

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
TOWNSHIP BOARD WORK SESSION - **APPROVED** -
5151 Marsh Road, Okemos, MI 48864-1198
853-4000, Town Hall Room
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 9, 2013 **1:00 P.M.**

PRESENT: Supervisor LeGoff, Clerk Dreyfus, Treasurer Brixie, Trustees Scales, Styka, Veenstra
(1:12 PM), Wilson
ABSENT: None
STAFF: Township Manager Gerald Richards

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Supervisor LeGoff called the meeting to order at 1:00 P.M.

2. PUBLIC REMARKS

Supervisor LeGoff opened Public Remarks.

Leonard Provencher, 5824 Buena Parkway, Haslett, spoke to transparency in government through timely postings of meetings on the Township website. He noted there are various forms of township governance and urged the Board to consider whether Township manager applicants have and understanding of or experience with policy governance when it reviews applications for the position.

Marsha Madle, Chair, Economic Development Corporation, 1373 Sebewaing, Okemos, requested the Board consider applicants for Township Manager who focus on leadership and customer service which creates a culture within staff, Boards and Commissions and in the community.

Supervisor LeGoff closed Public Remarks.

3. Township Manager Search Process Work Session

Karl Tomion, Executive Search Facilitator, Michigan Municipal League (MML) and Heather Van Poucker, Director of Information/Policy Research, 1675 Green Road, Ann Arbor, outlined MML's nine step process for a customized Township Manager search. They indicated it is a two (2) to three (3) month process, stating the base program is for three (3) meetings of the full Board, the second of which is conducted in closed session to review submitted resumes.

Mr. Tomion noted the Board will decide at the second meeting who is to be interviewed and the set of questions to be asked of each candidate. He addressed the necessity for confidentiality of the candidates' names which allows the Township to obtain the widest group of applicants possible. Mr. Tomion stressed the importance of all candidates being asked a specific set of questions to aid in the selection process and protect both the Township and the Municipal League from any legal challenges.

Mr. Tomion indicated the third meeting will consist of interviews with the candidates. He emphasized the importance of the Board discussing the candidates at the conclusion of the interviews to determine the preferred candidate. Once a candidate has been selected, the MML will assist with the background checks and help with the negotiations for terms of employment.

Board members and MML representatives discussed the following:

- MML will notify finalists and make sure they are still interested in being considered as a candidate
- Finalists will be announced after confirmation by MML of the applicant's continued interest
- Interviews are conducted in public at the third meeting
- Discussion and final decision on a candidate is conducted in public
- Summary information can be provided to the public without violating confidentiality
- Best candidates are often currently employed elsewhere and need for their interest to remain confidential until the point of interview

- Necessity of keeping the confidentiality sacred until the invitation is accepted to interview
- Board member preference for Policy Governance not to be considered as a criterion
- Township Board currently operates under Policy Governance and should be considered as a criterion during the interview process
- Board member preference to ascertain an applicant's experience of governance and then determine if that experience meets the Board's selection criteria
- Exploring the philosophy of the candidates relative to their interaction with the Board, employees and the public are important aspects of the interview process
- MML can design questions specific to a candidate's philosophy
- Opportunity for current employees and the public to provide input into candidate criteria (comes with additional cost)
- Active recruitment includes personal contact through individual phone calls
- Identification by MML of those individuals who may be a good fit but who are not necessarily seeking an active career change
- Suggestion for a nationwide search, including posting on the national city manager website
- Expectation that the cost of travel and hotel accommodations will be covered for each candidate who interviews
- Leadership qualities v. Michigan experience
- Familiarity with Michigan as an asset in a candidate's profile
- Concern with seven (7) members reaching agreement with the selection criteria
- Optional targeted outreach tasks should be conducted in tandem with the selection process to target profile
- Goal is to provide eight to ten candidates
- Many municipalities engage in a targeted outreach from various identified stakeholder groups to determine contents of the profile
- Many municipalities solicit input from key stakeholders and pair that with an open public call for input, providing results back to the MML
- Stakeholder groups may include representatives of internal labor groups, department heads, business community, homeowners associations, etc.
- Request for a proposal from MML which includes options regarding targeted outreach
- Estimated turnaround time of one (1) week for the proposal which includes options on the targeted outreach
- MML anticipation that inclusion of the targeted outreach will delay the timeline for the candidate profile
- Input process would need to be finalized prior to ad placement
- Base profile from the Board will provide leadership and guidance prior to consideration of a targeted outreach
- Schedule, candidate profile and community profile define the length of the process
- Transition period could be handled through hiring the current Manager on a consulting basis
- Draft timeline provided by MML indicates the new Manager on board the second week in April
- Preference to use April 3rd as the deadline in which to work "backwards"
- Timeline and selection criteria are the two most important aspects of a search
- Importance of criteria in terms of the profile and questions asked
- Allowance in timeline of two (2) to four (4) weeks for candidate to give notice to present employer
- Recommendation for expeditious forward movement surrounding the timeline for advertising, interviewing and a decision to capture the best available candidates
- MML recommendation to run the ad for four (4) weeks
- Suggestion of two weeks with current manager plus availability on a consultant basis
- Preferred option to have the current Manager available on a consulting basis with time set aside specifically for interaction with new Manager
- Two managers on a full time basis for two weeks not the best use of Township resources
- Job of the current Manager is to orient the new Manager on Meridian Township
- Importance of the current Manager's institutional memory during orientation
- Overlap of Township Managers is very unusual
- Possible inclusion of the new hire in development of the consulting contract
- Once the new Manager arrives, the contract can be amended if needed

