

WORK SESSION  
CITY ADMINISTRATOR INTERVIEWS  
MARCH 2, 2009

A Work Session Meeting of the Arcadia City Council was held on March 2, 2009 at 4:00 p.m. in the Margaret Way Building at 23 North Polk Avenue. Council members attending were Fazzone, Dixon, Goodman, Heine and Johnson. Also in attendance was Recorder Baumann.

Mayor Fazzone called the Work Session to order and stated that the purpose of the work session is to interview applicants for the position of City Administrator. Three (3) candidates are scheduled to appear today and additional interviews will be held on Wednesday, March 4, 2009 and Thursday, March 5, 2009. Each candidate will be given forty-five (45) minutes and will be asked ten (10) questions, with all applicants being asked the same set of questions at all interviews.

The interview of Mr. Joseph Fink commenced at 4:00 p.m. Mayor Fazzone welcomed Mr. Fink. Recorder Baumann read the questions to Mr. Fink.

**Question #1.** How knowledgeable are you with Florida Government and Government Sunshine Laws? *My first experience with Florida Law was as a member of the Charter Review Advisory Board of North Port and later as Chairman of that board in the early 90's. I also was a member of the Ad-hock Advisory Board for rate studies of utility rates in the City of North Port and later served as Chairman of that committee as well. After I was elected, I became very conversed in the Florida Statute because of the constant usage and also through attending the Florida League of Cities. I served on two committees in the League, I am quite converse in both Florida Statues and the Sunshine Law.*

**Question #2.** How familiar are you with the needs of a small city? The City of Arcadia is small and rural and at times at a disadvantage when it comes to competing with larger municipalities for state and federal dollars, how can you improve on this situation and assist in bringing in dollars for improvements to the City? *Before moving to Arcadia in 2005, except for the last eight years of my life I basically lived in small communities. I am from a rural area of Michigan, where I lived on acreage, moved to Florida when I was 15 and lived in North Port when there was 600 people. From the years 1996 to 2004, I lobbied extensively for the City of North Port at the state and federal level to make sure the city got its fair share of monies. For many of those years, North Port was a small city, so I am familiar with dealing with a small city. As you're Interim, as you are well aware, I have been networking extensively with other governments, most noted, the County. We meet on an average of at least once a week to make sure issues are clear and we are aware of what each body is doing; the School District and with other cities. I have met with the City of North Port and the City of Wauchula as well. I found the City of Wauchula has very similar issues or had similar issues about ten or fifteen years ago when Mr. Conerly was administrator in Wauchula. He updated the code at that time and dealt with issues that are facing us right now. I reconnected with a lot of friends I had as commissioner at the state and federal level so that I would be able to do what is needed in the community.*

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Interview of Joseph Fink cont.

**Question #3.** How would you manage a staff of many departments, be responsive and accountable to an elected body of officials, foster a relationship or cooperation with county officials and deal with citizens concerns in a timely manner? *I have been meeting with the school district and the county on regular bases. Whether you agree with the county or city in every issue, depending on where you are at, I think it is important to keep those lines of communication open so we don't have a "them vs. us" mentality. If we are going to survive this economic as a city, we need to assure we are going to get work together. I don't think we need to give any more services away. I think we need to provide services. That is what the best of local government is. Service provision basic and that gets to another key element of what you were talking about with how fast citizens concerns should be addressed. In my opinion it should be no less than twenty four hours in any issue that is brought before me, at least first contact. Resolution may take longer, but first contact needs and must be made within twenty four hours because if it is not, you have lost the edge at that point, we've upset a citizen, and we cannot allow that to happen. We must answer every complaint and every issue addressed to us within that length of time. I think consistency is a real key issue. We have to have consistency to the way we apply the codes, and the way we deal with folks. I think it is important to us that the codes are enforced across the board. I believe that it is imperative that staff, especially administrative staff show you the respect due your office. You are all elected officials, the voice of the citizenry. Often we get to familiar, sometime out of line, and if you chose me, I will continue to have staff address you by your proper title and in a proper manner, because I think that is due your office. Your office is a trust the people have given you and you have the vision of this city, and in that I believe you are due the honor of that position. At church, home or if you go out to socialize with people, that is a different thing. But in this office, we need to respect the office and position that you hold the position of authority.*

