

A workshop meeting of the City Commission was held on June 27, 2013 in the lunchroom at the Municipal Administration Building for the purpose of conducting phone interviews with city manager candidates Kenneth Sauer and Vincent Akhimie. 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; Deputy City Clerk Jacquie Hawkins

[CANDIDATE: KENNETH SAUER]

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

- Look at the Budget: Time is running out to make changes as it is close to completion.
- Meet with:
 - Staff: so they know who he is, what his management style is and what he expects from them.
 - Department heads: so he can learn their needs and wants and so staff can communicate with one another
 - Mayor and City Commission: to get to know each commissioner and so he can get their individual perception of the city and what they see as the needs for the future
- Meet with Merchants and Civic groups: to get their ideas about Lake Wales and what their picture of the future looks like.

What do you hope to accomplish in the first year?

- Prepare a Plan for the Future
- Workshops: to work with the Commission to develop a strategic plan and develop a vision for the future, which he said was crucial for the future of the City.

Question #2: Describe your management style:

Mr. Sauer said it would depend on the situation, where directions are needed whether a hand-up or unilateral structure etc. He said he has a facilitator style to get results. He gave an example of working in Haines City where he responded quickly to new challenges

Added Question:

Commissioner Wojcik asked what he would do if he found that a department head was not doing what he hoped they would be doing.

- Talk to the employee
- Help them develop an improvement plan in line with the city's vision
- Work through some disciplinary action
- Terminate

Commissioner Wojcik asked how long he thought that process should take. Mr. Sauer said three to four months. He wouldn't drag it out because some people are not good at change.

Question #3: What are your strengths?

- A Visualizer: Mr. Sauer said he knows how to visualize the issues and needs of the community.
- Planner: He put together a plan quickly and then can work together with staff to accomplish it. He gave an examples of a city-wide rezoning of Haines City was formed; an incentive program to bring businesses into the city; and he started a capital improvement program to address the future.

Added Question:

Commissioner Lutton asked Mr. Sauer his strengths dealing with management style.

- Experience: Mr. Sauer said he can talk to anyone about just about anything.
- A Good Judge: He said he can judge a person quickly as to whether or not they can do their job and he can identify the team players.
- Good with the Public: He gave an example of setting up a city manager's newsletter and said he is willing and feels comfortable talking with people.

Question #4: What are your weaknesses?

- Scheduling to Heavily: Mr. Sauer said he likes to have an open door policy so anyone who needs to can meet with him whether an employee, resident or commissioner, but he had a tendency to try to fit too many in one day. He said he solved that by letting his secretary know when he needed quiet time at his desk so she knew when not to schedule.
- Taking Credit: He said he had been told that he doesn't pat himself on the back enough. He said he is not that type of person and wants those who actually do the work to get the credit.

Added Question:

Commissioner Thornhill said it didn't sound like he was a tyrant, a dictator or micromanager but rather a people person? He asked Mr. Sauer if he saw that as a weakness, that he left staff work, holding them accountable, and yet sometimes he takes on their issues by himself.

Mr. Sauer said he wasn't sure if that was a weakness but he guessed it could be if it detracted from the other work he needed to do. On the other hand he said he likes working with employees, letting them know he is there to help them solve problems too.

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

Mr. Sauer said he participated in Leadership Polk and found Lake Wales to:

- Be Refreshing
- Have a great community pride and spirit downtown
- Be Friendly: He said school officials and business leaders came out to meet with them along with shop owners. The newspaper took pictures and vendors set up for them even though it was a day they didn't normally set up.
- Have Opportunities: He said he thought the town had sufficient opportunities between the Chamber and EDC for further development in Lake Wales.

Added Questions:

Commissioner Wojcik said that there was a requirement that the city manager lives in Lake Wales and asked if that would be a problem.

Mr. Sauer said he already has his house listed and it will be no problem.

Commissioner Lutton asked for his definition of being a 'business friendly' city?

Mr. Sauer said it would be a city that had staff, a city department, or city manager that actively seeks out potential businesses and then guides them through the process.

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

Mr. Sauer said it would have to be that Lake Wales does not do enough to capitalize on its assets such as the proximity to Legoland and Bok Tower and other attractions, its transportation network, the future parkway extension, and its quality of life for those searching for a home or business.

Added Questions:

Commissioner Lutton asked if there was anything he did in Haines City that could be replicated in Lake Wales.

Mr. Sauer said there were probably some things that would help.

Commissioner Wojcik asked if he had experience in all areas of operation.

Mr. Sauer said his strength is in the area of public works with water, wastewater, environmental issues with pollution, engineering with water and sewer line design, but being city manager and assistant city manager gave him experience with things like community development, economic development and things like human resources so he thought he has a well rounded background.

Commissioner Wojcik asked if he had experience working with the EDC in Haines City.

Mr. Sauer said he had a good working relationship with them and explained a project he worked on with them.

Commissioner Thornhill asked Mr. Sauer if he could summarize what happened in Lakeland.

Mr. Sauer explained and summarized that the recall committee basically wanted to clean out city hall. He said he did his job and walked away with his head up.

Commissioner Lutton asked what his responsibilities were as an Assistant City Manager.

