

A workshop meeting of the City Commission was held on June 25, 2013 in the lunchroom at the Municipal Administration Building for the purpose of conducting phone interviews with city manager candidates Kyle McCain and John Granger. The meeting was called to order by Deputy Mayor Christopher Lutton at 5:30 p.m.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Betty Wojcik; Jonathan Thornhill; Christopher Lutton, Deputy Mayor

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Mike Carter; Eugene Fultz, Mayor

STAFF PRESENT: Human Resource Director Sandra Davis; City Clerk Clara VanBlargan; Deputy City Clerk Jacquie Hawkins

[CANDIDATE: KYLE MCCAIN]

Question #1, Part A: What will your first steps be upon assuming responsibility for this position?

- Study the Area:
 - Learn what the city limits are and the assets of the City
 - Meet: with department heads, personnel, local officials, community leaders
 - Get an understanding of what the city is, a feeling of what it has, and who the players are
- Determine the needs and goals of the City

Question #1, Part B: What do you hope to accomplish in the first year?

- Get a very good start on the policies and procedures
- Layout Funding: for the present but also for the distant future because people do not like change.

He gave an example from his last position where he set up a 'Replacement Fund' that completely funded purchases the last fifteen years so they did not have to borrow money for things like a half million dollar fire truck, which kept them from having to raise taxes.

Question #2: Describe your management style and give examples from past employment in Savannah, Sarasota, and Jupiter.

- Communication: He communicates with employees and department heads to get their input and advice so they feel part of the decision making process and therefore do a better job.
- Experience: He has had experience in the operations of every department and therefore 'speaks their language'.
- Respect: He said his management style is not tyranny. He does not get mad and yell at employees because he knows you can't get a more effective work product out of someone by causing stress. Stress causes mistakes. He treats employees with respect, making sure they know they are important.

He gave an example of a commission in Texas he worked for that strongly criticized him for refusing to yell at his employees.

Additional Question: Commissioner Wojcik asked what he would do if he found that a department head was not doing his job as expected.

- Find out the problem: If training can make the difference he would do that first. He said it is expensive changing employees and it causes a loss of productivity.
- Replace him: If he can't save the employee he will terminate.

Question #3: What are your strengths?

- People Skills: Mr. McClain said he likes people. He deals with the public in such a way as to avoid a city lawsuit by making them feel they are not being ignored or getting the runaround. He said no City he worked for was sued under his management. He said it's all about how you treat people.
- Operational Background: He said he had the second highest licensing in Texas for water and wastewater. He said he understands things like water and sewer lines and expanding systems. He said having that background saved the City of Clute millions of dollars by reducing the cost of a project by half, and he explained.

Additional Question: Commissioner Wojcik asked if Mr. McCain oversees projects himself.
He said he tries to keep up with projects closely but he also makes sure they hire a reliable inspector to keep tabs on projects.

Question #4: What are your weaknesses?

- He wants to Please: He said he wants to please those he works with, but maybe too much.
- Too Trusting: Mr. McCain said he usually trusts people until he finds out otherwise, but he has found that many contractors are not trustworthy and have unethical practices. He said he has been known to run some of them out of business at city hall. He now pays more attention to that and when he catches himself being too trusting he reevaluates the situation.

Question #5: Give us a positive statement about Lake Wales.

The Historical District: He said the one thing that really stood out when he checked the city website was the historic districts and historic properties because it shows that we know who we are. He said you have to know where you came from before knowing where you are going.

Additional Questions: Commissioner Wojcik asked Mr. McClain to define being "Business Friendly".

- Being a business friendly city means making life easier and not more difficult for the business community.
- It's a give and take: You need to consider what a business can do for the city and support the operation while "not giving them the shop".

He gave an example of what he had to smooth out in order to bring in a Starbuck's restaurant to a small town he managed.

Deputy Mayor Lutton asked if he was still working as manager of the city listed last on his resume.

