

APPROVED
City of Fort Lauderdale
CITY ATTORNEY SEARCH COMMITTEE
Tuesday, August 8, 2023, 5:00 P.M.
3rd Floor Conference Room
Fire Administration
528 NW 2nd Street, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33311

Members	Attendance	Present	Absent
Romney Rogers, Chair	A	3	1
McKillop Erlandson, Vice Chair	P	4	0
Roosevelt Walters	P	4	0
Troy Liggett	P	4	0
Richard Weiss (via Zoom)	P	3	1

Staff

Jerome Post, Director, Human Resources
Susan Grant, Assistant City Manager
Kerry Arthurs, Administrative Supervisor
Barbara Smith, Administrator
Donna Higginbotham, Mercer Group Florida LLC
Carla Blair, Prototype Inc.

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 5:32 p.m. by Acting Chair McKillop Erlandson.

II. Roll Call

Roll was called as outlined above. It was noted a quorum was present.

Mr. Rogers was present via Zoom as a member of the public. Human Resources Director Jerome Post explained that he had contacted the City Clerk Interim City Attorney and Mr. Rogers can participate in the discussions as a member of the public, but not vote.

Motion was made by Mr. Liggett, seconded by Mr. Walters, to allow Richard Weiss to attend via Zoom. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

III. Discussion of Meeting Minutes

Mr. Liggett shared concerns regarding the level of detail in previous minutes and stated he liked the changes submitted in red.

Motion was made by Mr. Walters, seconded by Mr. Liggett, to approve the minutes with or without corrections. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

IV. Review of Recruitment Process from Mercer Group Florida LLC

Donna Higginbotham, Mercer Group Florida LLC, introduced herself briefly. She invited Mr. Post to provide a brief overview of the recruitment process to date.

Mr. Post reviewed the recruitment process to date. He noted the Committee had asked the Commission to consider a recruitment firm to expand the pool of applicants, and following a procurement process, Mercer Group Florida LLC was brought on. He stated Mercer had conducted a search and compiled a list of candidates, then selected three (3) that they recommend the Committee consider for advancement in the process. He noted the Committee was able to select candidates from the pool.

V. Discussion of Candidates

Ms. Higginbotham stated 17 resumes were received, and all previous candidates were also contacted.

Discussion ensued regarding the inclusion of previous candidates and how to best pare down the list of candidates for discussion based on analysis of qualifications.

Mr. Weiss asked for clarification on the process that had been used to review the resumes received and get to the recommendations.

Ms. Higginbotham advised that she had spoken with each of the candidates and their references. She stated she had reviewed the past meetings of this Committee and discussed the ways in which she had applied the requirements outlined.

The Committee members reviewed the individual resumes of the applicants and discussed the length and applicability of the applicants' individual experiences, as well as areas where they would like additional information to be sought by the recruiter.

Mr. Weiss asked what type of background check would be conducted. Ms. Higginbotham explained.

Discussion ensued briefly on the place of social media searches in the process. Ms. Higginbotham clarified that she typically does not include social media searches in a check or ask for social media accounts, as she considers them someone else's opinion of the person rather than facts.

Mr. Liggett stated he shared Mr. Rogers' concerns and asked whether the shortlist should be asked to provide a list of their social media accounts. Ms. Higginbotham responded that she could request any information the Committee would like to review.

Mr. Weiss stated he would like to see anything that a person could find when searching the candidates on the internet so that information could be passed on to the Commission for review. Discussion continued regarding social media.

Mr. Walters expressed concern as to which candidates might have a steep learning curve in the position.

Mr. Weiss offered a motion asking Mercer Group to conduct a deep dive into each of the candidates and report back.

Mr. Walters asked for a definition of deep dive. Mr. Weiss explained that he was looking for everything Ms. Higginbotham had outlined as her background check process, along with a review of media and social media to determine what a member of the public would be able to find.

Mr. Rogers suggested an effort to shorten the process. Discussion ensued as to how to move forward while also respecting Sunshine Law, including the timeline for background checks and future meetings.

Mr. Rogers left the meeting at 6:23 p.m.

The Committee discussed the wording of Mr. Weiss' motion briefly and made changes to the language via friendly amendment.

Motion was made by Mr. Weiss, seconded by Mr. Liggett, to ask Mercer Group Florida LLC to proceed with a background check on the short list of four (4) applicants, including social media/internet, and report back at the next meeting. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed. Mr. Walters was opposed.

Item VI was addressed following Item VII.

VI. Selection of Candidates to Proceed to Interview Phase

Acting Chair Erlandson reviewed the short list of candidates, including John Anastasio, Elaine Asad, Andrew Dunkiel, and Thomas Ansboro.

Mr. Liggett clarified that he would have no objection if Mr. Walters wanted to add the fifth name he had identified as a potential short list candidate. Mr. Walters declined.

Mr. Weiss noted that following the interview process, he believed the Committee should also speak with the candidates' references. Mr. Post highlighted concerns with the Fair Credit Reporting Act and stated that clear permission would need to be requested from the candidates for not only Mercer to make contact, but the Committee members as well.

Mr. Weiss suggested dividing the candidates among the Committee members to research individually. Mr. Post stated this could be done at the next meeting.

VII. Next Steps

Mr. Liggett asked for clarification on the interview process once background checks are complete. Mr. Post responded that the interviews would be scheduled as quickly as possible and suggested two (2) weeks or less. He noted a venue would need to be identified, and staff could work on that in the interim. Consensus was that Committee members should bring interview questions to the next meeting to allow Human Resources an opportunity to review.

Ms. Higginbotham commented that she typically schedules interviews 45 minutes apart, with 15 minutes leeway. Mr. Weiss stated he did not believe that was enough time. Discussion continued.

Ms. Higginbotham asked whether the interviews would be individual or as a group. Mr. Walters suggested they be conducted as a group. Consensus was to schedule 90-minute group interviews.

Mr. Post stated that while discussing scheduling for future meetings, Administrative Supervisor Kerry Arthurs would also identify several dates for interviews.

VIII. For the Good of the Order

None.

IX. Adjournment

Upon motion duly made and seconded, the meeting adjourned at 6:41 p.m. The next Regular Meeting of the Committee is scheduled for Thursday, September 7 at 3:00 p.m.

[Minutes prepared by C. Parkinson, Prototype, Inc.]