- Board consensus to have MML discuss consultant contract with current Manager
- One (1) to two (2) additional weeks required to include stakeholder outreach
- Board consensus for MML to use current timeline as a base schedule
- MML to also provide a proposal in the January 15th Board packet which includes stakeholder outreach
- Updated schedule to be provided when MML provides proposal for stakeholder outreach
- Review of the current job description for Meridian's Township Manager position
- Need for the job description to include use of diplomacy under challenging circumstances as a skill in communications
- MML looking for points to be included in the profile
- Candidate should have the ability to understand how to plan for and employ technology to maximize operations
- Differences between the current Township manager job description and the candidate profile
- Idea that the candidate will be even tempered and congenial with subordinates and the public
- MML will design interview questions to test the specified skill set
- Suggestion that the job description requirement of a Michigan Vehicle Operator's License be deleted
- Need to include analytical strengths in the candidate profile
- Different areas of expertise bring different strengths
- Possible inclusion of development/redevelopment management experience in the candidate profile
- Engineering experience would be beneficial
- Inclusion of desirability for managerial experience in public works utility systems
- Preference for sensitivity to Meridian Township's environmental concerns
- Experience with building a successful management team given retirements of department heads in the foreseeable future
- Ability to look at multiple viewpoints, breaking down complex issues and propose understandable options and alternatives
- Desire for the candidate to have proven experience in creating solutions to budget challenges in a declining economy without reducing services
- Preference for the candidate to have experience in using the "star" method
- Candidate must be a visionary
- Requirement of a master's degree in public administration not necessary if there is sufficient experience
- Preference for advanced training beyond a bachelor's degree; master's degree preferred
- High percentage of Township residents have advanced degrees
- Career path in local government management will present appropriate education
- Necessity of having ten years of progressive experience in municipal government
- Placement of environmental sensitivity as a core value in the community profile
- Preference for job description and community profile to include skill and ability in developing and implementing initiatives, specifically environmental
- Job description will be the basis upon which the Board selects the new Manager as well as the criteria used for Board evaluation of the Manager
- Board consensus for profile to include proven skill and ability in proactively developing and implementing environmental initiatives as strongly preferred
- Experience of candidates MML will be recruiting
- Talent of Township staff allows the Board to select a CEO who has similar abilities in management to the staff's technical abilities in managing their departments
- If local manager experience is not required, the Board, in reality, is making a "promotion"
- "Promotion" will have a financial impact on the amount of contract time needed for use of the current Manager's consulting services
- Key component in a candidate's experience is working directly for elected officials
- Local Government Manager has several "bosses" as he/she reports to the Board
- Assistant Manager v. Local Government Manager position
- Meridian Township as a complex community with a substantial educated and diverse population
- Board consensus for candidate profile to include the requirement of ten years of progressive experience in local government, including five years as a local government manager

- Private sector experience should not be required
- Private sector experience can help bridge communication between local government and business owners within the community
- Candidates with five years of local government managerial experience will have related experience in finance and budget, planning, development, engineering, building and zoning, etc.
- Helpful for candidates to have experience with union contract negotiation
- Correlation between size of budget and level of experience, i.e., number of employees
- Size of budget/level of experience can be addressed through questions during the interview process

Supervisor LeGoff recessed the meeting at 3:40 P.M.

