



City of Grand Island

Tuesday, December 09, 2003

Council Session

Item G4

Approving Minutes of November 22, 2003 City Council Special Meeting

*The Minutes of November 22, 2003 City Council Special Meeting are submitted for approval.
See attached MINUTES.*

Staff Contact: RaNae Edwards

OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS

CITY OF GRAND ISLAND, NEBRASKA

MINUTES OF CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING

November 22, 2003

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, a Special Meeting of the City Council of the City of Grand Island, Nebraska was conducted in the Community Meeting Room of City Hall, 100 East First Street, on November 22, 2003. Notice of the meeting was given in the Grand Island Independent on November 17, 2003.

Mayor Jay Vavricek called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. The following members were present: Councilmembers Meyer, Whitesides, Pielstick, Gilbert, Nickerson, Cornelius, Pauly, Hornady, Walker and Haase. The following City Officials were present: Interim City Administrator David Springer, City Clerk RaNae Edwards, and Human Resources Director Brenda Sutherland. Also present was Dr. Bill Giddings, Dee Price, Bob Sorensen, Robert Briseno, and Gale Larson of the Mayor's Citizens Committee.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE was said.

MAYOR COMMUNICATION: Mayor Jay Vavricek mentioned that the City flags would be flown at half staff on Monday, November 24, 2003 in remembrance of Howard Petersen, former Mayor and State Senator.

PUBLIC INTERVIEW WITH GARY GREER: Human Resources Director Brenda Sutherland, Councilmembers, and the Citizens Committee asked questions to better understand the candidate for the position of City Administrator. Mr. Greer answered questions concerning his desire to come to Grand Island, his experience in City Government and wanting to get back in to a City Administrator's position. He stated he was a person to get things done with integrity, sincerity, and a good work ethic.

Mr. Greer stated a City Administrator was a person who could facilitate consensus, needed to shoulder blame to take it away from the elected officials and be a leader. He also stated diversity were issues he had dealt with in both Manhattan, Kansas and Kearney, Nebraska when he worked there. Respect of diverse people was important, meeting them on their terms, the possibility of having city information written in Spanish and having employees who could speak Spanish would be helpful.

Mr. Greer commented on management styles. Openness, service to the citizens, mentoring staff, and work ethic of doing what needed to be done in a timely manner. Personnel issues were discussed when it came to terminating employees. Mr. Greer stated he tries to be a coach, have dignity in the process, and a professional duty to do what was right.

In his opinion, a balanced budget would be one where all expenses would be met with 15% in reserves. He believed highly in reserves. Management and leadership styles were brought out,

with Mr. Greer stating he had a family leadership style, was very motivated, very competitive but was working on patience. He felt he tried to understand both sides of an issue when working with council and mayor, and would do what the council and mayor wanted even if he felt differently. Meeting as many people as possible would be the first process in building credibility and confidence. Mr. Greer stated Economic Development was very important to any city. He also stated things do not get done unless you have communication. A City Administrator needed to look every day at what needed to be done and then make it happen.

RECESS: Council recessed from 11:45 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. for lunch.

PUBLIC INTERVIEW WITH ERIC SWANSON: Human Resources Director Brenda Sutherland, Councilmembers, and the Citizens Committee asked questions to better understand the candidate for the position of City Administrator. Mr. Swanson stated he would like to move to Grand Island because it would be a step up for his career and was excited about the city and what it had to offer. Explained was his 18 years of experience in government, enjoyment of working for and with people, and wanting to continue to work in the area of city government. Mr. Greer stated he is a good listener, has an open-door policy, is not afraid to make decisions or learn from mistakes made, is caring, optimistic, positive, and goal oriented

Mr. Greer stated that the three most crucial “people skills” a manager could possess were accessibility, listening, and an open-door policy. He spoke about recognition of employees being important along with pay. Communication, trust, timeliness, and day-to-day operations were mentioned as the responsibility of the City Administrator to the City Council.

Building trust to break down barriers was mentioned in addressing cultural diversity. Mr. Greer stated leadership was a process where you focus on what it takes to execute the plan to accomplish your goals. A good leader was someone who was a good follower. He stated it was important to make work fun and a family atmosphere and that you show you care about the employees.

Mr. Greer stated his strongest abilities as an administrator were visionary and day-to-day operations working with others. If hired for this position he would like to “hit the ground running” by meeting as many people as possible.

He mentioned that Economic Development was very important and that the City needed to be ready to have the site ready to go before the businesses came to this area. The City needed to be the key player. He also stated it was important to help existing businesses expand.

Mr. Greer stated communication was a process and he had brought innovation to that process, through phone calls, personal contacts, and whatever it took.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: Motion was made by Pielstick, second by Cornelius, to adjourn to Executive Session at 1:40 p.m. for the purpose of discussing the City Administrator candidates. Motion carried unanimously.

RETURN TO REGULAR SESSION: Motion was made by Pielstick, second by Hornady, to return to Regular Session at 3:15 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 3:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

RaNae Edwards
City Clerk