

A workshop meeting of the City Commission was held on July 11, 2013 at 1:30 p.m. in the Commission Chambers at the Municipal Administration Building for the purpose of conducting an in-person interview with city manager candidate Kenneth Fields. 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

[Meetings are recorded but not transcribed verbatim]

CITY COMMISSION CANDIDATE IN-PERSON INTERVIEW (ROUND 2) - KENNETH FIELDS

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

Mr. Fields said he had extensive experience in both Pittsburg and Hollywood as Budget Director and was a financial analysis consultant for state and local governments so he is strong in that area.

Commissioner Carter said an assistant city manager is not in the budget and asked how he would delegate that responsibility?

Mr. Fields said he has worked without an assistant before and it isn't mandated for the size community we have. He said it would be fine as long as someone can be delegated to step in to sign for him if he is on vacation or out of the country.

Prepared Question # 15: Share your experience in economic development and growth management.

- Mr. Fields said he was instrumental in the redevelopment of the downtown area in both Pittsburg and Hollywood.
- The spending of private money follows the spending of public money because the private sector is looking for stability and commitment before following through with their commitment.
- He believes the city needs to be able to understand the private sector, which he has experience with, and negotiate within development rules.
- He said you let the private sector do what it does best, set the deal, but the city is the one that closes the deal and the Mayor is the one that sells the community.

Commissioner Wojcik asked what he thought of using incentives.

Mr. Fields said he doesn't like them because incentives take money away from the city's coffers. The trick is to know how far to go with them because all cities use incentives these days, one city are in competition with another. He said he didn't think incentives were top priority to an incoming company so other advantages are open to negotiations.

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

- Lake Wales is a city with great potential
- It's location
- Proximity to Orlando and Tampa
- It is the distribution center of Central Florida
- It gives him a great opportunity to use his experience to make things better.

Mayor Fultz asked how working in a rural area is different than working in the large city.

Mr. Fields said he doesn't consider Lake Wales a rural community. He was in the Keys for three years and THAT was rural because he had to drive a half hour to get to the nearest Publix. He said Lake Wales is in a well developed area and the lifestyle suits him.

Commissioner Lutton said that Mr. Fields told them the City has great potential and is going places. He asked Mr. Fields how he would organize the city to take advantage of that potential.

Mr. Fields said it is the perfect time to do something because the city has the new EDC and a new city manager.

- He would hold workshops to form a vision for the downtown area to drive the process and create opportunities.
- He would want to hear from the community and get a consensus as to their vision so everyone senses a common goal.
- He would make sure everyone knows and understands what the vision is so they can collectively work on it together.
- Attitudes may need adjusting

Commissioner Wojcik asked for his views on the Grand Hotel.

Mr. Fields said he thought it could be a positive landmark and they need to decide what to use it for. He suggested mixed use with condos, restaurants and retail. He was informed that this was the present goal. He suggested that the eleven story height would be a selling point because there are few opportunities to see a view in Florida from that high.

Prepared Question #6: How will you go about assessing the city's strengths and weaknesses?

- The first 90 days he will learn figure out the strength and weaknesses of staff, identifying those who may need more training or discipline
- Learn what the organization is all about.
- The first year he will learn about the community by joining organizations like Leadership Polk County and Leadership Lake Wales, talk to community leaders and the press, and attend organizational meetings.

Commissioner Thornhill asked if in six months staff will say they have direction and leadership.

Mr. Fields said without a doubt they would. He said he is good at building teams with a sense of a common goal. He is approachable and has an open door policy.

Commissioner Wojcik said the city has had four city managers in five years and there is a feeling of instability. She asked how long he would be interested in staying.

Mr. Fields said he has stayed a minimum of five years in other jobs and is willing to stay as long as the commission wants him to stay. He is not using Lake Wales as a stepping stone to something else but wants to settle down and help the city grow, which would make him happy.

There is a requirement to relocate to Lake Wales. Is there any reason you couldn't do that?

Mr. Fields said his kids are grown and he has no attachments to keep him from moving to Lake Wales. He can start as soon as the City Commission wants.

