

**Town Council Minutes
Morehead City, North Carolina**

**Tuesday, January 17, 2012
Recessed from January 10, 2012**

The Honorable Council of the Town of Morehead City met in recessed Regular Session from the January 10, 2012, Council Meeting on Tuesday, January 17, 2012, at 4:00 p.m., in the Municipal Building Auditorium at 202 South 8th Street, Morehead City, North Carolina. Those in attendance were:

MAYOR:	Gerald A. Jones, Jr.
MAYOR PRO-TEM:	Harvey N. Walker, Jr.
COUNCIL:	George W. Ballou
	William F. Taylor
	Demus L. Thompson
	Diane C. Warrender
CITY MANAGER:	R. Randy Martin
CITY CLERK:	Jeanne M. Giblin
OTHERS:	Human Resources Officer Susan Nixon, Finance Director Ellen Sewell, Kelli Sabiston, Hartwell Wright, Lisa Kinsey, Mark Hibbs, Reporter, <u>The Carteret News Times</u> .

Mayor Jones reconvened the meeting which was recessed from the Tuesday, January 10, 2012, Council Meeting at 4:00 p.m. He stated that the purpose of the meeting was for the Council to be advised regarding the procedures, options and practices for municipalities hiring a new City Manager by representatives from the North Carolina League of Municipalities [NCLM].

Manager Martin stated that as directed by Council in Closed Session at the December 13, 2011, Council Meeting, he was requested to contact the NCLM representatives to seek their help for the Council to become acclimated to the process of hiring a new City Manager. Morehead City has had no experience in hiring a manager since 1995. No member of the current Council has been through the process. He introduced representatives from the NCLM, Lisa Kinsey, Member Services and Marketing Consultant and Hartwell Wright, Human Resource Consultant.

Mr. Wright explained that typically municipalities chose to appoint an interim manager while going through the usually lengthy process of hiring a long-term manager. When appointed, he advised that the interim manager would have the all the statutory rights and authority as a city manager. He continued that there are approximately 25 to 30 cities in North Carolina currently searching for a manager and that the competition may be fierce. The League does not get involved with the individual decision making process, but can advise on procedural matters. He distributed and reviewed the highlights of a handout he had prepared on the process.

The three [3] step process is:

- Recruitment: Typically a city would prefer a large pool of applicants.
- Assess the skill and ability of a candidate.
- Hire.

The decisions which Morehead City will need to make as soon as possible are:

- How much administrative support will be necessary.
- Confidentiality of applications and applicants.
- Who is going to do the hiring process? Will it be delegated to a committee or will a consulting firm be hired.

Mr. Wright also advised that the Council must agree on each step of the process.

Upon a question from Councilman Walker regarding the responsibility and cost for a consulting firm, Mr. Wright advised that how much responsibility the consulting firm undertakes determines the cost, but he estimated it would be in the \$15,000 to \$20,000 range. The particulars of the negotiated contractual agreement with a consulting firm will dictate the costs.

Upon a question from Mayor Jones regarding how many applicants Morehead City should expect, Mr. Wright replied there is no scientific reason to why individuals apply to

specific jobs, but North Carolina is known as a great place to be a city manager and it is quite attractive to other areas of the country. He believed that Morehead City would receive many applicants as it is a great place to live, the City has a good history particularly with the long tenured current Manager. The City has good political stability and the fact that the City Manager is retiring are very positive factors.

Councilman Thompson commented about the possibility of using a local person to do the interviewing and taking care of the applicants. He noted that some local governments had gone this route.

Manager Martin reported that when he was hired by Morehead City in 1995, the City used a professional consulting firm. One of the benefits of using a consulting firm is that they know the field of likely experienced applicants well and the history of an applicant's business experience since many of these firms work directly with local governments in other consulting capacities.

Mr. Wright stated that in his opinion, the selection of the manager is the most important decision that the Council will do. Everyone in the City is affected by the choice. He counseled to be careful in using absolute terms in describing a candidate and that the top three [3] attributes which are important to the Council should be identified. The process could take six [6] months. He recommended using professional publications and also the local media in the search. Consultants will, of course, have multiple means of seeking applicants that are qualified if a consultant is utilized to assist. The competitive salary for Morehead City for a manager is approximately \$90,000 based solely on full-time population, but a number of other factors will impact on the established salary range to be used to advertise the position. This will be an important factor that will significantly affect the number of applicants.

Manager Martin stated that Morehead City is very competitive in terms of fringe benefits, but salary range will be important to experienced managers.

Upon a question from Councilwoman Warrender about how the Council should decide on the consulting firm, Mr. Wright replied that the proposed firm should be definitely interviewed by City officials.

Upon a question from Mayor Jones about hiring an interim manager, Mr. Wright stated there are two [2] types: 1] Retired managers and 2] Managers in transition [in-between jobs]. The interim manager just keeps the City right until a full-time manager is hired. Interim managers usually work part-time. Regarding the full-time manager, Mr. Wright closed his comments by saying that the selected manager candidate should be required to go through a background investigation in terms of both criminal and financial matters, or anything else within the parameters of the law that could expose the City to criticism or liability. He continued that the final candidate will ask for an employment agreement or contract which the City Attorney should review before offering the position.

Councilman Thompson MOVED, seconded by Councilman Taylor, and carried unanimously, to enter into CLOSED SESSION as per G.S. 143-318.11[a][6] to discuss candidates for consideration as an interim city manager.

Councilman Thompson MOVED, seconded by Councilman Taylor, and carried unanimously, to return to OPEN SESSION.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:15 p.m.

Gerald A. Jones, Jr., Mayor

Attest:

Jeanne M. Giblin, City Clerk