Mr. McCain said he no longer was working there they didn't really want a city manager but a referee. There were four women on the Council and they hated each other. He said after two years he resigned, leaving them to continue their fight without him. He said the city was a bedroom community, an enclave near Antonio, and one of the most upscale communities in the area with the average new home value of \$756,000 in 2011, but there was no 'downtown' and therefore there was nothing that brought the community together.

Commissioner Wojcik said Mr. McCain spent most of his career in Texas or working for the Federal Government and asked if he was familiar with the different requirement of Florida Government such as the Sunshine Law.

Mr. McClain said though he was not familiar with the differences, many laws are the same and he didn't see that as being a problem. It was something he would have to pay attention to.

Commissioner Wojcik asked Mr. McCain why he would want to move to Florida.

Mr. McCain said he had applied once before for city manager of Lake Wales but had taken another position before the end of the process. He said he never worked outside of Texas so it would be a new experience and he would welcome the challenge.

Commissioner Lutton asked Mr. McCain he was still in the reserves for FEMA?

He said he resigned about 12 years earlier because he couldn't meet the time requirement, which was a minimum of six months out of the year. They kept him on anyway and he worked during vacations and in-between city jobs. He resigned when he became eligible to apply for federal retirement, because it takes a two year process. He still has his contacts and can reapply for the reserves if he decides to. He shared how his experience with FEMA saved several cities a lot of money after a hurricane.

Question #6: Give us a negative statement about Lake Wales, about its problem or difficulty.

Mr. McCain said the only negative thing he could think of was that Florida has no mountains and he likes to go to the mountains to release stress and clear his head, though he realized that Lake Wales is the highest point on the ridge.

Question # 7: Other

Salary Range: Between \$90,000 and \$153,000

Mr. McCain was agreeable to the salary range.

Deputy Mayor Lutton asked Mr. McCain if he had any questions.

Mr. McCain had no questions for the City Commission.

Deputy Mayor Lutton explained that they will be narrowing down the candidates to two or three and start the in-person interviews the week of July 8th. They hope to make a decision by the end of that week.

The phone interview with Kyle McCain ended at 6:09.

[CANDIDATE: JOHN GRANGER; 6:12 p.m.]

Question #1 Part A: What will your first steps be upon assuming responsibility for this position?

- Study the Area:
 - Meet: Meet with:
 - Commissioners, employees and the various boards to find out the policies and programs and what they are facing.
 - business owners to get an understanding of what the city is and who the players are.
 - Tour: Tour the voting district with a commissioner and the facilities possibly with the department heads.
 - Get a feel as to what the city has.
- Budget: Though most of the decisions for the budget process will probably be made by the time a city manager is hired, he needs to understand the document.

Question #1, Part B: What do you hope to accomplish in the first year?

- Listen: Mr. Granger would like to strengthen the City's ability to listen get the community behind the programs.
- Marketing: He would want to communicate to the residents the city's accomplishments.
- Program Budget: He would want to start prioritizing programs so that next year's budget has goals and objectives that staff, the commission and the public know will be accomplished.
- Plan of Action: He would want to develop a plan of action that can be measured.
- Start working toward accomplishing the goals.

Question #2: Describe your management style.

- Inclusive:

- Team and Employee Oriented: Mr. Granger said he encourages and works with his employees. He said six of his former employees went on to be city managers of their own communities.
- He is open and accessible: His door is always open to both staff and the public.
- Honest:
- Responsible: He takes the responsibility for every action. But when good things happen he gives the recognition to the employee responsible for accomplishing the task.
- Resourceful:

Additional Questions:

Commissioner Thornhill asked if Mr. Granger thought himself to be a dictator, a micromanager or a people person.

Mr. Granger said he was a people person. He works with others to solve problems and accomplish goals. His strong point is his ability to take the policies established by the Commission and work with the employees to accomplish them. He does not dictate or micromanage but uses staff meetings as a training tool and for an opportunity for staff to brainstorm ways they think they can accomplish the goals set by the Commission, and then he allows them to come up with a plan of action. He listens to all the ideas and plans and then makes a decision on what way to go.

Commissioner Wojcik asked if he would hold his department heads accountable and be able to replace one that was not doing the job.

