



MEMORANDUM

Date: May 23, 2024

To: City and Borough Assembly

Thru: Katie Koester, City Manager

From: Dallas Hargrave, Human Resources & Risk Management Director

Re: City Attorney Recruitment and Selection Process

This memorandum outlines options for the Assembly to consider when deciding the City Attorney recruitment process, including the “pros and cons” of each option. Additionally, if the Assembly is interested in using option two or option three, I have included preliminary recruitment and selection information and a timeframe. The specific selection criteria for this recruitment process will only be discussed in executive session.

Background

On May 8, 2024, Robert Palmer submitted his resignation as City Attorney to the Assembly, indicating his last day would be August 31, 2024 (but could be flexible if needed). On May 13, 2024 the City Manager, City Attorney, Deputy City Manager, HRRM Director, and Acting Mayor met to discuss posting the City Attorney position for recruitment. The information contained in this memorandum, a draft job posting (based of the last job posting in 2018), and City Attorney pay information was provided at that meeting. The Acting Mayor provided direction to the HRRM Director regarding posting the City Attorney position for recruitment and the salary listed in the posting, and requested that the City Manager report to the Assembly during staff reports at the May 13, 2024 Assembly meeting before posting the position on May 14, 2024. On May 14, 2024, the City Attorney position was posted for recruitment (see attachment).

Recruitment process

Below are three recruitment options that the Assembly can consider using. If the Assembly selects Option 2 or 3, and those recruitment efforts are unsuccessful, Assembly could still eventually choose Option 1. Based on the initial guidance from the Acting Mayor, we have started down the path of using Option 2 or 3; however, if the Assembly ultimately would rather use Option 1, we can take down the job posting and go through the process to engage a recruiting firm.

Option 1: Selecting an Executive Search Firm

Identify an executive search firm that specializes in municipal leadership or/or attorney recruitment. Use their services to source and pre-screen candidates.

PROS

- Recruiters often have their finger on the pulse of who is looking within the specialty (municipal leadership).
- A good recruiter will also contact individuals who are not looking and proactively source candidates for you.
- Uses less existing staff resources.

CONS

- You will mostly be offered the candidates within that recruitment firm's "stable" of executives.
- May have to go through an RFP process to select the search firm which would add time to the selection process.
- Can be expensive—will likely cost 25% - 33% of annual salary

Option 2: In-house recruitment

Run an in-house recruitment effort similar to the process that was used when the current City Attorney was hired.

PROS

- Gives the Assembly a degree of control over the sourcing process used.
- Cost effective.

CONS

- May miss candidates who will only go through a recruitment firm.
- More staff intensive.
- Will likely get candidates who are actively looking.

Option 3: Blended Effort

Run an in-house recruitment effort but allow recruiters to provide candidates. CBJ staff would screen applicants, but if a candidate was chosen who was forwarded by a recruitment firm, we would pay a fee to the recruiter.

PROS

- Recruiters often have their finger on the pulse of who is looking within the industry.
- Recruitment firms looking for the fee may also actively source candidates who are not looking but might be interested.

CONS

- There would be a fee to the recruitment firm if that is where the final candidate is selected from.
- Still moderately staff intensive as prescreening would still be conducted at the staff level.

Proposed Selection Process

If the Assembly selects option two or option three, I propose the following selection process steps. This is a general outline and the exact process that the Assembly uses may need to be adapted based on the results of the recruitment efforts.

1. The Assembly appoints Assembly City Attorney Search Committee. The Committee is charged with approving recruitment and selection process and materials, and with identifying a slate of finalists for full Assembly consideration.
2. Position is posted for 30 days. Advertising to include internal posting process (includes governmentjobs.com and indeed.com), AML, the Alaska Bar Association, an email to the AMAA, and other professional organizations identified by Mr. Palmer.
3. HRRM Director screens applicants against subcommittee criteria. For those candidates who possess the identified experience and education, an initial video conference screen is conducted to verify work history, get a general sense of communication style, and answer questions the candidate might have.
4. Results of the initial screening process are presented to the Committee who selects 6 – 10 candidates to take through an initial video conference interview.
5. Committee then selects the top 2 – 4 candidates for a site visit and selection process.
6. The entire Assembly sits as the finalist panel to interview and select the top candidate. Selection process activities will be identified in executive session, and portions of candidate interviews may need to be done in a public session.

Recruitment and Selection Timeframe

Below is a general proposed timeframe for the City Attorney recruitment and selection process.

Date	Activity
May 29, 2024	Assembly appoints City Attorney Search Committee
Early June	Search Committee meets to identify selection criteria and recruitment parameters.
Mid May to Mid June	Recruitment period. Search Committee continues to meet to develop selection process materials.
Early to Mid June	HRRM Director screens candidates who meet the criteria identified by the Search Committee. Prepares reports for Search Committee
Early June (Date TBD)	Search Committee meets to discuss selection materials.
Early June (Date TBD)	Search Committee meets to discuss selection materials.
June (Date TBD—after position closes)	Search Committee meets to review slate of candidates and make a determination on which candidates will proceed further in the selection process. HR begins background checks on semi-finalist candidates.
Late June to Early July	Search Committee interviews semifinalist candidates via video conference.
Early July	Search Committee identifies finalists to recommend to full Assembly.
Mid July	Full Assembly meets to select finalist candidates for in person finalist process.

Mid July	HR staff arrange for candidate site visits. HR conducts reference checks on candidates identified for a site visit.
Early August	Finalist selection process conducted
Mid August	Negotiations with successful candidate- candidate gives notice if currently employed.
Mid September	First day of employment

Next Steps

If the Assembly is interested in Option 2 or 3 for recruitment, then a City Attorney Search Committee should be appointed by the Assembly, preferably at the meeting tonight. Once the Search Committee is established, the committee can meet to consider options and provide direction to the HRRM Director for selection processes and criteria.

If the Assembly is interested in Option 1 for recruitment, then the Assembly should provide direction to the Manager to remove the current job posting, contact any applicants who have applied to explain the change, and begin the process to procure a recruitment firm.