

A workshop meeting of the City Commission was held on August 17, 2011 at approximately 5:15 p.m. in the City Manager's Conference Room at the Municipal Administration Building. The meeting was called to order by Mayor Michael S. Carter.

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

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: None

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

Agenda Item 1. Roll Call

Agenda Item 2. City Manager Candidate Interviews: Therese Leary, via in person; R. Dale Brown, via Skype

Therese Leary, via in person

The City Commissioners discussed what questions they wished to ask from the list and said they had other questions not on the list to ask.

The interview with Therese Leary was in person and started at 5:19 p.m. The Commissioners introduced themselves and then each Commissioner in turn asked question.

Mayor Carter asked questions and Ms. Leary responded as follows:

- **Her Experience with Respect to Budget Preparation and Finance:**
 - Ms. Leary said she was responsible for preparing a budget in all her past positions although when she had a good finance staff to work with it made it much easier.
 - She matches the revenues with expenses; reviews innovative proposals from department heads, a give-and-take situation; watches cash flow and revenue generation.
 - Ms. Leary said she read Ms. Delmar's budget memo and thought it was excellent, easy to read and understand, and she hoped to do as well.
- **Her Concerns Regarding having less staff and no Assistant City Manager, in the current Budget due to Budget Constraints:**

Ms. Leary said she would not come into the position expecting to fund an Assistant City Manager, and hopefully they can get along without one.
- **Her Experience Regarding Partnerships between the City and the Chamber of Commerce:**
 - In Lake Park the Chamber of Commerce was not strong and they basically were not interested in the City.
 - In Hilton Head there was a very strong Chamber of Commerce, which caused a rift because some people thought they ran the town. Their focus was naturally tourism and thought they should get more money from the town.
 - Ms. Leary said a partnership with the Chamber of Commerce was invaluable.
 - Commissioner Wojcik as the Director of the Lake Wales Chamber, and City Manager Judith Delmar gave her an overview of the partnership that exists now between the City and Chamber and what is being done to make the City more business friendly.
 - Ms. Leary said she spent a good amount of time in Lake Wales visiting the museum, and talking with some of the store and business owners downtown. She also visited the Legoland website and was disappointed to see that Lake Wales was not mentioned or included as an area town, only Winter Haven and Haines City, which means people

planning their trip to Legoland would not know Lake Wales is nearby with its unique attractions and history. Commissioner Wojcik and Mayor Carter gave her an update on the City's progress in capturing some of the tourism.

- **Her Experience and ideas on getting the community to volunteer for City Committees and Boards:**
 - You have to get people interested through things like forums, neighborhood presentations, street parties etc.
 - She would work with businesses about this issue and also about the loss of business they get because they do not stay open after 5:00 p.m. to accommodate working people, though she noted that many of the businesses downtown are those that don't necessarily need to stay open late because they are not retail or restaurants etc..
 - You need to get the message out.
- **What she enjoys doing in her spare time:**
 - Ms. Leary said she loves the beach.
 - She has three children, two daughters and a son, and two grandchildren and likes to spend time with them when she can.
 - She explained how she went back to school to get her college degree while in her 30's at the same time her children were getting their degrees.
 - She has not been working for the past year and, though she was told she should just sit back and enjoy herself, she has had enough enjoyment and wants to use what she knows to help towns grow. She can retire later.
- **Her experience with the Sunshine Law:**
 - Ms. Leary said she had had experience with the Sunshine Law, though it was a little different in that it only applied to more than two Commissioners instead of two or more.

Commissioner Thornhill shared with Ms. Leary the issues that caused him to want to become a Commissioner and asked questions, with responses as follows:

- **What she will do when the Lean Times End:**
 - Ms. Leary said she was big on the "save and pay" philosophy, somewhat like setting up a Christmas Club account at a bank, though she said the reality is that you have to borrow money to do things like infrastructure. She believes that everyone, including the country itself, is learning a lesson on long-term debt.
 - She would motivate staff so that everyone is working together to accomplish goals by learning to do more with less. Then when the pot of gold comes back, everyone will know how to be more frugal.
- **How important working with citizen groups are to her, how she would handle the view of "take, take, take" but not "give, give, give", and if she feels confident that she can say "no":**
 - They have to decide what the best investment and return is for the dollar and how it will benefit the community as opposed to money going to special interest groups.
 - You can dole out a little less to each organization or prioritize, which is difficult.
 - She said she can say no because she has no choice. There is only one pie and only so many ways to slice it.
- **How she would attempt to get downtown businesses to stay open after 5:00 p.m.:**
 - She said when businesses downtown close at 5:00 p.m. they are catering to the unemployed or the retired and it does nothing for the community mix.
 - You need a merchandise service mix that creates people traffic that feeds on each other.
 - You have to get people to believe there is a rainbow.

