

WORK SESSION
CITY ADMINISTRATOR INTERVIEWS
MARCH 4, 2009

A Work Session Meeting of the Arcadia City Council was held on March 4, 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 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. Two (2) candidates are scheduled to appear today. 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 Ms. Diane Wolcott commenced at 4:00 p.m. Mayor Fazzone welcomed Ms. Wolcott. Recorder Baumann read the questions to Ms. Wolcott.

Question #1. How knowledgeable are you with Florida Government and Government in the Sunshine Law? *I am working in a legal office now. I am familiar with a bit of Florida Law. I was a finance officer for a health care corporation and did many many grants with the state and federal government.*

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? *Well I've always lived in a small town. I was born in New York City and moved to a small rural county side. The health care corporation I worked for was in Highlands County and I did a lot of grant writing to bring programs into a tri county area; Highlands, Hardee and Polk County did the helicopter that flies here from Tampa. Just a lot of grant writing, attending meetings, council meetings, being part of different programs to try and get a feel for what's needed.*

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 was second in command to one hundred fifty employees. Fifteen doctors, five dentist, I sat on the community council for Sebring, Avon Park, for Hardee and Wauchula. I worked for the health department. I was responsible in maintenance working between departments coordination of different functions. Just by participating. I think it needs to be delegated. It does not need to be micro managed, I think you can hire people that know their jobs, just utilizing people with talent and being responsive.*

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? *As a Chief Financial officer working with a Board of Directors of fifteen, I was accountable to my CEO and the board. As my responsibility I prepared all the Federal accounting grant budgets, monitored all the grant functions, I was the liaison for the company. I prepared the financial packets prior to the board meetings, they had it at least a week in advance that was prepared with grafts and projections and what any variance might be if any. Reporting and keeping people advised.*

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Interview of Ms. Diane Wolcott cont.

Question #5. What do you have to offer the City of Arcadia? *A lot of years in small communities. I moved her in 1981. I moved to Avon Park and lived there for fifteen years. Came back here to take care of parents. I grew up in small communities. I have always been a small town person. So what I bring is a love of community, the smallness and closeness.*

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 don't know the candidates. I bring years of experience having worked for a tri county board. I have an accounting background, I've been a member of the Rotarian. I have been a member of three Chamber of Commerce while I was functioning administrator. I think I have the personality. I tend to be laid back. I like my word to stand for something. I like to give an answer with fact, but , I like them to understand the position. I like to share information. I think I have the qualifications and the education and background that would make me viable for the position.*

Question # 7. When would you be available to start? *When I was asked. I would like to give notice, but I don't believe there would be any problem starting when I was asked.*

Question #8. What is so appealing to you about this position that you are willing to leave where you are now? *I was fortunate to get a position with a local attorney, but I am not looking to make that a permanent career. I was pretty honest with her about the fact I was looking. She is encouraging , she is a sharp girl.*

Question #9. What are some techniques that you would use in handling critical issues with the council and public? *What type of critical issue? I guess what I would want to do is know more and then look kinda left and right and side to side then kinda start asking and certainly let people know looking to solve the problem. I guess not to maintain panic. You don't want to get people panicked. Certainly information gathering, answering questions, not having a closed door. Crisis is crisis, but sorta work it's way in and keep it steady.*

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 as a city administrator you are not only looking at Arcadia but you have to be the spokesman and liaison for Arcadia throughout the state. There are areas that lend opportunity to the city if you out there know about them. I think that is part of the goal. I think that person needs to be known and make friends within the community and reach beyond that office. Reach out. Work in different communities. Always opportunity for cites to get grant dollars. Just trying to be open and being a face people recognize.*

The interview of Mr. Rex Taylor commenced at 4.45 p.m. Mayor Fazzone welcomed Mr. Taylor. Recorder Baumann read the questions to Mr. Taylor.

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Question #1. How knowledgeable are you with Florida Government and Government in the Sunshine Law? *I have lived in Florida since 1981, and as you see in my resume managed in several different communities either as an interim or whatever for many years. Yes, number 1, I am very familiar with Florida government and certainly the Sunshine Law. I feel very comfortable and knowledgeable in working under the Sunshine Law. In terms of government in Florida, I have been past president of the Florida Municipal Electric Association and very active in the Florida League of Cities that whole time as well, set on a number of committees with the League of Cities.*

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? *The cities I worked in as manager tended to be more smaller communities. Each community has it's own unique identity, issues and problems it has to address. My first job as manager was in Kentucky in a city about the size of this one. The most famous resident was a horse named Secretariat. So I am familiar with working in small communities and the challenges. The other part of your question is about bringing in dollars. That is always an issue that is difficult. I suspect this city is not an entitlement community, so you have to apply and compete. So yes, over the years in different communities, we were able to bring in block grants, done some federal grants, with the FAA improving airport. I think it is extremely to expand job base. I think for this community to bring in any state or federal facilities to expand the employment base if possible. In Leesburg we created an industrial park and sold them off for businesses. There are a lot of things out there but you have to work hard in economic development.*

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? *Core value for anything is trust. You want to be able to trust me to do the right thing, be a good manager. I want to be able to trust this council to back up what you say, where you want to take the community. From an manager's standpoint if you say you are going to do something, I want to know you are going to back it. One of my strengths is working with staff and getting things accomplished. I will be working with the staff and collectively manage results. The public is very important. It is who I work for and who you work for. Try to have decisions and getting things resolved in the lowest area possible. I am a strong believer in holding department head meetings so the department heads are communicating.*

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? *Your town recorder and I were talking, and it seems that Florida is under attack. But one critically important thing that I do when preparing budgets working with the departments to see what their needs are and working with the Council to know where your going and to look out for more than just one year for a clearer view of revenue and expenses. I feel very strongly about financial reports.*

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Interview of Mr. Rex Taylor cont.

Question #5. What do you have to offer the City of Arcadia? *I believe one, you see my resume. I tried to outline projects I have done. I see myself from a strengths standpoint; I am a credential manger through the ICMeg program. One of my strengths was working with staff to accomplish goals. Another area it indicated was that I was a good communicator to staff to council and to the public. Another was to look into the future to see how things would impact the future. I have been a very stable manager as you can see in my resume.*

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? *Ditto what I just said. I think what I just said pretty well address that question.*

Question #7. When would you be available to start? *Once we work out what every arrangements, I have to give a sixty days notice as in my contract.*

Question #8. What is so appealing to you about this position that you are willing to leave where you are now? *One of the things that is of particular importance to me is to be back in a community that has more diverse operations and some new challenges, with the water and sewer. I spoke with your former administrator and he peaked my interest in a number of things. Another thing he indicated to me is that this council has been very stable for over the years. When he and I spoke, that was another attribute I felt comfortable with.*

Question #9. What are some techniques that you would use in handling critical issues with the council and public? *The best thing is for something not to happen. In that regard you do preventive maintenance and care. Also, be prepared to respond to them, to have contractor or other you are able to call to handle the situation and respond and respond quickly. I have contractors I can call at a moments notice to handle sewer line breaks or whatever.*

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 it is extremely important to work with Council to establish goals. You stand to be elected on that. I take that very important to take the goals you have as very important. Then the next step is to take staff and move forward to accomplish these goals or projects. It is my job to work with staff to accomplishment goals and create time schedules with council so you will understand and written down. The city working with the county or the state.*

The interviews for March 4, 2009 were concluded. The meeting was adjourned.


CITY RECORDER


PRESIDENT