

So this is what being on council can be like at times – I got up in the middle of a night I had a hard time sleeping to write my thoughts. Writing is what I do when I want to make my points carefully. I don't have the gift of gab I so admire in others. So please permit me to read what I have written. I am troubled a great deal by this item and how it has come to council, and how it has not come to council.

Let me say first what really bothers me about all this and the way it has been presented is that to question this action will seem to question John Karns and his stellar service to this community. That is unfortunate and was avoidable. I value a great deal what Mr. Karns has achieved for our community.

About a year ago we asked this good man who was leading our fire department and in the final year of his career to step up and fill a void in the city administrator's office made possible by the termination of the past city administrator.

Creating an interim is an important move. Designed originally to end by the December 2017, Mr. Karns stepped in and has done a really good job as an interim. However, interims are not long-term solutions. The proper move would have been to set up an interim and start a search as soon as possible. That did not happen. When requests for a search plan did not materialize in the first nine months I was on council, I finally at the last council meeting let it be known I was going to ask at every council meeting publicly until we received a plan.

That was just two weeks ago – in two weeks we are now being asked to appoint the interim city administrator to a full time position for over 18 months. No search, no search criteria, no outline of what we want out of a city administrator, or the skill set needed now and into the future. I asked for a search plan not a short term fix.

Tonight we are asked to take action in a hurry up offense – this is the way bad decisions are made, this is what bad planning looks like. That has nothing to do with Mr. Karns, this has everything to do with us - of course this fine man will say yes if we ask him to continue – that is what he does. I think it is a bit of the first responder in him...he runs to the danger. But just as Mr. Karns would not send people into danger without being well trained, I don't want to send Mr. Karns into danger without being well trained. While Mr. Karns has been a great public servant, and let no one suggest I do not fully appreciate his service to our community, while he has even been a legendary fire chief – there are a multitude of skills required in running a city. There are elements of city administration Mr. Karns is in a position to have to learn, to understand how all the parts relate and to lead that effort in full. It is a huge responsibility, daunting even to seasoned trained professionals.

We will now make the effort if this passes to give Mr. Karns the education and support to bring him up to full speed as the city administrator we need to lead this city...and there's the rub, about that time, 18 month will have passed and we get to do it all over again. I'm sorry folks, this is a move where we do not get the potential of a long term return on investment.

It is our responsibility to do what is in the best interests of this community over the long term. I have said if Mr. Karns wanted to give us five years I would be all ears and give it serious consideration, so this isn't about Mr. Karns or the high esteem I hold him in. This is about what I believe, speaking only for me, as I am asked to vote on this, is in the best interest of the community. An 18 month extension, where a year from now we are right back here facing the same time line pressures makes no sense to me. It is in my mind, poor planning. That's not on Mr. Karns, that's on us. Mr. Karns will step up when asked, again that is what he does, but this is a short term solution to a long term issue.

I hope Mr. Karns will forgive us for this, I hope he will forgive me for this – I hope he sees I feel my duty to this community is that important because I would not put him through this otherwise. I would like to have had things done much differently, but now we are here. We need to do a better job of planning forward. The challenges we face in the next few years are considerable and complex, and increasingly so every day.

We are in the process of treading water – that's not on Mr. Karns, that's on us. The mayor wants to wait until 2019 to start a search for the next city administrator. I suggest we need to start in January of 2018. We need to take the time to figure out the profile of the person we want – they will have many of Mr. Karns' fine attributes – we need to describe the job we want them to do, this will take time in and of itself and it is something we should have already have started. We need to do a smart and effective search, using any and all tools available to us. I hope Mr. Karns will help us through this process, and help us find the person we need to lead the next generation. However I believe we need to move now, not later. We need to start the search process, now, not later.

I will oppose this. I recommend we instead make a motion to start the search process immediately and ask Mr. Karns on bended knee to work with us until we have that person on board...that would be a great service for which we should be very grateful. A final note – I believe in the collective wisdom and I will, of course, do everything I can to help make the decision of this council successful.