- **The process and length of time she would take for evaluating:**

- She said she thought making changes right away would be suicide until you know what you are doing.
- She would take a while anywhere from one to three months or even longer if it required communicating and getting input from others.
- She would then take time to evaluate what was learned and weed out those ideas that are attached to someone's agenda.
- She would figure out what needs to be done.

Commissioner Wojcik asked the following questions and Ms. Leary responded as follows:

- **Why she was City Manager in Crystal Rivers for only a couple years:**
 - There is never job security with a city manager position and Crystal Rivers had the reputation of changing city managers basically every eight to fourteen months.
 - This was her first job in Florida and politics was bad there. It had a very dysfunctional council and there were special interest groups.
- **An experience she had that was more positive than any other:**
 - There wasn't a Historic Society in Lake Park or mention of it. She talked with a resident who had written a book about the history of the town, soliciting her help to promote the town's history. They got a grant to do a survey of historic buildings, though they did not have a historic district like Lake Wales does. Together they talked it up and formed a great Historic Society that started doing historic tours of the homes.
 - They also were doing a visioning of the downtown itself which was at a neglected waterfront park. People rallied around the project. There are ways to spur people on and get them going, though bringing businesses around is more difficult because they have to see that their investment will bring a return. But, they can only feel that way if you feel that way.

Commissioner Howell shared with Ms. Leary the reasons why she became a City Commissioner and asked the following questions and Ms. Leary responded as follows:

- **A mistake she made and what she learned from it:**
 - There was talk among the Commission and Department Heads to change the name of Lake Park back to its original name, Kelsey City, and it leaked out. There were people who were not very happy about that because it meant things like changing stationary etc. A resident wrote a letter in the newspaper just tearing into her. She talked with the Commission and they said if there was that much bad feeling about the change they should back off. So she wrote the lady a letter telling her that she and the Commission had felt the change would be a good idea but that it was people like her, those who cared so much about the community, that made it a great place to live, and because she and others felt that strongly against changing the name, they had decided to table the idea. The lady came in and hugged her.
 - Ms. Leary said she also made mistakes in management and with staff but she tried to work through them and always learned from her mistakes.
 - She also has a problem with delegating, but she is trying to learn that you have to let the professional people do their jobs and also be responsible for it.
- **What she thinks she can bring to the position that no one else could bring:**
 - Wisdom
 - She said she feels a connection with the town and its history.
 - She believes she can help the city get back on track for when things emerge again.
 - She is not a dictator and would like to work with staff as a team.
 - She is big on consulting others before making a decision so others can buy into it.
 - She likes people.
- **Where she would Live:**

- Ms. Leary said she could not imagine that a city manager would want to live anywhere else than in the city she managed and that she would definitely live in Lake Wales.
- Ms. Leary asked for the percentage of city employees that live in Lake Wales and Ms. Delmar said about 60%.

Commissioner Rogers explained to Ms. Leary some of the negatives she would have to deal with if she got the job, along with the positives. He said he was not against history but his first priority was having clean water, a good sanitation system and roads. He asked:

- **Would she Evaluate the Departments to see what Changes need to be Make.**
 - Ms. Leary said there was no way a new city manager could do that without first meeting with the department heads, those actually doing the jobs, to understand where they are coming from, who they are, and ask them for their suggestions on how things could be better.
 - Then she would make a plan in her mind.
 - She would try to address the issues within budget constraints

The interview ended at 6:18.

R. Dale Brown, via Skype & Phone

The interview with Dale Brown was through Skype and the phone, though there was a great deal of technical difficulties doing so. Commissioners introduced themselves and then in turn asked their questions:

Mayor Carter asked questions and Mr. Brown responded as follows:

- **His Experience with Respect to Budget Preparation and Finance:**
 - Jersey Village: He prepared the entire budget for 13 years though the last four or five years he had an assistant to the City Manager who worked with him on preparations with the help of a good financial program that had a budgeting module.
 - Palestine: He worked with the Finance Director with the help of a good financial program that had a budgeting module.
 - He explained his budgeting process as follows:
 - He used a modified zero based budget, based on history, and explained what that was.
 - Each department presented a proposed budget, itemizing each line item.
 - He reviewed it with the Finance Department.
 - When completed it went before the Commission.
- **His Concerns Regarding having less Staff, including no City Manager, in the Current Budget due to Budget Constraints:**

