

# **SWFRPC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SEARCH COMMITTEE MEETING**

## **October 20, 2011**

The SWFRPC's Executive Director Search Committee held a meeting/conference call on October 20, 2011 at the offices of the Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council. The following members and staff were in attendance:

### Committee Members

Mr. Michael Grant, Charlotte County Governor Appointee (Chair)  
Councilwoman Teresa Heitmann, City of Naples  
Councilman Forrest Banks, City of Fort Myers  
Ms. Laura Holquist, Lee County Governor Appointee  
Councilwoman Martha Simons, City of Bonita Springs  
Mr. Bob Mulhere, Collier County Governor Appointee  
Commissioner Karson Turner, Hendry County BOCC

### Staff

Ms. Liz Donley, SWFRPC Interim Executive Director  
Ms. Nancy Doyle, SWFRPC HR Operations Manager  
Ms. Nichole Gwinnett, SWFRPC Administrative Specialist II

### Call to Order

Committee Chair Grant called the meeting to order at 12:46 p.m. and then introductions were made.

### Executive Director Candidate Ranking Discussion

Chair Grant explained that the objective of the meeting was to rank the 22 candidates and then pick the top seven candidates. Those top seven candidates will then go to the next step and be notified for the 1<sup>st</sup> interview process on November 4 and 5.

Councilwoman Heitmann stated that she didn't fill out her ranking form because she didn't feel comfortable in doing so.

Mr. Mulhere gave his ranking over the phone.

Chair Grant stated that his original intention was that the candidate with the lowest score would be placed at the top; however, if that candidate only received one vote of "#1" then logically we are going to have to take the candidate's score and divide it by the number of votes they received.

Councilwoman Heitmann stated that she feels that the discussion shouldn't be about numbers, it should be about why we feel these candidates are qualified for the position.

Ms. Doyle of staff noted that Mr. George Mazzarantani, Commissioner Tom Jones, Commissioner Butch Jones is absent and Commissioner Robert Skidmore has withdrawn. Councilwoman Heitmann has not voted at this time.

Chair Grant stated that he was hoping to have the top three candidates and then the Committee could have a discussion on the remaining 4-7 candidates, because he was hoping there would be some kind of consensus on the top three.

Staff indicated that seven members had turned in their ranking sheets.

Chair Grant suggested dividing the total number by seven since seven members had voted.

Councilwoman Heitmann stated that she doesn't understand what intrigued the other members of the Committee to choose the candidates that they did for their top seven.

Chair Grant explained that he was hoping to rank the 22 candidates and then come up with the top seven candidates and find a way to drop off the first 12, assuming that there was a cluster between 1-12; we would say that these are the top three candidates, let's discuss 1-12 and that is where the conversation would be to get back to seven. He feels that it is a process of elimination.

Commissioner Turner indicated that some of the candidates received more votes than others so they should be the first qualifier. Ms. Holquist stated that it is a perfect example, why did people vote for that candidate.

The Committee suggested eliminating the candidates that didn't receive any votes or those that received only one vote.

**Councilman Banks moved and Councilwoman Simons seconded to remove Mr. Cookingham, Mr. Holly and Mr. Woods from the list.**

Staff highlighted the candidates which received two votes. The Committee discussed the candidates with only two votes and decided whether or not to keep them on the list. At the end, the Committee had narrowed it down to 12 candidates.

The Committee had a discussion about whether or not to keep a candidate on the list. After reviewing the candidates, the Committee decided to schedule nine candidates for interviews on November 4 and 5.

The Committee decided to use Skype to conduct the first interview process for all candidates. Chair Grant explained that the Executive Committee will interview the top candidates. Those interviews will be conducted in-person.

Ms. Donley noted that the only Executive Committee member who is not part of the Search Committee is Vice Mayor Denham.

Ms. Doyle stated that of the nine candidates there may be some candidates that may drop out. Chair Grant stated that the next discussion will be background checks.

Ms. Holquist asked Commissioner Turner how he felt having the Search Committee combining with the Executive Committee to make the final recommendation for the final three candidates. Commissioner Turner replied that he just wanted to make sure that the interview process is the same consistent process for those three candidates.

Ms. Holquist stated that the issue is now that we are not bringing in the candidates for the interview process. The plan all along was to originally have the candidates come in for the interview process. Chair Grant explained that he wanted to Skype the out-of-state candidates and bring in the in-state candidates, but we don't want to do anyone a disadvantage.

Ms. Holquist explained the interview process which she was involved in at FGCU.

Mr. Mulhere suggested inviting Vice Mayor Denham to participate in the interviews on November 4 and 5 as a member of the Executive Committee.

Chair Grant stated that at the end of the day on Saturday, November 5<sup>th</sup> the Search Committee and Executive Committee will have a discussion and come up with the top three candidates. If the Executive Committee decides that they want the Search Committee to help with the interviews of the final three candidates that is their decision.

Mr. Mulhere stated that there could be the possibility that after the first round of interviews there could be a strong support for one candidate and no need for the second round of interviews. Chair Grant stated that he doesn't believe that we would want to make a decision after a Skype interview process.

Ms. Holquist suggested interviewing five candidates on Friday, November 4<sup>th</sup> and four candidates on Saturday, November 5<sup>th</sup>.

Chair Grant stated that the next issue is that we need to come up with ten questions for the candidates for November 4 and 5.

Ms. Holquist suggested sending four questions to the candidates to answer ahead of the interview. She then read the questions which she had compiled.

Chair Grant asked the members to come up with questions which they would like to ask the candidates during the interviews. He asked the members to send their questions to Ms. Doyle and she will put them together and have 7 to 8 questions for the interview process. The same questions will be asked to all of the candidates. He stated that it is understanding that the interviews are going to be scheduled for one hour each.

Ms. Doyle asked the Committee on how extensive did they want her to get on background checks for the nine candidates and also the costs. She explained to the Committee that the costs ranged from \$50 to \$800. Mr. Grant replied to go with the \$100 background check for the nine candidates and for the final 3-4 candidates then we will have a more extensive background check conducted.

Ms. Holquist stated that you will be amazed at how many people will start dropping of the list by just checking their references.

Chair Grant suggested conducting reference checks before scheduling the Skype interviews. The Committee agreed.

**Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 2:15 p.m.

DRAFT