**Question #4.** How familiar are you with preparing a Zero Balance Budget? What techniques will you use to keep the city council full advised as to the financial condition and needs of the municipality at all times? *One of your council members said to me he had been contacted more by me in a month than he did all the time before with the previous administrator. My point is to make you aware of anything that is financially significant. The authority to do the job as staff comes directly from you. Unless those marching orders are given, I am not going to take anything for granted. I don't believe it is my job to take anything for granted and I am not going to. As far as a zero based budget, I believe it is imperative as well. In the real world in non governmental world, if you don't produce, if you don't do what you are suppose to, if you don't meet a list of goals, and that even deals with school districts, if you don't meet a list of specified goals, then you do not have the rational to keep the job the next year. Quiet frankly, that is the way government has to work especially in these economic times. People have to show the need of their position but, that they actually work. But it is going to be a proving thing, because without that proof, we don't have anything to show to expending their money and it is their money, it is not our money. We have only been grace over it for a short period of time.*

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Interview of Joseph Fink cont.

**Question #5.** What do you have to offer the City of Arcadia? *Well, I chose this place. This is the place I have always wanted to live. As a kid, we would go to Lakeland through Arcadia instead of 441. I would tell my father, one day I am going to live there. He would say, why you want to live there, it is old. My mother said we will live there one day after he passes. She did not make it, but I did. I chose this place; this is the place I wanted to live. I raised a family and even started a business. I am vested in the community. I don't want to change dramatically, the character, the historical significance of the town, but I do think I can help it and make it run better as a business and I think that makes me uniquely qualified of the candidates, because I did chose this place.*

**Question #6.** Do you feel that you are qualified to run the day to day operations of the city and what experience or qualifications make you the best candidate for the job of City Administrator of Arcadia? *I have Bachelor's Degree in Business Management, a minor in Finance and Accounting. It allows me to see where refinement of city government might take place, where updating might take place so that we are brought into the computer age in all aspects of the city. My experiences as an elected official to the third largest city in area in the state and the second largest between Miami and Tampa in population has shown me how better to refine government and make it work better. When I took office in 1996 the millage rate in the City of North Port was 5 mils. When I left office it was 2.8. It was not all due to me, I am not that arrogant, but it was due because we had a vision for what that city should look like and we monitored our staff directly and I learned from that planning staff. We were able to put together something that has slowly been put together. There were problems with it of course, but it was a marvelous learning experience and I picked it up like a sponge. Further, I think that on the coast you see a lot, and I would hate to see that be the mindset. There are a lot of people that think Arcadia might just pick up and blow away, and because it is easier for the county to do the job. It is easier for one government to do the job. I tell you quiet frankly, I chose a home within the corporate city limits because I wanted what the city government offered. I wanted a better standard of living than outside the corporate city limits. I believe that is easily obtainable through properly managed government. You set the policy, and staff puts it into place. But I think if we aren't careful, we may see what others see and we might blow away and that would be a sad thing because the best government is local government. It was very difficult to address the concerns of a city of fifty five thousand when I left office, because I was spending all my time on e-mail, every time someone sent me something, I was answering back making sure their problems were addressed. If this city were to cease to exist, this city would be at the mercy of an identity of thirty five thousand people, and the service provision would not be the same, could not have the same hands-on local service level that I believe you want and this city deserves.*

**Question #7.** When would you be available to start? *Tomorrow.*

**Question #8.** What is so appealing to you about this position that you are willing to leave where you are now? *I am not willing.*

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Interview of Joseph Fink cont.

**Question #9.** What are some techniques that you would use in handling critical issues with the council and public? *I think it goes back to open government. I think government gets in trouble when it tries to not tell all the facts of a situation. I have found that to be the case. That is when communication breaks down between staff and council and communication breaks down between citizenry and staff and council. I would hope if I am hired as the permanent City Administrator by you folks, you would me the latitude to ensure that public records are to be made to the "enth" degree, because as far I am concerned, I do not have any secrets. I live here. I have probably been in the newspaper way to many times in the course of time, and I really don't care about it now, I enjoy being staff and as far as I am concerned, if you do not give John ten pounds when he is asking for five, then he is going to be looking for more. As far as I am concerned, it is better to give him more than he wants, because then he knows we are not hiding a thing. I think open government is the best thing and to make you folks aware of what is going on. If you chose me, it will be my hardest job—I have heard over the course of time, all you have to do is keep three happy,- you know, I don't want to keep three happy. If you chose me, I want to keep five happy. I want to have the trust and the respect of all five of the council members of the City of Arcadia. I believe that is important. I have tried to treat you equally as the interim, and I want to make sure that relationship continues. There will be days when you will be on the losing end of a vote. There will be days you will be upset as all get out. But hopefully, when it is over we can sit down and talk and discuss how possibly to make you see as a vision issue that was not addressed by council more palatable to the rest of the members so everyone can have their vision expressed. I really want to have the support of everyone. It is imperative to me to have all interests and avenues of the city served and all interest is representative. It is a goal; I want everyone's support and respect.*