Mr. Brown said he never had an Assistant City Manager to work with and in many cases he directed other departments such as Planning.
- **His Experience and Ideas on Engaging the Community to Volunteer for City Committees and Boards.**
 - Palestine: The Mayor talked directly with people and actively solicited. He also used the local newspaper and yet they usually had one vacancy on each board that was hard to fill.
 - Jersey City: A group of women they referred to as the Babysitter's Club served on most of the committees and actively recruited others. They also sent a newsletter to every resident which included vacancies.
- **His Experience Regarding Partnerships between the City and the Chamber of Commerce Especially in the Areas of Economic Development**

- Huntsville: The City and the Chamber of Commerce worked very closely together. He was also Planning Director, Community Development Director and he and the Chamber president worked together on Economic Development.
- Jersey City: (A small City seven to eight thousand people) There was a large Chamber of Commerce and he was on the council serving on various committees such as the very important Transportation Committee and the Economic Development Committee. He also worked on a committee to get a community college built in the town.
- **What he Enjoys Doing in her Spare Time**
 - Visiting his two children
 - Reading
 - Genealogy
 - Fishing
 - Gardening and landscaping

Commissioner Thornhill shared with Mr. Brown the reasons he became a Commissioner and asked the questions with Mr. Brown's responses as follows:

- **How Important Working with Citizen Groups are to him and how he Handled Meeting with Them.**
 - Mr. Brown said they were very important and he will meet with anyone, as he has an open door policy.
 - He also gets out among the citizens to get feedback from them, both individuals and groups, including things like he met for lunch at a local restaurant, where people seemed to gather to talk about the city, once a week or so to be seen and to find out their concerns.
- **When the Lean Times End what Direction he will Take**
 - Pay off or pay down the debt with the extra cash
 - Or Refinance at a lower interest rate
 - Put money aside for capital improvement projects
- **Would he be able to say No to Organizations wanting Money**

Yes. When he got to Palestine they were issuing a lot of grant money and over the course of a couple of years he reduced that.
- **How he would Attempt to get Downtown Businesses to Stay Open after 5:00 p.m.**
 - Try to get downtown events established such as festivals, special events, Christmas programs, musicals etc. Look at what you have available and use what you can to get people downtown.
 - The cooperation of merchants is important
 - Brainstorming

Commissioner Howell shared with Mr. Brown the reasons why she became a Commissioner and asked questions with Ms. Brown's responded as follows:

- **Why he was not able to interview in person.**
 - He had prior commitments he could not get out of because people had changed their schedules to accommodate his schedule. He said he can be available anytime after Friday.
- **Something he did that he would like to have done differently**

He said years ago they put out for bids for garbage service with a requirement to build a transfer station and recycle center. The bid was very involved. Inadvertently things got left out of the bid and it had to be redone. It became very contentious and half of the bidders refused to resubmit. Looking back, he thinks he should have given more direct

oversight but at the time he did not want to be perceived as a micro-manager. That is something he thinks he needs to work on; how to be involved without seeming to be a micro-manager. He tends to think his way is the best.

- **What he Thinks he can Bring to the Position that No One Else could Bring.**
 - Extensive experience in Economic Development and Financial Management
 - Creativity and imagination as was used in the saving of the Texas State Railroad, and getting the community college built
- **Would he Live in Lake Wales if he got the Job.**

He said he has lived inside the city limits of every town he worked in and he would live in Lake Wales.

Commissioner Wojcik asked the following questions and Mr. Brown responded as follows:

- **Why he Feels it is Important to Live in the City**

He said if you are going to be the city manager you should be part of the community in every way so what the City and Commission does affects the city manager as well as all other residents.
- **Has he Ever Been Fired from a Job or Asked to Leave**

Yes, from Palestine he was asked to leave after five and a half years because there was a change in the City Council and they felt that because they were in opposition to everything the previous council had done, he had been associated too closely with the that council to make a good fit. He said that no city manager ever lasted there more than seven years in Palestine. The Fire Chief that just retired after 40 years told him he worked with 16 city managers over the course of his career in Palestine. Mr. Brown said he took the job knowing about their terrible history in regards to city manager tenure.

Commissioner Rogers said it seemed that his strong point was in economic development. He told him a little of the problems he would face and asked the following questions with Mr. Brown's responses:

- **His Plan for Economic Development**
 - He said he did not have a plan yet because he does not know enough about the city.
 - Economic development takes everybody and the economy
 - What worked best for him was when the Mayor, Commissioners and City Manager met with new or potential companies.

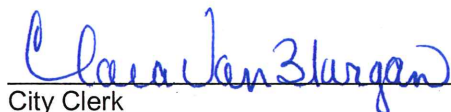
Mayor Carter made some closing comments and told Mr. Brown that Ms. Davis would be in touch with him.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:41.



Mayor/Commissioner

ATTEST:



City Clerk