Mr. Sauer said that as assistant city manager he basically was more like an operation site manager dealing with the day to day operations, keeping the budget in line and staff on track.

Question # 7: Do you have any questions for us?

Mr. Sauer asked what the short and long term issues were that would need to be solved.

- Commissioner Wojcik said the budget and making the pension plan more sustainable though the city is making progress on that
- Commissioner Thornhill said he basically wants:
 - Lake Wales to be the best stop in Polk County. He wants people to come to Lake Wales and wants necessary improvements so businesses will come.
 - He wants a leader who is doing the job and not one who is late coming in or is always out, unless out in the field working. Mr. Sauer said last year in Haines City the first thing he did was reduce the staff by 25%. He said staff reduction is something he is always looking for though service level is important.
 - He wants staff to be happy because staff sets the morale for the city. If staff is happy the work will get done and we will be proud of what's going on. If staff is not happy and grumbles it sets up a negative climate in the city and the Commissioners get the complaints.
- Commissioner Lutton said He is looking for someone who is:
 - A true leader, not waiting all the time for direction from the Commission and yet follows those directions when given. He said reducing staff was not what he meant by leadership. He just wants to know that we have the right staff, and that our manager knows what is going on at all times.
 - Traffic Cop: He said basically they are looking for the traffic cop for the city commission, staff and citizens.
 - Knowledgeable: He wants someone who can answer questions, doesn't say he needs to do research for a couple of weeks first, and what he does says can be backed up with what citizens see.

Mr. Sauer said it will be beneficial for him to meet individually with each commissioner to find out their expectations and then it would be very beneficial for him to meet often with them to talk about what they are seeing and hearing in the community so he knows what is going on out in the public.

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

Mr. Sauer was agreeable with the salary range.

The Next Step

A short list will be decided on after the interviews on Friday. Face-to-face interviews will start the week of July 8th.

The phone interview with Kenneth Sauer ended at 6:10 p.m.

[CANDIDATE: VINCENT AKHIMIE; 6:15 p.m.]

[The tape of this meeting was unclear and to understand what was said was near impossible. The summary was taken from notes.]

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

- Find out what the community needs and develop a work plan
- Arrange to have some workshops to discuss the needs
- Set goals and objectives

Question #1, Part 2: What do you hope to accomplish in the first year?

- Budget
- Projects: Start a list of projects that need to be accomplished
- Efficient and Effective Resource Applications

Question #2: Describe your management style.

- Leadership
- Coach

Added Questions:

Commissioner Thornhill asked if Mr. Akhimie thought his management style was that of a micromanager or people person.

Mr. Akhimie said a little of both. He gives the proper guidance and then lets staff do its work. Because he works for the city commission, and tries to avoid surprises, he does not drop the ball drop but steps in if needed to give further direction or modifications.

Commissioner Thornhill asked what would be his process for holding an employee accountable if there was an issue.

- Find out the source of the problem. If it is lack of tools provide them. If it is lack of training provide that.
- Set objectives and goals
- Set a schedule for improvements
- If that doesn't work try and relocate
- Dismissal as a last resource

Commissioner Thornhill asked him how long that process should take.

Mr. Akhimie said between six months and a year.

Commissioner Wojcik asked if he thought his assistant manager experience would prepare him to be city manager.

Mr. Akhimie said he has been preparing to be city manager for years and as he now has the skills to do it, he did not see a problem. He was utility director for six years in Polk County so feels that because utilities are about 50% to 75% of the city's function, he thought he was prepared.

Question #3: What are your strengths?

- Budgeting

- Public Works
- Infrastructure and Maintenance
- Technology

Question #4: What are your weaknesses?

Mr. Akhimie said he sometimes pushes himself too much.

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

Mr. Akhimie said he has talked with residents and business owners in the community and has determined these positives:

- It's slogan: Progressive Vision, Vintage Charm
- Its Friendliness
- Its small town feel
- Its amenities such as the singing tower

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

Mr. Akhimie said it was hard to come up with something because he is partial to Lake Wales, but said Lake Wales needs more economic development and jobs.

Added Questions:

Commissioner Wojcik asked him to define what it means for a city to be business friendly.

Mr. Akhimie said it would be a city where the customer is always right.

Commissioner Wojcik asked him how important he thought recreation was to a community.

Mr. Akhimie said he thought it was very important and a city should maintain and build on its recreation so children as well as adults have enough to do. He said the city's recreation is part of the attractiveness of Lake Wales.

Question # 7: Do you have any questions for us?

Mr. Akhimie had no questions for the City Commission.

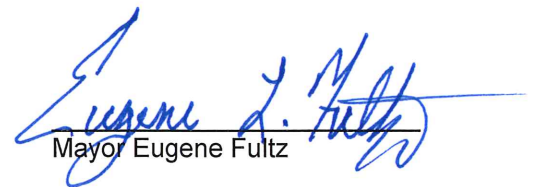
Salary: Between \$90,000 and \$153,000

Mr. Akhimie was agreeable with the salary range.

The Next Step

A short list will be decided on after the interviews on Friday. Face-to-face interviews will start the week of July 8th.

The workshop meeting adjourned at 6:36 p.m.


Mayor Eugene Fultz

ATTEST:


City Clerk Clara VanBlargan