**Question #10.** What do you see as the role of a city administrator and what would your role be in the development of effective gals and objectives for the City of Arcadia? *If you hire me as the administrator, my job is singular. It is in fact to put into working effect the policy you have set as the leaders and the people with the vision of this city. It will be my place to put that into effect. It is not my vision, it's not staffs vision, it is your vision, you are the elected officials. As to goals in my opinion, the goal of council is to have that vision and to express it through action and put it into a policy of the City. My job and goals is to take that policy and put it into practice and nothing more. The vision has to come from you. You are the leaders. It will be the job of staff through me to insure that policy you dictate is to upheld and that is their goal. There goal is to ensure that policy is executed through the procedures I have laid out.*

The interview of Ms. Markae Rupp commenced at 5:05 p.m. Mayor Fazzone welcomed Ms. Rupp. Ms. Francine Clark read the questions to Ms. Rupp.

**Question #1.** How knowledgeable are you with Florida Government and Government in the Sunshine Law? *I have been employed in municipalities throughout Florida for the last fifteen years. Most of those employments were as a City Clerk or an Assistant Town Manager, Acting Town Administrator. In those positions, one of my biggest duties was the minutes and the records. So I am extremely familiar with the records law. I also am certified as a Florida Records Clerk.*

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Interview of Ms. Markae Rupp cont.

**Question #2.** How familiar are you with the needs of a small city? The City of Arcadia is small and rural and at times at a disadvantage when it comes to competing with larger municipalities for state and federal dollars, how can you improve on this situation and assist in bringing in dollars for improvements to the City? *Actually, Arcadia would be one of the larger cities I have worked in. I have worked in larger cities, in Sanford in Seminole County, which was twenty five thousand, but most of the cities have been three to five thousand. I have successfully applied for grants for such things as Records Management Program, a Community center. We were going to convert an abandon school into a community center. I am a firm believer in applying for ever grant that you possibly can. They are out there and a lot of them are never used. I also am a firm believer in polling at the legislation, going to legislative dates, working through Florida League of Cities. They have a lot of clout when trying to get funding for cities. I have been active in Florida League of Cities and I have found they are very cooperative.*

**Question #3.** How would you manage a staff of many departments, be responsive and accountable to an elected body of officials, foster a relationship of cooperation with county officials and deal with citizens concerns in a timely manner? *I am a firm believer, you are only as good as your staff, and if you treat your staff well, they are normally responsible. I would normally never ask my staff to do anything I would not do or could not do myself. I am an on the job person. I don't dictate. I believe in teamwork. I consider myself a leader not a dictator. I believe that the better you treat your staff, the better they will work for you. As far as the public goes I believe a Town Administrator even a Town Clerk needs to be involved in the community not just at work. They need to attend festivals, plus they need to be out on the street talking to the business people, they need to be involved in the Chamber of Commerce, plus they need to be out in the community, hear what the concerns are, bring them back to the Council and say this is what I've learned, what can we do about it.*

**Question #4.** How familiar are you with preparing a Zero Balance Budget? What techniques will you use to keep the city council full advised as to the financial condition and needs of the municipality at all times? *I am a firm believer in monthly reports to the Council both financial and project wise. Which projects are working or which are at a standstill because of finances and that does happen. The community I am working in now, over two years ago bought an abandoned building; they were going to turn it into a Civic Center and city offices. It came to a standstill and they are just now getting to the point they hired an architect. The economy went downhill and so they just stopped. We were on an extremely limited budget to the point where we have cut the city staff to the bone. We do not have a full time planner, we do not have a full time engineer, we do not have a police force, we turned it over to the county, we have cut and cut to the point where we have almost hurt ourselves but it was necessary. I am a firm believer, when your family becomes restrictive with funds you have to look at everything and I think city should also. Jobs and funds may be lost, but until you can get back on your feet, that is what needs to be done.*

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Interview of Ms. Markae Rupp cont.

