



Evaluation Guide and Sample Questions

for

Juno Beach Town Manager Finalists

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Evaluating Candidates

When evaluating candidates, it is important to consider them based on information from several sources. The first is the candidates' experience as presented in their written material (i.e., their resume and/or application for the position). The second is the background review (particularly the references) your consultant has prepared. The third is the actual interview of the candidate. No single source will give you the complete picture so all need to be considered.

We have developed the following materials to assist you in evaluating the candidates. They are briefly described in the following paragraphs.

The Evaluation Tool

The Evaluation Tool is a list of the key factors that make someone successful as a Town Manager. We recognize you are very successful people and may make decisions using very different approaches to the same issue. For example, some Councilmembers may wish to use it as a ranking sheet where each factor is given a score of 1 through 5, the scores summed, and the candidates ranked based on the results. Alternatively, other members may wish to use it as a guide to the areas that should be considered and, instead of a specific score, the result might be an overall impression of each candidate. These Councilmembers might then rank the candidates based on those impressions and not use numerical rankings. You should use the approach you are most comfortable with.

When using the tool, your evaluation should be based on *all the following*: the interview, the candidate's experience as presented in his/her resume and introduction, and the background review the consultant has prepared (the references, news media and background checks).

The Evaluation Tool follows on the next page.

The Interview Questions

The questions herein follow the outline in the Evaluation Tool. It should be noted that not every factor listed on the Tool is addressed with a question. Some factors are best evaluated through the background reports (for example, their ability to work with others including the press). Other elements may not lend themselves to questions but are readily apparent in the interview (communications skills, for example).

Questions Not to Ask

Some areas should not be discussed in an interview for legal reasons. These are described at the end of this package.

Candidate Evaluation Tool

Name: _____

Interaction Skills: How well the candidate interacts with:

- The Council
- Residents
- Employees
- The Business Community
- Other Governments
- The Press

Subtotal

Administrative Skills: The candidate's experience:

- Preparing and managing a budget
- Managing professional and operational staff
- Developing and executing operational and strategic plans
- Obtaining and managing grants
- Intergovernmental relations

Subtotal

Technical Skills: The candidate's experience in:

- Managing day-to-day governmental operations
- Capital projects
- Contract negotiations
- Economic development / redevelopment
- Managing growth
- Financial managements
- Parks and recreation
- Planning, zoning and building
- Utilities

Subtotal

Personal / Managements Skills: Ability to

- Communicate well generally, both orally and in writing
- Select, develop and retain good staff
- Demonstrate a high degree of ethics

Candidate Evaluation Tool

Name: _____

Track record:

- Demonstrated vision
- Demonstrated ability to lead organizations
- Demonstrated management ability
- Demonstrated creativity
- Demonstrated ability to solve problems
- Demonstrated ability to react well to new and unusual situations
- Record supporting diversity

Subtotal

Total Score:

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Notes:

Interview Questions

The following are the questions we at CB&A would ask if we were evaluating Town Manager candidates. They are in the same sequence as the Evaluation Tool. It should be noted that the first seven questions are focused on how the candidate will work with the Council. If he/she cannot do that well, nothing else will matter.

Since you will have a limited amount of time with the candidates, you will probably not be able to ask all the questions. Consequently, please select the ones you feel will give you the information you need to decide who is the best candidate to be your next Town Manager and hold the remainder in reserve. Of course, if you have questions you would prefer to ask instead of some or all of these, then please do so. Again, the important thing is you to gather the information you need to make the right decision.

Interpersonal Skills

1. Describe the relationship a Town Manager should have with the Council as a group and as individual members. How will you go about building a strong relationship with the elected officials? How will you maintain it?
2. What information do you think our elected officials need concerning day-to-day operations of the Town?
3. How do you propose to keep the Town Councilmembers informed so we are not surprised by any of the issues you are dealing with?
4. Tell us how you would handle a situation where we as a Council want to pursue a course of action that your professional experience tells you is not prudent.
5. We are a five-member Council. We all have the best interests of the Town at heart, yet our opinions may differ on specific issues. Assume for a moment that you are asked to present an issue where you know the Councilmembers are divided 2 to 2 with one member who is completely undecided. Further, you also know the four members are very strong advocates for their respective positions. How do you handle the situation?
6. Tell us how you would handle a situation where a single Councilmember asks you to do something you feel the majority of the Council is opposed to. How does your answer change, if it does, if two members of the Council together ask you?
7. Tell us about your experience dealing with the press, and with social media. What are the keys to being successful with it?
8. Tell us about an issue you had to resolve by working with other governments. Explain what you did and the results.

Interview Questions

9. What kind of relationship do you think the Town Manager should have with the community at large? How will you establish it? Provide an example of a situation where you worked with the community to resolve an issue.

10. Coming from your current position, what do you feel will be the three biggest challenges you will face if you become Juno Beach's next Town Manager? How do you plan to address those challenges?

Administrative Skills

11. Tell us about your experience overseeing the activities of contractors and contractual employees.

12. Tell us about your experience preparing and managing budgets. Tell us about a situation when you had to reduce your budget by 10%. How did you do it?

13. Tell us about your experience developing and managing operational and strategic plans.

14. Assume for a moment that you have been hired as our Town Manager. How will you go about identifying any strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for improvement of our current Town staff and contractors? Once you have identified them, how will you go about making changes?

15. Tell us what role performance evaluations should play in a Town government? How do you assess the performance of your employees?