Mr. Granger gave an example of a department head that had been working at that location for 19 years and how he tried to give him the opportunity to change or modify his behavior for two years and finally had to fire him. He added that he would hope that the Commission would let him work with a problem employee and make his own decisions on what needed to be done and not expect him to come in and start firing people. He said he believes that each employee should have the opportunity to settle down, learn their job and get help if needed before firing them.

Question #3: What are your strengths?

- Visionary: Mr. Granger saw himself as a visionary.
- Problem Solver: He said he has been able to solve problems that others couldn't. He gave a couple of examples of how he saw problems that no one else had seen because he knew how to do that type of work. He said one of his greatest strength is his ability to look at alternative ways of doing things while looking to the future, knowing that a decision you make today effects the future of a community.

Question #4: What are your weaknesses?

Mr. Granger said he had a tendency to get frustrated at the slow pace of government work, though it is internalized. Because he is always thinking about the future and the next step that must be taken he tends to become impatient and he loses his focus on the present one. He said his patience has improved over the years as he has learned that impatience impedes progress and he realizes that governments sometimes move slowly, even taking one step backwards at times before moving two steps forward. He has learned to understand that progress isn't all black or white but there are shades of gray and that they take time.

Question #5: Give us a positive statement about Lake Wales.

Mr. Granger said that after researching, he thought the most positive thing about Lake Wales was its resources and the opportunity and ability it has to achieve greatness. He said he believes perception is a very strong tool for government and if the residents have the perception of the city doing well, good things can happen. He believed the city was close to achieving that.

Additional Question:

Commissioner Wojcik asked Mr. McClain to define being "Business Friendly".

Mr. Granger said being business friendly means that the risk and time needed to bring businesses into the community is reduced by demonstrating a willingness to work with the businesses. It means determining if the regulations are necessary and if not, modifying them.

Question # 6: Give us a negative statement about Lake Wales.

Mr. Granger said according to the city survey only 50% of the residents viewed certain areas of the city favorably. That told him that the City is not communicating effectively with the residents because it appears that they have a poor perception of what the city is doing, and little confidence in it being done. He said he would be more comfortable if the percentage number was in the high 60's or 70's.

Other Questions:

Commissioner Lutton asked about his work in his Granger and Associates firm.

Mr. Granger said he did things like business plans, comprehensive plans and strategic plans for towns, boroughs, townships and school districts. He said he was tired of working 65 hours a week, doing a lot of driving, and he missed being a manager. He is looking for a city to put roots down in that has the right environment, like Lake Wales.

Commissioner Thornhill said Lake Wales is not a wealthy community, but a working class community. We are the only city in the county that has no business complexes or large manufacturers and asked what he would do to bring some here.

- Market Study: Mr. Granger said the first step would be to have a market study done to find out what types of businesses the community can support, and identify the opportunities that are not provided by the surrounding cities.
- Plan: The next step would be for the Commission to decide which of those businesses the city would like to attract to the city.
- Design: Design or modify the zoning plan to accomplish that and create an opportunity.
- Develop: Develop a plan of action, then market and reach out to find those specific opportunities.

Question #7: Other

Deputy Mayor Lutton asked Mr. McCain if he had any questions.

Mr. Granger asked what their expectations were for a city manager. Commissioner Lutton said the city has many positive assets but we haven't been able to get them running in the same direction to make the place take off. Compared to neighboring cities we don't have enough businesses to help with the tax base and create more jobs. Mr. Granger said the city needs to find some kind of balance between residential and non-residential and then develop a plan.

Salary Range: Between \$90,000 and \$153,000

Mr. Granger was agreeable to the salary range.

City Resident

Commissioner Lutton explained that there is a requirement that the city manager must live in the city. He listed some opportunities for housing.

Next Step

Deputy Mayor Lutton explained that they will be narrowing down the candidates to two or three and start the in-person interviews the week of July 8th. They hope to make a decision by the end of that week.

The workshop meeting adjourned at 7:02 p.m.


Mayor Eugene Fultz

ATTEST:


City Clerk Clara VanBlargan