

**SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING
INTERVIEW CANDIATES FOR THE
POSITION OF FIRE CHIEF**

JANUARY 17, 2006

A Special Meeting of the Arcadia City Council was held on January 17, 2006 at 5:00 p.m. in Room D of the Way Building at 23 N. Polk Avenue. Councilmembers attending were: Heine, Johnson, Goodman, Whitlock, and Fazzone. Also in attendance were: Administrator Strube, Attorney Holloman, Marshal Lee, Special Projects Coordinator Hewett, and Recorder Baumann.

Mayor Heine called the special meeting to order and stated that the purpose of the meeting is for Council to interview applicants for the Fire Chief position.

All applicants will be interview one at a time and the other applicants will wait in the hallway until their name is called.

The following applicants were scheduled to be interviewed:

- Claude W. Blosser
- Harvey R. Sweeting (not in attendance, was ill)
- Lewis A. Wells II
- Ricky D. Wood

Each applicant was asked to introduce themselves and to take a few minutes and tell the Council about themselves.

Claude W. Blosser known as CW was the first applicant to address the Council. CW stated that he has worked for the City for over seventeen (17) years. He is past Chief of the Volunteers and is now the coordinator for the volunteers for county wide large events for fire services. He is the Steering Chair for the State Fire School and has extensive Emergency Operations Center (EOC) training. CW is the only person on the current staff with a Fire Officer II Certification. He is the past President of the State Firefighters Association and has been on the Board of Directors for over ten (10) years. Johnson asked "Why do you feel you are the most qualified or best candidate to become the next City of Arcadia Fire Chief" to which CW replied that his training and leadership roles make him the best candidate. Goodman asked "Are you familiar with the proposal by DeSoto County to merge the City and County Fire Departments, and if so what is your opinion of the merger proposal". CW responded by stating that he is familiar with the proposal and he believes that it could be a successful operation if done right.

Lewis A. Wells II then addressed the Council stating that he has worked for the City for sixteen (16) years. He holds a Fire Officer I Certification and is a Fire Instructor and Inspector. Fazzone asked "What is your best or biggest asset or quality that you bring to the City of Arcadia, if selected as the next Fire Chief" to which Lewis responded by stating that he is a Christian and believes that he would treat everyone fairly. Johnson asked "Why do you feel you are the most qualified or best candidate to become the next City of Arcadia Fire Chief" to which Lewis replied that for the last five (5) years he has been an office assistant doing the annual budget, preparing purchase orders and payroll time sheets under Chief Rutherford. Goodman asked "Are you familiar with the proposal

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by DeSoto County to merge the City and County Fire Departments, and if so what is your opinion of the merger proposal” to which Lewis stated that a merger is inevitable, there is growth in the County, and a lack of growth in the City. He feels that a merger would better distribute staff and equipment.

Ricky D. Wood then addressed Council stating that he has worked for the City for twenty-four (24) years noting that he has trained CPR and has worked out of town on various fire crews. He also worked training the volunteers. Fazzone asked “What is your best or biggest asset or quality that you bring to the City of Arcadia, if selected as the next Fire Chief” to which Ricky replied that he can think under pressure and can make command decisions as required. Goodman asked “Are you familiar with the proposal by DeSoto County to merge the City and County Fire Departments, and if so what is your opinion of the merger proposal” to which Ricky stated that if done correctly it would be the best for the citizens of Arcadia and the County. Ricky was asked “If selected as City of Arcadia Fire Chief and if the City of Arcadia and DeSoto County agree to consolidate their Fire Departments will you work with the City of Arcadia Council and DeSoto County Commissioners to make the merger a smooth transition” Ricky replied that if that is what the Council decides need to be done then he believes that he can work with the Council to get it going. Johnson asked “Why do you feel you are the most qualified or best candidate to become the next City of Arcadia Fire Chief” to which Ricky replied that he did not know if he were the best, however he has been here longer and has more experience noting that he has trained most of the current employees seeking this position. Fazzone then asked “Do you think the City of Arcadia / City of Arcadia Fire Department is capable of working with DeSoto County / Desoto County Fire Department” to which Ricky stated that yes the fire department can make it work, the City staff has worked for years with the County. Ricky was then asked “What is the most important factor the City of Arcadia/ the City of Arcadia Fire Department faces as far as consolidation relative to the merger” to which he replied that taking care of the citizens of the City and County would be the most important, noting that employees will always come and go, we need to have proper stations and proper manpower. Fazzone then asked “Do you think the money side of the merger is an issue that might encourage the consolidation” to which Ricky stated yes that the money is an issue for him and the guys that he has talked with and he feels that the County’s current proposal is the best that has been presented.

There was some discussion between Council Members with Goodman stating that she felt that after the last Council meeting it was perceived that Council would not get involved with the interview or hiring process. Whitlock stated that he felt the hiring was up to the Administrator. Johnson noted that not all of the applicants were asked the same questions and he requests that the first two applicants be brought back in and asked additional questions which were asked of Mr. Wood.

CW was then asked “Do you think the City of Arcadia / City of Arcadia Fire Department is capable of working with DeSoto County / the DeSoto County Fire Department?” to

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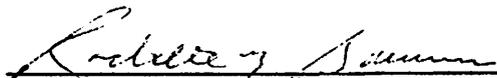
which he replied yes, they must learn their equipment and they must learn our equipment. He was then asked "What is the most important factor the City of Arcadia / the City of Arcadia Fire Department faces as far as consolidation relative to the merger" to which he replied that imposing the new tax on City residents. He stated that he thinks both departments are looking forward to a merger. To the question "Do you think the money side of the merger is an issue that might encourage the consolidation" he replied yes stating that we need to combine resources together. He was then asked "If selected as City of Arcadia Fire Chief and if the City of Arcadia and DeSoto County agree to consolidate their Fire Departments, will you work with the City of Arcadia City Council and DeSoto County Commissioners to make a smooth transition" to which he replied that he would. CW was then asked "What is your best or biggest asset or quality that you bring to the City of Arcadia, if selected as the next Fire Chief" to which he replied his ability to lead, adapt and get things done.

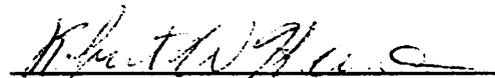
Lewis was then brought in and asked "Do you think the City of Arcadia / City of Arcadia Fire Department is capable of working with DeSoto County /Desoto County Fire Department" to which he replied absolutely the City and County staff have always worked well together. He was then asked "What is the most important factor the City of Arcadia / the City of Arcadia Fire Department faces as far as consolidation relative to the merger" to which he replied that we need to make sure that personnel are treated fairly and equally and that the City is treated fairly. He was then asked "Do you think the money side of the merger is an issue that might encourage the consolidation" to which he replied yes, however it is not a driving force behind the merger. He was then asked "If selected as City of Arcadia Fire Chief and if the City of Arcadia and DeSoto County agree to consolidate their Fire Departments, will you work with the City of Arcadia City Council and DeSoto County Commissioners to make a smooth transition" to which he replied absolutely noting that this particular merger proposal is the most thought out to date.

Administrator Strube suggested that Mr. Sweeting could be interviewed some time in February to which Council requested a Special Meeting be held on Tuesday, January 24, 2006 at 5:00 PM to interview Mr. Sweeting.

County Administrator Coffee was in attendance and requested that if time were available after Mr. Sweeting's interview that the Council could discuss the possible merger. Council elected to hold a Special Workshop on Tuesday, February 7, 2006 at 5:00 PM to discuss a possible merger of the City and County Fire Departments.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned.


 CITY RECORDER


 PRESIDENT