



MINUTES

City Commission Special Meeting

5:30 PM – Monday, August 12, 2024 – City Hall

CALL TO ORDER: 5:30 P.M.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF QUORUM AND PROPER NOTICE

PRESENT: Commissioner Gary Ashcraft, Commissioner Willie Hawkins, Vice Mayor Emily Lee and Mayor Michael Holland

1. CITY COMMISSION DISCUSSION

1.1 City Commission Discussion for Appointment of Interim Commissioner to Fill Seat #4

Tom Carrino, City Manager, reviewed the packet presented to the City Commission with information created by Mary Montez, Deputy City Clerk, regarding the process used to fill the vacancy back in 2019. He cited the draft ad, appointing resolution and application.

Commissioner Hawkins asked how long it took last time to complete the process.

Mr. Carrino responded that the application period ran for about two weeks from March 25th to April 5th with a special meeting held April 11th to interview the applicants. The Commission made the appointment that same night. He noted the lag in time to place the advertisements and estimated the total time frame as about one month. He stated the earliest they could run a display ad would be Friday, August 16th. He commented that the Charter does not speak to the process. He indicated that various parts of the process are up to the discretion of the Commission. He stated that the application period could be left open as long as the Commission wished.

The Commission asked the number of meetings left in the year with Mr. Carrino noting the second meeting in August was cancelled for the League of Cities conference. He indicated that there are two regularly scheduled meetings in September, October, November and December; however, it is possible that the second meetings in November and December may be cancelled.

Discussion was held regarding how long the application period should be left open and when the appointment should be made. Discussion was then held regarding whether or not to hold the interviews at a regular or special meeting.

Mr. Carrino indicated the appointee could serve for up to six meetings depending on when the special meeting is scheduled due to whomever is elected in November being sworn in at the first meeting in January. He noted that the Charter says the Commission "shall" appoint an interim commissioner; however, it does not dictate the process to be used.

The Commission questioned why they couldn't just wait until after the election with Sasha Garcia, City Attorney, responding that the charter says the Commission "shall" appoint and quoted Section 9 of the charter. She mentioned the possibility of selecting someone who was a previous commissioner due to the learning curve and Sunshine Law.

Commissioner Hawkins expressed support for selecting a former commissioner and Commissioner Ashcraft stated the application period needs to be open to everyone, not just a former commissioner.

Mr. Carrino suggested holding off and appointing in November the winner of the Seat #4 election.

Commissioner Hawkins expressed concern regarding waiting due to some time that he would be away and that would leave only three Commissioners.

Attorney Garcia responded that the language of the charter makes it clear someone needs to fill the seat until the next general election.

Vice Mayor Lee expressed support for appointing a former commissioner.

Commissioner Ashcraft emphasized his preference for not limiting the applicants to former commissioners.

Commissioner Hawkins expressed concern about the Commission being able to make progress during the interim.

Mayor Holland stated he understood the desire to appoint someone who already has experience but agreed with the desire to open the applications to everyone. He noted that the interview process could help weed out the applicants.

Further discussion was held regarding the interview and application process. It was noted that previous application periods were all opened to the public.

Mr. Carrino asked Attorney Garcia whether or not the Commission could legally open the application period only to former commissioners with Attorney Garcia responding that it wouldn't have to be advertised that way. The applications could be reviewed and more weight given to applicants that have prior experience.

Discussion was held regarding the wording for the application period advertisement with Mr. Carrino noting that each Commissioner can have their own preferences for who to select and Attorney Garcia stating that the application advertisement can only be limited to those people who would qualify to serve as a commissioner.

Discussion was held regarding whether or not they could just appoint someone rather than opening up the application process.

Mayor Holland stated they must make an appointment prior to the November election. They have two options - appoint a former commissioner or open the application period to the public the way it has always been done.

Discussion was held regarding whether or not the candidates would be eligible to apply for appointment with Attorney Garcia saying they could not limit the applicants other than that they must be qualified to be a commissioner.

Discussion was held regarding the timeframe involved and when to hold a special meeting to conduct interviews. Following discussion it was a consensus to hold the special meeting on September 11th at 5:30 p.m. It was confirmed that an applicant would need to appear in person for the interviews and that background checks would be conducted.

2. ADJOURNMENT: 5:55 P.M.

**These minutes reflect the actions taken and portions of the discussion during the meeting. To review the entire discussion concerning any agenda item, go to www.eustis.org and click on the video for the meeting in question. A DVD of the entire meeting or CD of the entire audio recording of the meeting can be obtained from the office of the City Clerk for a fee.*

CHRISTINE HALLORAN
City Clerk

MICHAEL L. HOLLAND
Mayor/Commissioner