Prepared Question #10: Talk about the most controversial issue you have encountered as a manager or assistant manager, how it was resolved and what you would do differently.

Mr. Fields explained a bitterly divided issue when a high level treatment plant and wastewater collection system was state mandated. It was highly controversial because it would cost \$120 million dollars, or about \$1800 per household. The community didn't want to do it and wanted to sue the state instead. If they refused the mandate the state would have shut down any future building projects. The newly elected commissioners' goal was to get rid of him.

He said he would do some things differently. He would have spent more time explaining the implications if they didn't do it. He would have gotten the facts out earlier by using social media. He would have tried to understand the opposition and warned the elected officials early on.

Commissioner Thornhill explained the controversial Rails-to-Trails issue in Lake Wales when the city commission did not want to take action on it but a referendum dictated that they do so. He asked how Mr. Fields would go forward with such a divided issue.

Mr. Fields said as soon as he realized there was opposition he would start gathering facts and then give those facts to the commissioners. He would find out who is leading the opposition and talk to that person, then figure out how to counter it. He would not dismiss the opposition or assume the commission knows about the controversy. He would make sure the commission is in agreement as to what should be done.

Prepared Question #3: What particular experience do you have with respect to personnel and labor relations and what process would he use to make the pension plan sustainable?

Mr. Fields said he had significant experience in both Pittsburg and Hollywood with pension plans and safety issues and has dealt with unions. He is very familiar with structuring pension plans.

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

- Communicate with the commission regularly at their convenience to answer any questions. He is available by cell phone 24/7
- He holds a pre-meeting to go over the agenda
- He does not want the commission to be surprised about anything so he shares any information he has with them.

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

Keep him informed about what is going on in the community so he can deal with issues early.

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

Mr. Fields said he was asked to leave the Seminole Indian Tribe position and chose to leave Alvarado and Southwest Ranches because he was stuck in the middle of political issues.

Commissioner Carter asked what his role would be in finding grant opportunities.

- Talk to colleagues
- Seek private sector money, for example there is an organization that gives grants to teach kids how to fish.
- Look for standard grants
- He said he knows how to write grants and how to pitch them

Describe accomplishment in your career that you are most proud of.

- Mr. Fields said he seeks to work with good people, mentors and trains them so they can go forward with their own careers.
- He tries to leave every city better off than when he came

Describe some innovative solutions you had for difficult problems.

- Seminole Tribe: Mr. Fields said he reorganized the government and created subgroups, structural changes and coordinated services which made things run more efficiently.
- When the fire chief in one city retired they split the position with another city, lowering the cost.
- He said he is adaptive, stays current in the profession and is open to new ideas

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

- Positive feedback
- City recognition such as Employee of the Month.
- If possible, with the new ethics restrictions, seek things like free meals from local restaurants
- Public recognition
- Treat employees with respect for if they are happy and feel good about their job it will show in customer service

What is your opinion of customer service?

- Citizens are our customers and customer service is what our job is about.
- Employees need to show respect.
- The customer is always right
- If the rules don't make sense, change the rules
- Employees may need additional training or it may be that they need to be reassigned to a position away from the public

What is your idea of a dress code?

Mr. Fields said he would take direction from the commissioners. He normally dresses in a business suit but is flexible and can go business casual.

Commissioner Carter asked for his opinion on the importance of maintenance.

- Stay on top of maintenance because it is a bigger mistake not to
- It is better to replace old equipment than pay for higher maintenance on old ones
- There are creative ways to economize like leasing cars instead of buying them

Mayor Fultz asked if there was one thing the city commission should know about him.

- He acts professionally and wants the city to benefit from his experience but some people interpret that as being arrogant
- He is not afraid to express his opinion even if it is different from others
- He is a strong manager

Mayor Fultz asked if there were questions he would like to ask of them.


He asked for confirmation that their decision would be made on the following Tuesday night. It was confirmed.

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



Mayor/Commissioner

ATTEST:



City Clerk