



## CITY OF HIGHWOOD

17 Highwood Avenue  
Highwood, Illinois 60040  
847.432.1924 / 0735 Fax  
www.cityofhighwood.com

### City Council Meeting MINUTES

#### **March 20, 2008 Special City Council Meeting**

City Hall Council Chambers  
17 Highwood Avenue  
Highwood, IL 60040  
5:45 p.m.

#### 1. **CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Donofrio called the City Council Meeting to order at 5:55 p.m.

#### 2. **ROLL CALL**

Present: Mayor Donofrio, Aldermen Pieri, Linari, Cahnmann, Bruni, Fiore, Pecaro, Murphy and Hospodarsky.

Absent: None.

Also present: S. Druktenis, City Clerk and M. Zimmermann, City Attorney

#### 3. **INTERVIEW WITH FIRMS TO SERVE AS INTERIM CITY ADMINISTRATOR**

- a. **Bill Balling** – Mr. Balling referred to his proposal dated March 12, 2008 and noted that the proposed service is comprised of two parts, 1) activities during the transition and 2) an independent organizational assessment. His management team would be 4 to 6 individuals working at different times and in different areas. He would close out the project with a final report. The proposed time frame is three months and does not include an executive recruitment. Since the Council is already comfortable with the City's financial review, the proposal could be tweaked to focus on property maintenance and the building department.
  - o Questions and answers are as follows:
    - Would there be a physical presence in the office and how many hours? ***There would be 4 to 6 professional (including Bill) that would stagger their hours (there would be a physical presence)***
    - Would you make suggestions for reorganizing the administration? ***Mr. Balling would identify the obvious areas for improvement (similar to a master plan, the City Administrator would execute the plan). This would also assist in attracting a quality City Administrator.***
    - The proposed contract would be from April 1, 2008 until June 30, 2008. What if a City Administrator was found before then? ***Mr. Balling feels the timeframe is already aggressive but would be willing to construct the contract to accommodate an early release.***
    - Would a good administrator be able to do what he does? ***Yes, but the City needs to structure itself to attract a quality City Administrator and have a work plan for the City Administrator to follow.***

- Where is your firm located? ***The home base is in Arlington Heights. There should not be any additional costs unless there is an additional request (i.e., a City Administrator Search)***
- There are four main points in your proposal. If we decided to modify what we would like you to focus on, would this change the cost? ***Yes, proposal was based upon conversations with City Attorney Mike Zimmermann; however, the proposal can be changed based upon the Council's request.***
- Discussion ensued regarding this is an opportunity to have an independent assessment. The City Administrator is going to need to have an understanding of the community and priorities. This assessment would provide a clearer focus and clarity of the job expectations. A City Administrator recruitment profile would be ready about midway to two-thirds way through the project. The City would then need to understand how they would recruit.
- How would Mr. Balling and his team accomplish this? ***He would observe and assess through discussion and possibly a short survey. He would have a peer review of his report. He would provide an unvarnished assessment of the staff.***
- What are the expectations from staff? What will he need? ***He needs to have everyone's cooperation, support and understanding that this is a high priority.***
- Who would be the go to person? ***Bill Balling would be the go to person. The 4 to 6 people that would be brought in all have experience in City Management. In Mr. Balling's opinion the City would need to make do without an Assistant to the City Administrator. He feels the City Administrator should pick the Assistant.***
- What if we needed coverage beyond three months? ***We can discuss the needs at that point.***
- Can you comment on combining departments (i.e. Building/Fire)? ***Combining these departments might make sense as it has in other communities he's worked with, since there would be one point of accountability for permits.***
- What about cross utilization of employees in Departments? ***The City Administrator would look for opportunities (includes how willing the employees are to do this)***
- How can the proposed number of hours cover the day-to-day activities? ***Focus would be on what has to be done. Some issues may not be addressed.***
- What is "Special Research Consulting" that is referenced in his proposal? ***He has provided specific research reports upon request.***
- The following City issues that may need to be addressed in the interim were noted:
  - Fire Department Labor contract (***would not be the most prudent use of the interim time and the City may want to wait for the City Administrator***)
  - New Police Chief (***yes, could handle***)
  - Audit and Budget (May 1)

