

**TO Westlake Mayor and Council**

**FROM Russ Blackburn, Jim Hanson and Ken Parker, Senior Advisers**

**DATE December 9, 2025**

**SUBJECT City Manager Candidate Recommendations and Interview Process**

The purpose of this memo is to provide The FCCMA Senior Advisers assessment of qualified candidates to be considered as your next City Manager and to recommend timing and steps for the interview process.

We reviewed the 19 applications sent to us based on the most important knowledge and competencies from the Position. Our recommendations are contained in three groups; Qualified meets all requirements, Qualified, but does not meet all requirements and Not recommended.

**Qualified, meets all requirements.**

- Leondrae D. Camel
- Mark A. Kutney
- Horace McHugh
- Howard Brown
- Peggy Castano
- Larry Tibbs
- Michael Jackson

**Qualified but do not meet all requirements.**

- Emmanuel O. Adediram
- Robert Curnow
- Ramsay Bulkeley

**Not Recommended**

- Deidra J. Boykin
- Brandon Carter
- Michael K. Gendill
- Jason Goldsein
- George Calvin Dickens
- Armani Nelson
- Frederick Stang
- Chandler Williamson
- Charles Morris

Our recommendations are based solely on the applications we received. We have not conducted background checks on these individuals.

The City Commission needs to move quickly but with due diligence. The City Council should take the following actions at your next meeting.

**Choose a semi-finalist candidate field.** We recommend that each Councilmember review our recommendations and select up to 7 candidates to be considered in the semi-finalist field. We recommend that your selection of semi-finalists come from the two groups of qualified candidates. The City Council should then reach a consensus or vote for the City Council's Semi-finalist, 7 to 10 candidate field. Background checks should be conducted for the semi-finalists. After the background checks are received, the City Council should meet to select the interview field.

**Interview field.** The interview field should be composed of approximately five candidates. Our experience is that some candidates may drop out, so we recommend that Council include two alternates who can be inserted into the interview field if needed. Staff should also verify with each candidate that they are willing to accept the job, if offered, at a starting salary rate that is within the published range.

**Choose dates for the interview process.**

The schedule for the interview process will be impacted by the number of candidates you want to consider.

**Instruct staff to coordinate with interviewees on interview dates and travel and assist with accommodation if needed.** Also, they should notify applicants not selected for interviews by email or letter.

**Decide upon an interview process.** We recommend:

- A two- or three-day process,
- Have group tours of Westlake with your top staff so that they can learn more about your city prior to the interviews,
- Consider holding a reception for candidates, elected officials, top staff and the public on the evening prior to the public interviews, (optional)
- Mayor and Council conduct one-on-one interviews with the finalists,
- City Council conducts a public interview with each candidate. Candidates should be asked the same questions.
- Finish with a Council vote on who you want to be your next City Manager and authorize someone (usually your Mayor and City Attorney) to negotiate an employment agreement subject to final Council approval. Choosing a 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> choice is a good idea because negotiations with top candidates are not always successful and waiting for authorization to negotiate with a 2<sup>nd</sup> candidate delays the process and
- agree to pay travel and lodging costs for candidates and their spouses. Why spouses? Few people would accept a job in a new city unless their spouse visited and agreed to move there.

**The Senior Advisors can provide a draft list of possible interview questions;** City Council should ask the City Attorney to review the interview questions and provide the interview questions to the City Council on the day of the interview.