Brainerd, MN
October 23, 2023

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, the Special Meeting of the Brainerd City Council was called to order at 6:00 P.M. by Council President Bevans.

Upon roll call, the following members were noted as present: O'Day, Terry, Stenglein, Johnson, Czeczok, and Bevans. Mayor Badeaux was also noted as present.

Also noted as present were Administrator Bergman, Finance Director Hillman, HR Director Schubert, Police Chief Davis, and IT/GIS Director Strong.

Council President Bevans opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

MOVED AND SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBERS O'DAY AND CZECZOK, DULY CARRIED, TO APPROVE THE AGENDA.

New Business

Accept City Administrator Bergman's Resignation

MOVED AND SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER CZECZOK AND STENGLEIN, DULY CARRIED, TO ACCEPT CITY ADMINISTRATOR BERGMAN'S RESIGNATION EFFECTIVE NOVEMBER 15TH 2023.

Authorize the General Terms and for Staff to begin Negotiations for Interim City Administrator Patrick Wussow

Member Czeczok asked about the process that was conducted to lead to the current recommendation. He asked whether the Mayor is typically included in the leadership team. He stated that a standing committee meeting was conducted with three voting members present. He is not suggesting that anything nefarious took place. However, the City talks about being transparent and if the Council President wants to call a Special Meeting, they can do that. He does not understand why there had to be a meeting conducted with three voting members prior to this meeting. All of the items on the agenda could have been addressed without a separate leadership meeting.

MOVED AND SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBERS TERRY AND JOHNSON, DULY CARRIED, TO AUTHORIZE THE GENERAL TERMS AND FOR STAFF TO BEGIN NEGOTIATIONS FOR INTERIM CITY ADMINISTRATOR PATRICK WUSSOW.

Authorize Hiring of a Consulting Firm to Conduct a City Administrator Search

HR Director Schubert stated that Baker Tilly's fee to conduct the Bemidji City Administrator search was $26,000. This afternoon she received a second e-mail from South Central Cooperative, they conducted the City of Byron and Freeborn County Administrator searches. She did not have time to do reference checks or get in direct contact with the firm. Their price was up to $16,500 with a two-year guarantee. The way that the search is conducted between the two firms is different. Sourcewell does have a reimbursement program for this and could cover up to 50% of the cost.

Administrator Bergman stated that the previous process was to submit a resume, application packet, and video interview.

Member Terry asked about BLAEDC's ability to conduct a search like this.

HR Director Schubert stated that the City has not used BLAEDC in the past for this type of search. BLAEDC did not reach out and the City did not reach out to them.

Member Johnson stated that the contract with Interim Administrator Wussow is for a limited number of hours and does not include benefits. Whether the cost of the search is $16,000 or $26,000 there is enough saving on the Administrator's salary that the City can choose whichever firm it feels would do the best job.

Member Bevans stated he would be uncomfortable going with an unknown company. With the holidays coming up, at the very best the start date for the new Administrator would be early 2024.

Member Stenglein asked whether the process that DDA utilizes, which is similar to that of Baker Tilly, or something unique to DDA that the Council was not happy with from the Police Chief hiring.

Member O'Day stated that the hiring range DDA advertised, and communication were the main concerns with the previous hiring process.

HR Director Schubert stated that the process used for the Police Chief hiring was muddied because of the implementation of the performance-based pay and due to having a Police and Fire Civil Service commission. She felt that there hadn't been much luck with DDA in the search for the City Administrator in the past, prompting staff to contract other companies. With the holidays fast approaching, Staff felt it was necessary to start the process of hiring as soon as possible. This was part of the reason that a Council leadership meeting was conducted.

Member Czeczok stated that the way that this is being paid for is by taxpayers, the Council should take the time to explore cost effective options.

MOVED AND SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBERS CZECZOK AND STENGLEIN, DULY CARRIED, TO DIRECT STAFF TO COME BACK TO THE NEXT REGULAR MEETING WITH MORE INFORMATION OF OPTIONS.

Adjourn

MOVED AND SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBERS CZECZOK AND O'DAY, DULY CARRIED, TO ADJOURN.

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 6:15 p.m.

Jennifer Bergman
City Administrator