

MINUTES OF THE WORKSHOP
OF THE BRAHAM CITY COUNCIL
MONDAY, MARCH 25, 2019
4:30 P.M.

The workshop was called to order with the following present: Mayor Patricia Carlson; Council Members Robert Knowles, Shawn Sullivan, and Vicky Ethen; and City Administrator Sally Hoy. Council Member Jeremy Kunshier arrived after the workshop had begun. Also present were Isanti County Commissioner Terry Turnquist; Isanti County Administrator Kevin VanHooser, and Isanti County HR Director Lindsey Giese who had been invited to assist the council in the hiring process.

In the audience were Street Supt. Dan Eklund, Police Chief Eric Baumgart, Account Clerk Sue Hasser, and Office Specialist Stephanie White.

Administrator Hoy provided the panel with the LMC Toolkit in hiring a City Administrator, a recap of that toolkit with bullet points to follow, and the City's 2019 Salary Schedule. She told the council at the start of the meeting that she would be as much or as little involved in their hiring process as they want her to be.

The first thing the council did was hear from the employees present at the meeting as they shared what their concerns would be with a new administrator. They all shared the same concern that they did not want the new administrator to be a micromanager. They noted that they wanted to be trusted to do the jobs they were paid to do, and wanted an administrator with the same open door policy and flexibility as Administrator Hoy when they have questions or need time off for family issues. They told the panel that all the departments get along and work well together now and wanted to retain the current cohesiveness, where they can come in with ideas and the administrator will support those ideas and steer them in the right direction, rather than being a cog in the wheel. Chief Baumgart summarized for the employees, saying they don't know what to expect, and if there will be drastic change with Administrator Hoy's departure.

The council acknowledged their concerns and concurred they all want the same thing for the City, noting the benefits of a thorough background check and that although someone new would come in with their own management style, they weren't looking for someone with the attitude that they were going to change the world.

From there, the panel discussed the process. Council Member Knowles noted he did not feel the City should hire a consultant for the hiring process. County Administrator VanHooser told the council that Gary Weiers from David Drown Associates had told him there is no small cities discount because they typically took more work than larger cities. He said that he and Giese would assist them as much as they needed but they were weren't a search team. He said one of the things Weiers said was that larger cities and counties will exclude the City Administrator out of the process, but in this case, Braham doesn't have an HR Department, and if the Administrator is leaving on good terms, there wasn't much reason she can't be involved in a lot of the process.

Administrator Hoy told the council that in order to draw her PERA, there could be no verbal or written agreement that she would return to work after her retirement date. Council Member Sullivan noted the benefit of starting the process early enough to have both Hoy and the new administrator working together for the hands on training.

Sullivan asked Giese how important it was to have someone from the community vs. finding someone from outside the community. Giese answered that it depended on what the council was looking for. She told him they didn't have to be from the community, and it could be someone from another small town and understands the government and what the small towns are like, noting sometimes it's better because they don't have all of the ties and history of the community. Commissioner Turnquist told the council they want to hire the best and most qualified person, regardless where they come from. He said he wouldn't go into it with any preconceived notions. Administrator VanHooser added that the council should not expect to get another 30-year administrator. He said getting 4-5 years out of someone was doing good.

General discussion took place from there regarding the actual process-- Veteran's Preference which was not applicable, whether there would be reimbursement of expenses, and the number of applications to anticipate. The consensus of the council was to leave the minimum job requirements as drafted, to state 3-5 years experience as preferred, and to require the Municipal Clerks Certification to be obtained once they are hired. The consensus of the council was that applications be screened by full council, the first set of interviews done at a Personnel Committee level, and final interviews done by full council. They agreed that the mayor should be the voice of the council and be the one to take the finalists around to all the departments, and the tentative timeline for advertisement be in April with a deadline the beginning of May. These were all based upon a general consensus of the direction the process should take, with no official council action being taken at the workshop.

Knowles moved, and Sullivan seconded to adjourn. Motion carried 5-0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sally A. Hoy
City Administrator