

MAYOR
Hal J. Rose

DEPUTY MAYOR
Andrea Young

COUNCIL MEMBERS
Diana Adams
Pat Bentley
John Dittmore
Daniel McDow
Stephen Phrampus



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CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING

MINUTES

October 4, 2022

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Rose called the special meeting to order at 3:10 p.m.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND MOMENT OF SILENT MEDITATION

Mayor Rose led the Pledge of Allegiance followed by a moment of silence.

3. ROLL CALL

Attending: Mayor Hal Rose, Deputy Mayor Andrea Young, and Council Members Diana Adams, Pat Bentley, John Dittmore, Stephen Phrampus and Daniel McDow.

Also present: City Manager Tim Rhode, Interim City Attorney Cliff Repperger, Acting Police Chief Richard Cordeau, Human Resources Director Jennifer Curran, Systems Administrator Christian Arsenault, City Clerk Cynthia Hanscom, and members of the public.

4. DETERMINATION OF JUSTIFICATION

Council Member Bentley moved to determine the special meeting was justified. Council Member Adams seconded the motion, which passed 7-0.

5. PUBLIC FORUM

There were no comments received from the public.

6. CONDUCT INTERVIEWS FOR CITY ATTORNEY

Interim City Attorney Repperger reviewed recommendations in interviewing the candidates and types of issues to avoid when questioning the candidates.

City Manager Rhode reminded Council that one of the candidates had withdrawn from further consideration; therefore, Council would be interviewing only two candidates.

Jennifer Cockcroft introduced herself and reviewed her education and work history.

Council asked questions regarding experience, mentoring, and her expectations in the job. She indicated she wanted to work in West Melbourne and had applied for the City Attorney position when it was open five years before. Ms. Cockcroft indicated that she was not familiar with working in a small department and that as the City grows they may need to consider additional staff. She felt capable of handling the workload for the department.

Ms. Cockcroft further reviewed her work experience and the reasoning for her movement from job to job. She was asked about living in the City and she indicated that she may not sell her home in Kissimmee right away but would sublet locally in the short-term. When asked about the relationship between staff and Council, Jennifer stated that the reporting structure would be to City Council but coordinate the work with City staff; ultimately, the City operates through Council with the staff.

Ms. Cockcroft noted that she had very little experience with labor negotiations but had worked on personnel investigations. When asked about community service, she stated that she was active as a football mom and worked with not-for-profit sports organizations as well as those at the high school level.

Council asked several questions about her work history and the reasons for leaving previous positions.

Ms. Cockcroft concluded that she would be available to move into the position almost immediately and believed she would be a good addition to the City.

Council recessed the meeting at 4:20 and reconvened at 4:27 p.m.

Council Member Dittmore asked about veteran's preference. City Attorney Repperger indicated that this position was exempt from veteran's preference as stated in the Florida Statute.

John Cary introduced himself and provided a background on his education, and experience.

When asked about litigation, Mr. Cary responded that he would handle some issues of litigation such as petition for *writ of certiorari* in regards to land use decisions made by the City. However, other litigation should be assigned to outside counsel. He noted that an ideal relationship with Council would include respect from all parties. He noted that he had also handled Risk Protection Orders and worked in drafting and reviewing contract language.

Mr. Cary said his biggest weakness or drawback would be being the sole attorney. However, he believed he had a network of attorneys that he could contact for advice and guidance if he had any questions.

If successful, Council asked Mr. Cary about leaving as a partner in the firm. Mr. Cary explained it was a non-equity partnership and he believed he would be able to give a relatively short notice once he had completed all the necessary steps through human resources. He stated he would not be bringing clients with him.

Mr. Cary was asked about his application with the City of Melbourne for the City Attorney position. Mr. Cary noted that the City of West Melbourne was further ahead in the process; if he were offered the position, he would not be pursuing the City Attorney position with Melbourne.

Mr. Cary was asked about longevity and he explained why he had moved several times and that it was common to move around to different agencies when working for the State. He expressed his desire to work in local government and noted that he was invested in this area.

Council asked about his experience with personnel matters. Mr. Cary replied that he has handle some questions regarding personnel but usually issues are handled by a labor attorney. He stated that he had worked with labor negotiation and drafting a new contract.

Mr. Cary concluded that the city attorney is responsible for representing the city but is also part of the team that works to build solutions. He stated that this is his community and he hoped to work to continue to make it a great place to live.

7. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the special meeting adjourned at 5:11 p.m.

Hal J. Rose, Mayor

Cynthia Hanscom, City Clerk