

Council Study Session

August 16, 2021

Agenda Item	City Manager Selection Process	
From	Gary Milliman	City Manager Pro Tem
Contact	Gary.milliman@ashland.or.us ; 541-813-9267	
Item Type	Requested by Council <input type="checkbox"/> Update <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Request for Direction <input type="checkbox"/> Presentation <input type="checkbox"/>	

SUMMARY

This Council Communication outlines the vetting process for City Manager selection.

POLICIES, PLANS & GOALS SUPPORTED

At the City Council meeting of July 6, 2021, the City Council directed staff to initiate recruitment for the position of City Manager and authorize contracting with a recruitment firm at a cost not to exceed \$25,000.

BACKGROUND AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The City is recruiting for its first-ever non-interim City Manager. Administration will be utilizing consulting services to assist in preparing a recruitment brochure and to provide sourcing services, i.e., seek applicants through various means including broad advertising and targeted email. Applications will be received and reviewed by the City Manager Pro Tem, who will also interact with potential candidates and applicants. Note that the City Manager Pro Tem has worked professionally as an executive recruiter, and has managed the selection process for a successor in several of his previous City Manager assignments. Just as a recruitment consultant would do, the City Manager Pro Tem will review application materials, conduct preliminary interviews, perform initial reference/background checks and present semi-finalist candidates for Mayor and City Council (M/CC) consideration. The M/CC would then select “finalists” for further consideration.

The City Manager Pro Tem is seeking direction from the M/CC concerning the process to be utilized in M/CC review of candidates and community engagement in the process.

Cities have utilized various methods of conducting the City Manager selection process. Some City Council’s have elected to keep this process entirely within the purview of the M/CC as the City Manager serves at the pleasure of the City Council. A more common approach is to involve some level of staff and community engagement. Community engagement techniques have included:

- A community “open house” where all finalist candidates are invited to an information social gathering to meet members of the community at-large. Sometimes this includes the candidate families. Sometimes this includes a program where each candidate makes a brief presentation about their qualifications and interest in the position and the community. Sometimes this involves a structured period for taking questions from the public.
- A series of City and community panels that meet with each finalist candidate. This might include an employee panel, a panel of City Managers from other cities, and/or one or more community panels. Information would be obtained from each of the panels and provided to the M/CC prior to their interviews with the candidates.

- Some City Councils have conducted a public workshop in advance of the candidate review process to secure comments from the public concerning the desired experience, education and other traits (i.e. communication style, working with diverse community, etc.) of the new City Manager.

Note that for many candidates, confidentiality is important until they are selected as a “finalist”, at which time their identity as a candidate becomes available to the public. Current City Managers may not wish to advise their current employers of their interest in relocating to another City until they become finalists as it may have a destabilizing influence on their current assignment.

FISCAL IMPACTS

To be determined based upon process selection. The City Council allocated \$25,000 to retain consultant services for this recruitment; a sourcing only contract should cost less. There may be materials costs associated with panel and community meetings.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What level of community and/or staff engagement should be involved in the City Manager candidate vetting process? Advance public workshop? M/CC interviews only? Community panel(s)? Employee panel? City Manager professional panel?

SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS

Designate the Mayor and City Council President to work with the City Manager in developing a City Manager selection plan and identify, if so desired, members of candidate review panels.

REFERENCES & ATTACHMENTS

None