**Question #5.** What do you have to offer the City of Arcadia? *I think I have a lot of experience. I started out as a clerk in an auditors' office, worked my way up to chief clerk in the auditors' office. I was a deputy city clerk. I got my municipal clerk's certification and took a job as a city clerk. Then I was the acting Interim City Manager and also the Administrative Police Chief. I went to another town and I was Interim City Administrator as well as the city clerk until they changed their form of government. They changed to a mayor council form of government. I also have worked at NASA at Johnson Space Center at Houston. I have that little bit of experience in a larger branch of government. I did come back to Florida and I have worked as a Town Clerk. I feel I have lots of experience and education, Master's Degree, a Certified Municipal Clerk, Certified Records Manager and a Paralegal. I think I have a lot experience, a lot of education, a lot of background and a lot of desire to move a city forward.*

**Question # 6.** Do you feel that you are qualified to run the day to day operations of the city and what experience or qualifications make you the best candidate for the job of City Administrator of Arcadia? *For the first part of that question, I do think I qualify. I think I have pretty much outlined why, I guess the biggest thing is my experience and my desire to be the Administrator here. I have actually been in town since about 10'clock this morning driving around getting familiar with the area, the housing, business and some apparent problems in the area. I feel very comfortable that I could step in and take the direction of the Council because obviously you are the ones that know what need to be done. I think I could institute those issues and get some of them solved.*

**Question # 7.** When would you be available to start? *First of April.*

**Question #8.** What is so appealing to you about this position that you are willing to leave where you are now? *Actually the position I have right now is an interim position, the community in actually advertised for a town clerk and they interviewed me and told me at that time they had an Interim Finance Manger, an Interim Town Manager and no Town Clerk. They asked if I would take the position as an interim with no benefits until they could hire a Town Manager and felt the new Town Manager should be able to hire his own Town Clerk. Being from government background, I totally agree. So I agreed. They did hire a new Town Manager, started two weeks ago. He asked me to apply for this position as a permanent position. However, he was going to re-advertise that position. He did not want to show any favoritism toward the existing staff. So there is no guarantee that job will be there. I can apply for the job but it is not something I feel I would want to do for a long period of time. I think my education and my goals; I want to go up a couple levels. I feel I can do the work, it is not the problem, but I think I am qualified to do more.*

**Question #9.** What are some techniques that you would use in handling critical issues with the council and public? *With the public, I have an open door policy. I have handled some sticky situations; bounced checks, irate customers. I have seen a lot through the years of experience. I have worked very well with the Council. If I have had a problem, when individual council tried to tell me what to do. When it gets to that point you need to set down with the whole Council as a body.*

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Interview of Ms. Markae Rupp cont.

**Question #10.** What do you see as the role of a city administrator and what would your role be in the development of effective goals and objectives for the City of Arcadia? *I see the City Administrator as a matriarch of the City as you will to both Council and citizens. I would always make myself available to the Council to listen to their concerns and desires for the City. If I felt it was something that needed to be address, I would bring it before the whole council. I think the City Administrator needs to be an active member of the community. Also a strong leader but also a very compassionate involved citizens.*

The interview of Ms. Roxann Read commenced at 6:00 p.m. Mayor Fazzone welcomed Ms. Read. Recorder Baumann read the questions to Ms. Read.

**Question #1.** How knowledgeable are you with Florida Government and Government in the Sunshine Law? *Pretty knowledgeable. I have worked for the last couple of years for Charlotte County and a couple of community groups and I constantly had to remind them of the Sunshine Law. As far as Florida Laws , I have work on the capital improvement program and I am familiar with DCA and how they operate. I am familiar with the statues. As we have redone our Comp Plan in Charlotte County, we have had to read the statues that pertain to that. Know where to find them, what to find that I need in them and who to call if I need to.*

**Question #2.** How familiar are you with the needs of a small city? The City of Arcadia is small and rural and at times at a disadvantage when it comes to competing with larger municipalities for state and federal dollars, how can you improve on this situation and assist in bringing in dollars for improvements to the City? *Working with a small city is something I am familiar with. I came from a small city in Illinois and actually was a trustee in that city for a little while. So I know there is a political aspect to it that you really have to get in with your representatives and talk to them and meet with them and meet with them often, make sure the needs of the city are known essentially it is a lobbying position you have to be in and you have to build that relationship. I think that is with anything, you have to build relationships with people, let them know what your needs are. I know that a lot of the cities needs now are infrastructure and I am sure Arcadia is no different. I think this is part of what the stimulus package is going to do is to beef up the infrastructure. So I am very aware that has to be done in a small city yet respecting the peoples wishes what they want to see done in their city and how they want to see it done.*

**Question #3.** How would you manage a staff of many departments, be responsive and accountable to an elected body of officials, foster a relationship or cooperation with county officials and deal with citizens concerns in a timely manner? *It's a juggling act. We are trying to see that everyone's needs are respected and heard. That is something I do in Charlotte County. We are always balancing what the people of Charlotte County as to what we know the commissioners are going to say. It is making sure all the voices are being heard and you are being fair.*

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Interview of Ms. Roxanne Read cont.

