviews she would have to go with Ms. Leary because she did not get that much from Mr. Brown's interview on the computer.

Jack Van Sickle, 3060 Ashton Club Drive, said he also agreed with Commissioner Rogers that Mr. Brown did not get a fair shake because he too could not see or hear him that well and therefore did not get that

much out of the interview. He said Ms. Leary's focus was a little too much on the historical downtown, and though a very important part of Lake Wales, we also need services in other areas of town too and help with failing infrastructure, which he did not think Ms. Leary had the same passion for.

Mimi Hardman, 300 S. Lake Shore Blvd, explained why she thought she may have been responsible for the comments made by Ms. Leary regarding historic preservation in Lake Wales. She did not think the fact that Ms. Leary visited downtown and the Legoland website was something to hold against her.

Mayor Carter said we probably need to decide if we want to have another interview with Mr. Brown in person. Commissioner Howell recommended also interviewing Ms. Leary again so the Commission could ask her about interests other than the historic downtown, which is important to us but not as important as the city's infrastructure. She said the Commission geared its questions toward the historic downtown.

Commissioner Wojcik said a lot of the Mayor's questions focused on the downtown and what we can do to make the downtown more viable and alive. Nobody really asked her any questions about things like infrastructure. She said that Ms. Leary made a statement that we need to prepare for capital improvements and make sure we are prepared financially to handle the infrastructure problems. She said the decision was too important and they needed to at least feel comfortable before making that final decision.

Mayor Carter said it was important that the decision be unanimous and he thought it would put the person at a disadvantage if a decision was based on something like a technical problem.

Commissioner Rogers reiterated that Mr. Brown did not get a fair shake.

Mayor Carter asked if the Commission would like to interview any more candidates. Ms. Delmar said if we have a candidate that we think would make a good fit then we don't need to drag it on any more than we have to.


The consensus of the City Commission was to interview both candidates again and if not satisfied open it back up.

Mayor Carter asked Ms. Davis to contact both candidates and explain to them what was going on.

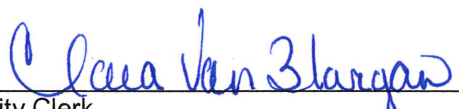
Following the discussion and consensus of the City Commission, contact was made with Mr. Brown and he agreed to meet with the City Commission for an interview in person on Tuesday, August 23<sup>rd</sup> at 5:30 p.m. in the City Manager's conference room. The City Commission asked that Ms. Leary be contacted for a phone interview at the same meeting.

The workshop meeting to interview the two candidates was scheduled for Tuesday, August 23<sup>rd</sup> at 5:15 p.m. with the first interview beginning at 5:30 p.m. in the City Manager's conference room and the Special meeting for discussion of the two candidates was scheduled for Tuesday, August 23<sup>rd</sup> immediately following the workshop meeting in the Commission Chambers.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:07 p.m.

  
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Mayor/Commissioner

ATTEST:

  
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City Clerk