



**Town of Surfside
Town Special Commission Meeting
MINUTES**

September 29, 2014

7 p.m.

Town Hall Commission Chambers - 9293 Harding Ave, 2nd Floor
Surfside, FL 33154

1. Opening

Call to Order

Mayor Dietch called the meeting to order at 7:03 P.M.

2. Roll Call of Members

Town Clerk Sandra Novoa called the roll with the following members present: Mayor Dietch, Vice Mayor Tourgeman, Commissioner Karukin, Commissioner Olchyk and Commissioner Cohen.

3. Pledge of Allegiance

Chief Allen led the Pledge of Allegiance

4. Town Manager Recruitment Process – Michael P. Crotty, Town Manager

Colin Baenziger representing his recruiting firm gave a presentation as to the services they provide. He gave a detailed report of the recruitment process and how they proceed with background checking. He said their data base checks by county, state, and national. He feels it is important to see a candidate in different lights and asks them to write how they perceive themselves. Background checks include, credit, education, bankruptcy, employment, criminal records at county, state and national levels. They also run civil records at county, state and national levels. He spoke about references the candidate provides and how they decide who they will contact. They also run internet checks. He also explained that background checks are limited by law. He explained why they try to stay out of a candidate's personal life and said the background should be based on the ability to do the job.

Mr. Baenziger said they usually bill customers as they go along but he offered to bill Surfside at the end and payment if they were satisfied. He is so confident that the Commission will be satisfied that he said if not satisfied they would not have to pay.

Vice Mayor Tourgeman referred to a Miami Herald newspaper article involving a city manager for Coral Gables and Mr. Baenziger's firm. He said he expected better from the firm as some things were not done. He quoted from the newspaper "that the day before the gentleman was officially appointed the firm forgot to ask candidates for past lawsuits." He expressed his concerns about the mistakes made by the firm and was uncomfortable. Mr. Baenziger responded and admitted they made a mistake and tried to ease the concern but saying they now have a slightly different approach and procedure in place.

Commissioner Olchyk said she was against the selection of the firm and gave her reasons. First she said the Mayor submitted the firm as the one we were to use without consulting the Commission and allowing them to review other applicants. The other reason she gave was to save the recruitment fee as they have not had much success in the past with Town Managers whether they did the recruiting in house or out sourced.

Commissioner Olchyk asked in the past five years how many instances have they had like the Coral Gables issue with not satisfactorily presenting the best candidate. Mr. Baenziger responded by saying he believed that was the only incident in the past 16 years. He did say there was a candidate for a finance director in early 2000 where they did not check for a bankruptcy report because they thought it would show up in a credit report and they were embarrassed but have learned from their mistakes.

Commissioner Olchyk asked if the firm asked former employers of candidates if they would hire this person again. Mr. Baenziger said it is one the standard questions his staff asks.

Mayor Dietch first wanted it clear that he never worked with this gentleman before and he was not the one who selected the firm. He found it very disappointing that Commissioner Olchyk would not approve the firm for spiteful reasons toward him.

The Mayor asked Mr. Baenziger what his role is in the search process and his value as an executive. He also asked about the allegations made by Coral Gables that he was not an active recruiter but just a paper pusher.

Mr. Baenziger responded by saying the Coral Gables position was very difficult. He gave an overview of what they did and how they proceeded. He said they did not only accept applications but went out to try to find the right applicants.

Commissioner Olchyk responded to the Mayor and said she was not implying that the Mayor knew or had anything to do with the firm. Her objection is the Commission not being consulted for their input and review of other applicants but the Mayor just presenting a recommendation.

Town Manager Crotty said staff had done some research and Mr. Baenziger's firm was very well established and recommended them. Manager Crotty said he knew of Mr. Baenziger's firm and worked with them in Satellite Beach with very good results. He then made the recommendation to the Mayor. Commissioner Olchyk still objected to the process and strongly feels the Commission should have a say in reviewing all applicants and should not go forward just because one municipality has had success.

Commissioner Karukin said he did not want to do this in house but wanted a professional recruiter who will collaborate with our Human Resource Department. He feels Mr. Baenziger's firm is highly reputable and the article in the Miami Herald was not completely accurate. He wants to continue the process and not start over as it would be in the town's best interest to continue and find a new Town Manager. He also mentioned that this firm has ties to the local talent and strongly feels we should keep going unless someone has a better idea.

Vice Mayor Tourgeman wanted it on record about the Miami Herald article and what he read was directly from the newspaper and did not make anything up. He also said he resents that Commissioner Karukin minimizes his position on issues.

Commissioner Cohen said he didn't want to get involved in this as it is becoming a family feud. He said the Commission should try to operate in a business like fashion. With all due respect for the Miami Herald he said reporters don't always tell it all but put it in ways to sell papers. With regards to Mr. Baenziger's firm it is very impressive and said sometimes we make mistakes, we all have, but wants to keep the process moving. He feels we should get a Town Manager as soon as possible and thinks the offer made by Mr. Baenziger is very generous.

Mayor Dietch opened the meeting to the public.

Public Speakers

- Barbara McLaughlin believes the Commission should keep on track and move forward.
- Lou Cohen said his concern was not with the recruitment but with the Commission. He referred to a political science book called the "Animal Farm." He gave a sample of what was wrong and nothing being done and ended with maybe we have to change our ways.
- Norma Parron spoke in favor of going forward with Mr. Baenziger and feels they are a responsible agency. Due to the article in the Miami Herald she feels they will be held to a higher level. She thanked Vice Mayor Tourgeman for calling this special meeting to clear the facts and give everyone the opportunity to express their views.

The Mayor thanked Mr. Baenziger for coming and speaking to the Commission and the community. He feels he has been honest in his responses and gave the community some insight about his agency.

Commissioner Karukin made a motion to accept the company with his offer of billing at the end of the process. The motion received a second from Commissioner Cohen. The motion passed 4-1 with Commissioner Olchyk voting in opposition.

Vice Mayor Tourgeman said he is not in favor of continuing with this company but did not want to be the descending vote because he feels this will go forward. He gave it much thought and feels because of all things that have come to light the company will do a good job as all eyes will be upon them. He also expressed he will not tolerate any mistakes.

Commissioner Cohen thanked Lou Cohen for bringing the "Animal Farm" as an example and hopes the Commission will eliminate personal attacks, unnecessary verbiage and get to the point to where we are going.

Mayor Dietch thanked Human Resource Director Yamileth Slate-McCloud for all her hard work and said going with an outside agency was no reflection on her department but that they are just going in a difference direction at this time.

5. Adjournment

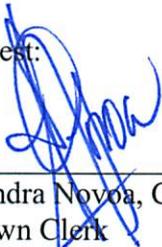
There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting adjourned at 8.05 p.m.

Accepted this 14th day of October, 2014



Daniel Dietch, Mayor

Attest:



Sandra Novoa, CMC
Town Clerk