

A workshop meeting of the City Commission was held on July 10, 2013 at 1:30 p.m. in the Commission Chamber at the Municipal Administration Building for the purpose of conducting an in-person interview with city manager candidate Robert Bartolotta. The meeting was called to order by Mayor Eugene Fultz.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Christopher Lutton; Betty Wojcik; Jonathan Thornhill; Michael S. Carter; Mayor Eugene Fultz

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: None

CITY REPRESENTATIVES PRESENT: Clara VanBlargan, City Clerk; Jacquie Hawkins, Deputy City Clerk; Sandra Davis, Human Resources Director; Albert C. Galloway, Jr., City Attorney

[Meetings are recorded but not transcribed verbatim]

City Attorney Chuck Galloway requested a shade meeting to be scheduled after the July 16th City Commission meeting dealing with the pending airport litigation.

Commissioner Carter made a motion to approve scheduling the Shade meeting following the July 16th City Commission meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Wojcik.

By Voice Vote:

Commissioner Carter	YES"
Commissioner Wojcik	"YES"
Commissioner Thornhill	"YES"
Commissioner Lutton	"YES"
Mayor Fultz	"YES"

The motion carried 5-0.

CITY MANAGER CANDIDATE IN-PERSON INTERVIEW (ROUND 2) - ROBERT BARTOLOTTA

Prepared Question #1: What particular experience do you have with respect to budget preparation and finance?

Mr. Bartolatta said he has worked with budgets all of his 35 years of municipal management. He said he estimates revenues conservatively and brings a balanced budget to the commission.

Does he use zero based budgets or something else?

Mr. Bartolatta said he doesn't use zero based but starts out with no increases. All changes have to be justified and items already listed do not necessarily have to be in the new budget. He said he goes line by line through the budget before.

An assistant city manager is not in the budget. What effect does he think that will have?

Mr. Bartolatta said an assistant is a good to have because it brings continuity, is helpful in planning and reduces the workload on the manager, though he said he has done away with that position when the budget dictated it. Without an assistant he would have to rely more on his department heads.

Prepared Question # 4: Why are you interested in being our City Manager?

- The quality of life in Lake Wales is the biggest plus.
- Lake Wales is the perfect size: small enough to know staff and the community but large enough to have resources
- Its Natural resources
- It's Ideal location

- It's community assets

Follow-up Questions:

Commissioner Lutton asked if he would be satisfied coming to Lake Wales after being city manager of Sarasota with its huge staff and all Sarasota has to offer.

- Mr. Bartolatta said he was impressed with the professionalism of city staff
- He said he was city manager in smaller cities (25,000).
- Sarasota has a lot to offer including its beaches, but he rarely went. He said he thought community spirit was more important.

Commissioner Thornhill asked if he thought being from outside Polk County was a hindrance or a help.

- Mr. Bartolatta can't change where he is from but he can treat everyone with dignity and respect. He said it depends on who you talk to:
- It could be considered a hindrance because he won't know the history or the problems that have been faced, and he won't know everyone like he would have if he grew up here.
- It could be an advantage because he can see things with fresh eyes.

Prepared Question # 12: Economic Development is now under the Chamber of Commerce. What do you see as the role of the city now?

- Partnership: The business community needs to take the lead but the city can offer incentives, provide the workforce and provide the quality of life that draws businesses to the city.
- Attitude: The city needs to have the attitude that we can help make it happen.

Prepared Question # 5: What techniques or procedures do you use to keep the City Commission informed?

- Use of staff reports, summaries and recommendations.
- Meet with each Commissioner at least once a week
- Phone calls daily if needed
- Breakfasts and lunch meetings
- All information he receives will be given to all five commissioners and all commissioners are copied emails
- He doesn't play favorites and he doesn't engage in gossip.

Prepared Question # 9: What can the Commission do to assist you in becoming a success in your role of City Manager?

- Trust and support
- Come first to him if there is a problem
- Give staff the benefit of the doubt
- Go through him to give staff direction

Prepared Question # 8: To what extent do you believe contact with citizens and citizens groups are important.

- The citizens are our constituents; we serve them and it is why we are here. He asks each Commissioner and each department head to give him names of three key leaders he should meet and then he meets with them to find out what is important to them.
- He has an open door policy
- He doesn't play favorites
- He talks up the city.

Follow-up Question:

How important is customer service and what do you think staff should do?

- Greet every customer with a smile, giving eye contact

- Listen to them and give them an opportunity to express their views
- Know how to channel them to the right department
- Have the attitude that they may not be able to please everyone but they can try.

Should the City Manager be the focal point in the city or stay in the background?

Mr. Bartolatta said it depends on what the Commission wants him to be. He will take direction from them. He can be highly visible if they wish or work behind the scenes, but he believes the spokes person for the City is the Mayor and the mayor should be the one highly visible. Mayor Fultz said he wants them both to be visible and work together.

What would be your first steps if hired?

Mr. Bartolatta said the first 100 days he would:

- Absorb information
- Meet each city commissioner to find out their vision for the community, problems with staff, and what they think the city is doing right and what it does wrong.
- Meet with each department head after looking at their resume and their background.
- Take a tour of each facility
- Get out in the field at all levels
- Walk downtown and introduce himself to people
- Meet with other city managers
- Meet key leaders and attend as many meetings as he can
- Look at the strategic plan

Prepared Question # 13: Describe an accomplishment in your career that you are most proud of because of your innovative solution.

