

FARMINGTON CITY COUNCIL
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
September 19, 2011

A special meeting of the Farmington City Council was held on Monday, September 19, 2011, in Council Chambers, 23600 Liberty Street, Farmington, Michigan. Notice of the meeting was posted in compliance with Public Act 267-1976.

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Mayor Buck.

PRESENT: Buck, Knol, McShane, Wright.

ABSENT: None.

CITY ADMINISTRATION: City Clerk Halberstadt, Attorney Schultz

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

09-11-146 MOTION BY Knol, seconded by Wright, to approve the agenda as presented. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

REVIEW COUNCIL CANDIDATE APPLICATIONS

Discussion was held regarding scheduling interviews of candidates to fill the Council vacancy. Council agreed to schedule two meetings on Monday, September 26 and Tuesday, September 27, both starting at 6:30 p.m.

Discussion continued regarding the importance of informing the public once the appointment is made especially if he/she is a candidate on the November ballot.

Discussion was held regarding the criteria for selecting candidates to interview. Council concurred that all candidates would be interviewed citing the importance of gaining an in-depth understanding of all of them in order to make a good decision.

Council concurred to split the interviews with five on the first day and three on the second day.

Discussion followed regarding the provisions of the Open Meetings Act in terms of Councilmembers discussing candidates with each other outside of official city meetings. City Attorney Schultz advised under the OMA councilmembers cannot meet to discuss qualifications of candidates outside of an official meeting.

Wright recommended councilmembers share their candidate questions with each other. He stated it would also be beneficial for councilmembers to share any observations made on the applications and questionnaires. Schultz advised Council e-mail their questions to the City Manager's office.

COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS -2-
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Buck asked councilmembers what qualifications they find most important in a candidate.

McShane stated a strong background in finance and business is important in order to face the economic challenges ahead. It is also important for a candidate to have a strong desire for economic development and experience in that area if possible.

Knol concurred with McShane, but stressed the importance of previous service and commitment to the community. She stated someone who is involved in a community has a better understanding of what makes it work. She expressed the importance of a candidate's ability to represent the community. She stated a candidate needs to be a quick study and capable leader.

McShane cited the importance of a team player who will not be grandstanding on their own issues all the time.

Knol would like to know why two of the candidates are not seeking election in November. She questioned whether they are avoiding the challenges of the campaign process including community participation, public speaking, etc.

Knol stated it is important for a candidate to be tough and withstand public scrutiny.

Buck recommended Council allow 30 minutes for each interview and schedule candidates in alphabetical order if possible.

Wright questioned the process for conducting the interviews. He asked if candidates would be allowed to make an opening or closing statement.

Wright expressed opposition to allowing candidates to give an opening statement. He stated they had that opportunity in the application process.

Wright stated the forum as structured will not allow Council the time to really gain an in-depth understanding of candidates in order to make a clear decision. He proposed each Councilmember take an area of concern and develop related questions. He concurred 30 minutes for each interview is sufficient.

Wright suggested scheduling an additional meeting to interview finalists one more time if Council is unable to reach a consensus on a candidate.

McShane noted Councilmembers could meet individually with candidates after the meeting on Tuesday. She stated her previous decisions regarding appointments were not necessarily based on written qualifications.

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Discussion followed regarding the process that will be followed in making a final decision. Council discussed using the same process that was used when Wright was appointed.

Buck discussed the format for questioning and emphasized the importance of open-ended questions, i.e. are you a team player vs. give me an example of your ability to be a team player.

DISCUSSION – BOARD AND COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

A. Planning Commission

B. Beautification Committee

Discussion was held concerning the qualifications of Jill Babcock and Ken Chiara who were interviewed for the Planning Commission at the September 6, 2011 special meeting. Council agreed that both candidates were well qualified to serve on the Commission. Discussion was held regarding other openings on Boards and Commissions that would fit the candidates.

Council concurred that Emily Towlerton would be a good fit on the Beautification Commission. Knol noted that given her background she would also be a great candidate for the Commission on Children, Youth and Families.

OTHER BUSINESS

Clerk Halberstadt requested Council add to the regular meeting agenda appointment of Councilmember Knol to the Election Commission.

Wright proposed changing Council compensation from \$1800 to \$2400 per year. Following discussion and the determination this would require a charter amendment the proposal was withdrawn.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Annabelle Gabel, 23089 Violet Street, pointed out the landscaping at the Community Living Center looks very nice.

COUNCIL COMMENT

No council comment was heard.

ADJOURNMENT

09-11-147 MOTION BY McShane, seconded by Knol, to adjourn the meeting.
MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

The meeting adjourned at 6:55 p.m.

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J.T. (Tom) Buck, Mayor

Susan K. Halberstadt, City Clerk

APPROVED: October 17, 2011