

City of New Castle Delaware  
City Council Special Meeting  
1 Municipal Boulevard  
Tuesday, November 7, 2023  
6:30 p.m.

**Call to Order: 6:30 PM**

**Roll Call**

**Present:** Council President, Suzanne M. Souder  
Councilperson Joseph F. Day  
Councilperson Nermin Zubaca  
Councilperson Elect Brian Mattaway

**Absent:** Councilperson Andrew Zeltt

**Also present:** Max Walton, City Solicitor

Council President Souder called the November 7, 2023, special City Council meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Roll call followed and a quorum to conduct business was declared.

The Special Council Meeting was called to discuss a system to evaluate candidates for the position of City Administrator. Of the 200 applications received, 40 were considered eligible to move to the next stage. All applications are still available if Council feels they should be reviewed a second time.

**Public Comment**

Phil Gross, 1301 13<sup>th</sup> Street

Mr. Gross opined that part of the criteria should be that the successful candidate should not be related to any Councilperson or City employee. He added that all criteria should be publicly advertised and comment from the public who did not attend the special meeting should be solicited. Council President Souder noted that the minutes of the Special Council Meeting will be published on the city website.

**Discussion of evaluation and hiring procedures for the City Administrator position**

Council President Souder noted that the vacancy advertisement included a list of specific criteria for the position and reviewed some of the criteria. Council President Souder suggested a numeric ranking system to identify how well the candidates meet the criteria.

Items suggested to be included for consideration:

- Grant writing.
- Hiring / liaison with professional personnel.
- Project management and/or overseeing capital projects.
- Economic development.
- The time commitment of the position, including being on-call for emergencies and city-sponsored events.

Mr. Walton briefly explained some items that are typically included in the contract negotiations. He added that the expectation is that the position is not a typical 40-hour a week job.

Ms. Delgado will supply copies of the 40 applications to each of the Council members in order to rank each candidate's qualifications and to establish each Council member's top candidates. Thereafter, a Special Meeting will be scheduled to discuss the applications. The members concurred. In response to a question from Councilperson Elect Mattaway, Mr. Walton explained that the city Code establishes criteria to ensure the hiring process is in compliance with State law. He added that the Council members will receive a list of all Delaware law requirements that are in the city Code.

In response to a question from Councilperson Day, Mr. Walton explained the method of informing unsuccessful candidates that their application was not selected for an interview; noting that he is not aware of a standard operating procedure currently being used by the city in its hiring process. Council President Souder will inquire about the impact on city staff to notify all unsuccessful candidates that they were not selected for an interview and thanking them for their submission. Mr. Walton recommended that a letter be sent to all unsuccessful candidates who are interviewed.

Regarding grant writing, Council President Souder will inquire if the former City Administrator was responsible for grant writing.

Mr. Walton suggested that the Council members each select their top 10 candidates from the 40 applications and that a numeric ranking system be used during the interview process. After discussion, the Council members agreed that each of their top 10 candidates will be discussed to identify a group of candidates for a first interview.

Further discussion included situations that might require decisions subsequent to first interviews, verification of employment, reference checks, and discussion of candidates in open session vs executive session. Mr. Walton recommended that references be checked for the final candidates.

Mr. Walton stated that the criteria set forth in the Public Integrity Statute will be used in the event a candidate has a personal relationship to any of the Council members. A discussion on when to recuse ensued.

A motion to adjourn the special City Council meeting was made and seconded. The motion was unanimously carried and the meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen R. Weirich  
City Stenographer

**Next Regular Meeting Date: November 14, 2023**  
**Posted: 10/31/2023**