

City Council of the City of New Castle
Special Council Meeting at Town Hall – 201 Delaware Street – New Castle
Wednesday – January 30, 2012 – 6 p.m.

Present:

Council President William Barthel
Councilperson John Cochran
Councilperson John Gaworski
Councilperson Ted Megginson
Councilperson Teel Petty

Also present: Mayor Donald Reese, City Administrator Cathryn Thomas, City Solicitor Daniel Losco

Council President Barthel said this is a new process in which the City Council is engaging – selecting a new City Administrator, since Administrator Thomas has given her notice that she will be leaving the City. Council President Barthel said it is likely the new Council elected at the April 13 City election will make the final decision on who is hired for this position.

Administrator Thomas said that the optimal place to advertise the position would be on the Web site of the International City/County Management Association (ICMA). Solicitor Losco said that when Delaware City performed its manager search, they placed advertisements in professional publications regionally, locally and nationally.

Councilperson Petty said that the last time the City performed a search they advertised through the ICMA. That occurred two times in a row, which is what was necessary over a period of several months back in 2005. (The first search that year did not result in a successful hiring.)

Councilperson Megginson said that six years ago, when the City hired a Public Services Director, there was a committee formed to manage that process.

Council members liked the idea of a committee and settled that a committee of three would work. They also discussed that others involved in the process could be the current City Administrator, the Human Resources Director and the City Solicitor.

Mayor Reese said that in the past the City found out valuable information on prospective candidates by performing background checks. With current technology, much information can be found online.

Administrator Thomas said that at some point in the process the Council will have to decide if they will pay expenses (i.e., airfare, hotel stays, meals, etc.) for out-of-town candidates to come to the City to be interviewed. The other option is not to pay these expenses, at least for the first round of interviews, and let the applicants know that this initial expense is something they will have to cover.

There are also other alternatives to performing first round interviews in person for candidates not from the area. This could include conference calls and/or video conferencing such as using an online service like Skype.

The interview process should include that candidates are asked uniform questions, and consideration should be given to developing and employing a scoring system.

Councilpersons Petty and Cochran volunteered to serve on the initial application screening committee, along with Council President Barthel.

Council members decided against advertising a definite salary or range for the position. Instead, the advertisement will include that applicants provide a salary history and also include salary requirements.

The deadline for applications was set for the end of February. The advertisement will also include that applicants shall have a minimum of five years' experience in positions comparable to the City Administrator/Public Services Director position in New Castle.

Mayor Reese asked if the City would detail in the advertisement benefits to be provided to the successful candidate when s/he is hired. Administrator Thomas responded that the City benefits package is likely comparable to most benefit packages provided to persons in this position in other similar-sized municipalities. Further, some of the benefits offered by the City and/or requested by an applicant would be negotiable.

Administrator Thomas said in addition to the ICMA, she would investigate advertising on the Web site for the American Public Works Association (APWA), since this position may continue as a combined job of City Administrator/Public Services Director. Further, she will be networking with various colleagues throughout Delaware and also provide the job advertisement to the University of Delaware and their Institute of Public Administration.

A motion was made by Councilperson Petty to enter into executive session, which was seconded by Councilperson Cochran and was unanimously approved.

A motion was made by Councilperson Gaworski to adjourn the executive session and the meeting, which was seconded by Councilperson Cochran and unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Cathryn C. Thomas
New Castle City Administrator/Public Services Director