16. Tell us about the last person whose employment you terminated? What was the situation and what process did you follow? Were you sued over the termination?

17. Tell us what you feel are the most important elements of obtaining and managing grants.

Technical Skills: Note that for the most part, technical skills have been addressed in the candidate's resume and introduction. Hence, we did not devote a great deal of time to those skills here. Further, properly answered, Question #1 above may provide the information.

18. The Town Manager's Office is responsible for providing leadership, management, support and advice to a wide variety of operational areas. These include: Finance, Police, Public Works, Community & Economic Development, Utilities, and Human Resources, among others. How comfortable are you that you can oversee these areas?

19. Tell us about a large capital project you have overseen. Were there any issues? If so, how did you resolve them?

Interview Questions

20. Tell us about a development or redevelopment effort you have worked on for your community.
21. Our residents tend to have high expectations of their government. How will you address their needs and concerns?
22. Tell us about your experience partnering with a business or another governmental entity to address a need.
23. Tell us about an experience you are particularly proud of where you negotiated on behalf of your organization with another party.
24. Strong fiscal management skills are central to this position. Please describe the most challenging budgeting situation you have encountered and how you reacted.
25. Tell us about your experience working with the state legislature to solve a local problem.

Personnel / Management Questions

26. Assume you need to hire a new Police Chief for our Town. Tell us how you would do that and what factors you would consider in evaluating applicants?
27. Tell us what steps you would take to ensure your staff continues to grow professionally. Is professional growth important for all employees?
28. What kind of relationship do you plan to have with the Town's senior managers and how will you establish it? How do you hold them accountable for results?
29. Tell us about an ethical situation you have faced and how you dealt with it.
30. We are very concerned about equity and improving the diversity in our management ranks. Can you please give us an example of how you improved diversity in your organization?

General / Track Record Questions

31. Tell us about a situation where you changed the organizational culture to make it more responsive and citizen centric.
32. We are looking for a Town Manager who can see "over the horizon" – meaning someone who can look into the future, anticipate what will be needed for Town of Juno Beach to build a reputation as a premiere community as well as foresee problems that might occur and take actions that will prevent those problems from occurring. Please give us an example of how you have done that in one of your past positions.

Interview Questions

33. Tell us about a situation where you had to build and lead a team to solve a problem.
34. Tell us about three innovations you have introduced into your organization.
35. Tell us about the most unusual situation you have faced as a manager and leader and how you dealt with it.
36. COVID-19 was/is a sudden and unprecedented event in our lifetimes. How do you see it impacting local governments in the next six months and the next five years? What thoughts do you have about how we can be prepared for unexpected events in the future?

Final Questions

37. How did you prepare for today's interview?
38. Is there anything which we have not discussed today that you would like us to know?
39. Please provide any closing remarks you might have.

Questions and Topics to Avoid During the Interview Process

A large body of legislation has developed over the years addressing civil rights and race/gender/age discrimination. Questions in these areas should be avoided during the interview process. As a result, the process of interviewing and selecting an applicant is no longer a simple matter of conducting a casual conversation and to learn a candidate's strengths, weaknesses, likes, and dislikes. Various civil rights laws now make the average interview a process that should be approached with caution. However, if you keep in mind the following basic rules, the process will move along smoothly and without issue.

In most instances, asking inappropriate questions may raise an inference of either discrimination or retaliation against a candidate. In other instances, such as those involving issues of mental or physical health, inappropriate questions are presumptively discriminatory. Therefore, the interviewer must avoid questions relating to the following:

1. Political affiliation, political views, or voting history.
2. Religious beliefs or practices.
3. A candidate's race.
4. A candidate's age.
5. A candidate's national origin or ancestry.
6. A candidate's family and whether they would be willing/able to join them in the new location.
7. A candidate's desire to have children or raise a family.
8. Pregnancy and other gender related issues.
9. Sexual orientation or sexual practices.
10. Marital status or personal and private relationships.
11. Potentially controversial issues of race, gender or ethnicity.

Any information a candidate may *volunteer* during the interview process regarding these matters does not render the interview invalid or otherwise taint the process. Consequently, open-ended questions, such as asking if the candidate wants to reveal anything else that has not already been covered, are not prohibited. In fact, they can sometimes provide valuable insight into a candidate's views and perspectives.

Questions and Topics to Avoid During the Interview Process

With regard to issues of physical or mental health, many questions are appropriate after a conditional offer of employment has been made, but must be avoided beforehand. The interviewer must avoid questions relating to the following topics:

1. A candidate's medical history.
2. Past workers' compensation claims.
3. Past use of sick leave.
4. Health of a candidate's family members.
5. Any obvious physical or mental impairment of the candidate. Although it is permissible to ask if the candidate is able to perform the essential functions of the job for which he/she is applying, it is probably better is not to ask this type of question at all. Of course, from a practical point of view, it is hard to imagine anyone answering negatively.
6. A candidate's frequency of illegal drug use or addiction. However, it is permissible to ask if the candidate ever used illegal drugs, and if so, the last time he/she did so. Once again, this is a very delicate area that can create significant problems for the employer if the questioning is intrusive.
7. Alcoholism or the frequency of alcohol consumption.

The questions listed above which relate to medical conditions may properly be asked of a candidate after he or she has received a conditional offer of employment. Before an offer is made, however, the questions must be avoided.

If you need further assistance in crafting proper interview questions, please do not hesitate to contact us for further guidance.