**Question #4.** How familiar are you with preparing a Zero Balance Budget? What techniques will you use to keep the city council full advised as to the financial condition and needs of the municipality at all times? *That is part of open communication and keeping you informed. The zero balanced budget is just making sure it balanced every year. I have taken a look at your budget and it looks really solid that is just getting with department heads and make sure their needs are realistic and listening to your concerns.*

**Question #5.** What do you have to offer the City of Arcadia? *The experience and knowledge I have gained over the last couple of years working in different size municipalities. I have worked in a rural county in Missouri, then working in Charlotte County which is a larger municipality and being successful and knowing I could bring that back here to Arcadia and working with the staff as close as we can with the staff of DeSoto County having a perspective from the county. I think I can bring knowledge and experience and to improve upon things you want and improve upon the things you want and a positive attitude.*

**Question # 6** Do you feel that you are qualified to run the day to day operations of the city and what experience or qualifications make you the best candidate for the job of City Administrator of Arcadia? *I feel like I am qualified because I have the experience of doing a variety of things in my career. I worked in as an Interim in the City Administrator's office in Collinsville which was holding safety meetings, working with personal, budget, confidential personal records. Then for the County of Jefferson in Missouri, all of my job was planning there. So I know that some planning does come into play in Arcadia. In Charlotte County working on a state level bases; the state is very much involved in local government, so I bring that experience. I feel like I am ready to take the next step. I done a lot in planning and my goal is to be in City Administration and doing a wider variety of task as far as working with developers to bring development here and making sure we have a good comprehensive plan, making sure the budget is sound. So those are the things I think I can bring here and change, a different way of approaching things and forge those relationships we need to work on.*

**Question #7.** When would you be available to start? *I don't know what your time line is, I typically like to give my employers two weeks notice and that would be my only request is to give them two weeks notice.*

**Question #8.** <sup>2</sup>What is so appealing to you about this position that you are willing to leave where you are now? *I think it's the challenge. The challenge of working in city administration and doing something different expanding my horizons. Planning is a great field but it is not all I want to do. I would like to get back to doing a variety of things in cities. There is so many things you can do. I just love getting out and talking with people, spreading that communication and making sure people know what is going on. I just like to do a variety of things and I think it can go as far as the council wants it to go or as far as needed.*

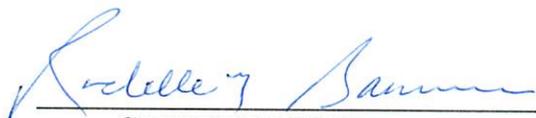
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Interview of Ms. Roxann Read cont.

**Question #9.** What are some techniques that you would use in handling critical issues with the council and public? *The line of communication have to be open. What I know of Florida government, is that everything is open to the public. So the public needs to know they can get a hold of unless it is sensitive or crucial confidential information but most documents are open to the public. So keeping that line of communication open. Making sure my door is open, making sure you know you can talk to me, keeping those lines of communication open making sure people know what each other are doing not hiding things from each other, total transparent as a government.*

**Question #10.** What do you see as the role of a city administrator and what would your role be in the development of effective goals and objectives for the City of Arcadia? *I think the City Administrator should advise the best practices but it is really up to the Council to listen to the people and then in turn set some of the priorities. If that is something you want is advice on best practices, that is something I bring to it. I am not coming in overbearing saying my way is the right way. I have a sense of rural communities, but I don't know your community. You hear what the people are saying all the time and I respect that and I would respect your advice to me but on the other hand we are looking at best practices and how to make thing better. I think it is good for everyone to be as open minded as they can and to look at new things and to try some new things if they are not too far out of the realm of risk. I am not a big risk taker. I like to take measured risk but I like to make sure you are using good judgment. I think that is the most important thing. I would see my role more as a moderator. That is kind of the role I do at Charlotte County right now. More of a facilitator, moderator , making sure that what we are doing is fair making sure all the voices are being heard and that we are not trying to single out anybody or suppress any voice but making sure everything is above board.*

The interviews for March 2, 2009 were concluded. The meeting was adjourned.

  
CITY RECORDER

  
PRESIDENT