Mr. Bartolatta described his five year work on the pension plan and eliminating subsidies for the performing arts program and spring training for baseball in order to balance the budget.

Prepared Question #10: Talk about the most controversial issue you have encountered as a manager or assistant manager.

Mr. Bartolatta explained the controversy over them installing parking meters in their downtown area. The shop owners had complained that employees were parking in front of the businesses, taking up spaces that customers could use. He spent a year working with businesses and the public over the issue and finally they installed 600 meters. There was such a public outcry that they put into place a two month moratorium while they worked on the problem. In the meantime the new commissioners took office that had run on getting rid of the meters, so the majority of the Commissioners were not in favor of the parking meters. They ended up taking them all out and they built a free parking garage instead. He said the only thing he could think of that he could have done differently was to warn even more vehemently how controversial it could be.

Follow-up Question: Commissioner Lutton asked if he had prepared a report giving the estimate of revenue and things like the cost of maintenance and the staffing of meter readers.

Mr. Bartolatta said that they originally had two-hour parking but with no meters and the cost came out of tax dollars. That is why they wanted to put the meters in; so users would pay for it instead of the taxpayers. They planned on also using the earnings to build more parking garages.

Prepared Question #12: Have you ever been fired or asked to resign from a job? Explain.

Mr. Bartolatta said out of his 35 years experience he was asked to resign one time, in Sarasota. He explained that three newly elected city commissioners came on board and they were not happy with the outcome of his work on pensions and the parking meters. He always said that if three or more commissioners lost confidence in him it was time to leave, so he resigned with severance benefits.

Other Questions:

What is your methodology working with staff?

- Treat them ethically and honestly and expect them to do likewise
- They should be willing to provide customer service and should never be rude or obnoxious.

Six months from now will staff say they have had sufficient direction and are being sufficiently led?

- Mr. Bartolatta said they will know where they are going
- He said if he gets clear direction from the city commission he can give staff clear directions as to what the city commission wants.

The City has not been able to give raises to employees for several years. What would he do to address employee retention?

Mr. Bartolatta said you can't go forever without increases because when the economy turns around the top employees will try to find employment elsewhere. He suggested giving employees incentives such as special paid holidays or bonus leave days until such time a raise can be given. He said he would rather have a small workforce with pay increases than a large workforce without.

What would you do if an organization wanted to take you out to wine and dine?

Mr. Bartolatta said in the old days that kind of thing was not unusual but with tighter ethics policies you should not do that at all unless a vendor sponsored an event that everyone is invited to and no favoritism is showed.

Commissioner Carter asked what he thought about using grants.

Mr. Bartolatta said grants go to someone and it might as well be us so it is worth applying. He said he is very supportive of using grants as long as you check out the conditions attached. He listed some he has used.

Follow-up

Question: Commissioner Lutton asked how he would motivate a newly appointed commission to complete a grant project that they didn't vote for in the first place.

Mr. Bartolatta said you really can't motivate them to do that but you can point out the consequences of not completing it.

Commissioner Thornhill asked what he would suggest they do with property started with grants that now is not being used.

Mr. Bartolatta said if it is public land than the city should keep it in public trust until it can be used for public purposes. But if there is no use for the land, it could be privately developed so it can be put back on the tax role.

Commissioner Thornhill asked what he would do if there was a building on the property that was built with grant money.

Mr. Bartolatta said it needs to be maintained and secured until such time that it can be completed. In the meantime it could be leased to a nonprofit organization for zero rent if they will maintain the building with the understanding that the city will take the building back once it has the funds to complete the project.

Commissioner Carter said the city has not had the money to maintain its facilities and asked for his view on juggling the budget.

- Mr. Bartolatta said you must not let the property deteriorate even though you may not be able to improve it; a small leak becomes a big leak if not taken care of.
- Secure it
- Look into grants
- Try to find community groups that are willing to get involved, which will instill community pride
- If there is no use for it, dispose of it.

Commissioner Lutton asked what topics and level of detail he thought was needed in order to create strategic planning action plans.

Mr. Bartolatta said he recommended only having five specific priorities to focus on, those things that are most important to the commission, with measurable objectives for each.

Commissioner Thornhill explained that the city finally has a code enforcement policy with teeth in it so now something can be done. He asked what Mr. Bartolatta thought needed to be addressed first.

- Entranceways into the city need sprucing up.
- Something has to be done about the Grand Hotel, and though options may not be cheap, the building is an eyesore and negatively impacts downtown economic growth.

Commissioner Wojcik said that if the building is fixed up its history alone will draw people to Lake Wales. Mayor Fultz agreed that the history behind the building would definitely be a draw. The problem was getting to that point.

Mayor Fultz asked if there was something they needed to know about him.

Mr. Bartolatta said he believed in full disclosure and he would rather them hear about an event from him rather than via internet. He said he had not disclosed it with his last employment and he lived to regret it because someone found out and it was plastered all over the news.

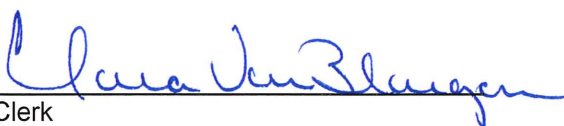
Eleven years ago while he was the city manager of Jupiter, Florida his wife became very ill and was in intensive care for seven months. Someone made an allegation that he struck his wife at the hospital. His wife said it didn't happen and so did his daughter who had been there at the time. The state attorney got involved but there was no charge and no arrest. A year later he resigned.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:05 p.m.



Mayor/Commissioner

ATTEST:



City Clerk