Supervisor LeGoff reconvened the meeting at 3:51 P.M.

Continued Board and MML representatives' discussion:

- Suggestion for the Township Manager to receive the top salary for department heads
- Caliber of candidate pool directly correlates to the salary offering
- Compensation level should be approximately the same as the current Manager
- On a comparative population basis, the current Township Manager salary is in the low range
- Challenges which Meridian Township faces in the next ten (10) years are increasing as the population ages
- Transformation in Michigan from a manufacturing economy to an entrepreneurial economy
- Need to factor experience into the salary offering
- Salary amount in the advertisement should offer a range from \$105,000 to \$120,000, negotiated upon a candidate's qualifications and experiences
- Consideration of fringe benefits which will be provided
- Relocation expenses are usually provided
- Setting a salary lower than what the current Manager earns sends a message as to the Board's value of the Manager
- More Managers are retiring than coming up through the field
- Factors to be considered when setting a salary include the housing market and spousal employment
- Geographic location of Meridian Township allows better employment opportunities for spouses
- Reality of the necessity to offer a salary greater than the salary of the current Manager in order to keep pace with the market
- Setting a salary too low may not lead to retention of a Township Manager for a long period of time
- Offering a salary range helps attract better candidates
- Board consensus to offer a salary range of \$105,000 to \$120,000
- Request for information to be provided to the Board and public in advance of the scheduled meetings
- Average tenure of a Local Government Manager is approximately five (5) years; due, in part, to attrition, upward movement and budget problems
- MML is vested in the process with its members, one of which is Meridian Township
- Community profile should include these items of value:
 - Value of education and our nationally ranked K-12 schools
 - Teachers as recipients of national awards
 - Next door to a nationally recognized university (Michigan State University)
 - Environment
 - Thriving business community
 - Meridian Area Business Association (MABA)
 - Successful public/private partnerships
 - Land Preservation Program as a nationally recognized environmental initiative
 - Proximity to the State's Capitol
 - Walkable community
 - Strong emphasis on public safety
 - Family friendly community which places a high value on fun

- Value of living in diversity
- Entrepreneurialism
- Value in contacting Okemos Public Schools to review the community profile in its search for School Superintendent
- Suggestion for MML to review profile information on maba.biz
- Use of policy governance evaluation documents in the selection process for the new Township Manager

4. PUBLIC REMARKS

Supervisor LeGoff opened Public Remarks.

Doris Schwartz, 2209 Kent Street, Okemos, complimented the Board for its cooperative spirit during this discussion. She spoke of her appreciation for the New Year’s Eve Fireworks. Ms. Schwartz requested that handouts be included in the public packet, as she noted the Manager’s efforts regarding recycling and library expansions were not included in the job description. She expressed concern with the Board surrendering the screening process to a third party and spoke in opposition to expenditure of funds for the targeted outreach. Ms. Schwartz believed now to be a good time to update the job description of the Township Manager. She addressed leadership management style as it relates to staff providing timely dissemination of information to the public. Ms. Schwartz believed there is a lack of teamwork among employees.

Leonard Provencher, 5824 Buena Parkway, Haslett, requested the targeted outreach, if selected by the Board, be made as public as possible for optimal input. He spoke to the existing criteria used for evaluation of the Township Manager and requested use of these criteria during the interview selection process. Mr. Provencher noted his preference for a Manager who would serve the township for more than five (5) years. He requested information for the Policy Governance meeting be made available to the public as soon as possible.

Supervisor LeGoff closed Public Remarks.

5. ADJOURNMENT

Supervisor LeGoff adjourned the meeting at 4:55 P.M.

ELIZABETH LEGOFF
TOWNSHIP SUPERVISOR

BRETT DREYFUS
TOWNSHIP CLERK

Sandra K. Otto, Secretary