- Codification (currently with City Attorney)
- Highwood Towers
- Midwest Family (Forest City)
- City Administrator Ordinance may need to be modified

- Are you able to start next week to transition (since the City Administrator's last formal day is next Friday)? **Yes.**

Mr. Balling closed by asking the City Council to use this period of time to be cooperative and cautioned that the comments will be unvarnished and to take them in that light. The project is ambitious but doable.

- c. Baxter and Woodman Local Government Strategies (a division of Baxter and Woodman) – Representatives Terry and Lisa indicated they could assist on an interim basis for 2 to 3 months. The mentoring need would be based upon request. They would respond to Highwood's needs ("with a light hand on the rudder") and would work primarily with the Department Heads.
- o Questions and answers are as follows:
    - **How many people would be working on this project and how many hours would they spend in the office?** Initially, Terry would come in. They would start small to keep the cost down. Lisa would handle the administrative issues and come in 2 to 3 days a week. The total number of hours would be 20 hours a week but can be adjusted to meet needs. Lisa noted that she has not done this before but does have some Municipal experience. Both Terry and Lisa would assess what needs to be done.
    - Can they handle the fiscal budget? **Yes.**
    - It was noted that first the City needs to take care of business and then hire a City Administrator and Assistant City Administrator. **They can help and commented that the City may want to consider hiring the Assistant to the City Administrator because the City Administrator would understand that a group would be in place and would not necessarily have to hire the Assistant. Having the Assistant to the City Administrator handle administrative tasks instead of them would keep the costs down.**
    - Would the cost be for time and materials or on a fixed fee basis? **Typically they charge hourly. Terry @ \$125 per hour and Lisa @ \$70 per hour. Terry has experience in being a City Manger for Homewood, Mount Prospect and Plainfield.**
    - Would you expect the City Administrator to "do it all"? **No, would not recommend this. A jack-of-all-trades cannot do everything really well. Can always contract out tasks. Contrary to what was said earlier the recommendation is to hire the City Administrator as soon as possible and you may find that you do not need the additional Assistant (may just need a clerical person)**
    - What is your availability? **Would not be available immediately (vacation).**

- c. Following the conclusion of the interviews, the Council discussed and compared the two rates. It was noted that B&W would provide service as needed and Bill Balling would offer a complete analysis. It was felt that if Bill Balling's proposal were accepted, because of the expense, the hiring of the City Administrator and his analysis would need to be done in tandem. Mayor Donofrio did not feel that a team of 4 to 6 people was needed. However, it was reiterated that they would not all be working on our tasks at the same time; their hours would be staggered. It was recognized that the two firms had two entirely different philosophies; one is a consultant and one would be business as usual until the City Administrator comes on board (one is proactive and one is reactive). Another plus for Bill Balling is that he can do an assessment of Baxter & Woodman services already contracted by the City. In general, the Council viewed the Bill Balling proposal favorably but thought the contract should be negotiated further. The items to be negotiated are 1) the City Administrator recruitment profile and City administrator Ordinance completed sooner (i.e., May 15) and 2) identify best practice for day-to-day tasks (i.e., front window, agendas, permits, job description for Assistant to the City Administrator). A committee would then be used to search for a City Administrator (Mayor Donofrio, Alderman Linari and Alderman Hospodarsky). All costs should not exceed \$25,000 per month and the Council would want month-to-month reports. If the job is completed earlier, the cost will be reduced. City Attorney Zimmermann will discuss these changes with Mr. Balling. It was agreed that the Council was comfortable with the individual and the concept and the contract could be ratified at the April 1, 2008 meeting.
4. **ADJOURN** - Alderman Hospodarsky, seconded by Alderman Murphy, motioned to adjourn the meeting. All Aldermen voted aye. The meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Susan Druktenis - City Clerk