

WORK SESSION
CITY ADMINISTRATOR INTERVIEWS
MARCH 5, 2009

7185

A Work Session Meeting of the Arcadia City Council was held on March 5, 2009 at 4:00 p.m. in the Margaret Way Building at 23 North Polk Avenue. Council members attending were Fazzone, Dixon, Goodman, Heine and Johnson. Also in attendance Marshal Lee, and Recorder Baumann.

Mayor Fazzone called the Work Session to order and stated that the purpose of the work session is to interview applicants for the position of City Administrator. Two (2) candidates are scheduled to appear today. Each candidate will be given forty-five (45) minutes and will be asked ten (10) questions, with all applicants being asked the same set of questions at all interviews.

The interview of Mr. Paul Mercier commenced at 4:00 p.m. Mayor Fazzone welcomed Mr. Mercier. Recorder Baumann read the questions to Mr. Mercier.

Question #1. How knowledgeable are you with Florida Government and Government in the Sunshine Law? *Well I know enough to know to have my own e-mail for personal business. I think that if you have to ask the question about sunshine than you know the answer. Is this a sunshine violation then you know that it is. I am very familiar with it. Sunshine can burden us sometime but at the same time the spirit of it is the correct way to go.*

Question #2. How familiar are you with the needs of a small city? The City of Arcadia is small and rural and at times at a disadvantage when it comes to competing with larger municipalities for state and federal dollars, how can you improve on this situation and assist in bringing in dollars for improvements to the City? *I've been in town 31 years all of my family is here. I come from the school that we can take control of our own destiny by working within the framework that's in the city right now. We can be creative; maybe with some of our zoning changes, working with the business community, faith based organizations I think that is where we bring everybody together to work together. I have no magic wand to bring in money. I would only observe that if your' going to do that you need to speak with the representatives in Tallahassee and Washington on your turf, our turf not their turf. If anybody's been to Tallahassee it's insanity up there, but when they come back to the district that's when you need to talk to them, to tell them what you need. And I do believe that we need more coordinated partnerships with the County and School Board. We have duplicate efforts. We all have IT but we don't work it together. Maybe there's some creative ways we can bring IT together to bring back some efficiencies.*

Question #3. How would you manage a staff of many departments, be responsive and accountable to an elected body of officials, foster a relationship of cooperation with county officials and deal with citizens concerns in a timely manner? *My life experiences has taught me that an individual can only successfully manage and work with five people. After that there has to be a flow of organization. I learned that in the military, has not failed me to date. If you look you have five city council members here and you start getting six or seven it gets a little bit unruly. But five is the number. It really depends on how you have your supervisory staff set up and one of the issues I think you always have to look at is that organizational chart. Is there any efficiencies that could be brought in by working some of those departments closer together. Example we do roads and I heard Council member Heine talk about we build roads but then we have water and sewer and sometimes there is a disconnect. I'm not saying we should merge them, I'm saying you can only supervise five people efficiently, then you still need someone like Shelly Baumann or someone to be I call them a sergeant major, someone to make sure that everybody is doing what they are suppose to.*

WORK SESSION
CITY ADMINISTRATOR INTERVIEWS
MARCH 5, 2009
Continued

Interview of Mr. Paul Mercier cont.

Question #4. How familiar are you with preparing a Zero Balance Budget? What techniques will you use to keep the city council full advised as to the financial condition and needs of the municipality at all times? *I think communication is the key when it comes to money. Zero budgeting is relatively easy. I had my own business. I'm going to look at every check that was written in every major account to see where did the money go. Who got it? Every year I would make mistakes as a business person. I'm not saying that Arcadia is making mistakes, but you can look at that and say how can we keep from repeating the same error. I think it's keeping on top of those expenses and obviously taking to the Council. The position I'm faced with here I have to prove to the five of you that I can lead and that I can be lead. And if I am to be lead then I have to give you the information for you yourselves to lead. So it's a partnership- working together.*

Question #5. What do you have to offer the City of Arcadia *Persistency, integrity, teamwork, understanding people. I will go anyplace anytime to talk about the benefits of working together. The benefits of what the City of Arcadia can do for people. I'm not afraid to meet with anybody anytime, 6 in the morning I'll be there, 10 at night I'll be there.*

Question # 6. Do you feel that you are qualified to run the day to day operations of the city and what experience or qualifications make you the best candidate for the job of City Administrator of Arcadia? *With my ego in check, I'm probably not the best candidate for the job because I don't know who the other candidates are. I can tell you that I've only had 3 jobs. My time in the military service which is very important to me. I was in control of over 200 people and at one time responsible for re-supply maintenance over an entire brigade. I've run my own business. I've hired, fired, done payroll, set up corporate policies. I don't know where we are if we have an investment policy in place now for the City of Arcadia, but the key is whoever is in position has to be able to work with staff. Staff is the one. I'll be a little bit of a wise guy, if I have to know what Shelly knows then I don't need Shelly. So we all need each other to make things work. It's bringing out the best in people to make it work as a team. I think that is what I can bring to the table.*

Question # 7. When would you be available to start? *Well we have sold our home and my plan is to live in Arcadia, in the city. We do have some problems I have to work out. My wife is a teacher, teaches third grade and F-CAT is next week. We have sold our house and are closing on it tomorrow. We have bought a small place just in case. So I am ready to start whenever we've reached an agreement and the Council feels comfortable with a decision.*

Question #8. What is so appealing to you about this position that you are willing to leave where you are now? *Where I am now is I'm not working. This was self inflicted. My wife and I had a plan, we do planning together as a married couple married for 41 years. I did 2 terms as a County Commissioners, best 8 years work experience of my life, 8 was enough. We are in striking distance, it was in our plans that after I left, I have observed dealing with small counties and being in the League of Cities, the County was that there is a void in management of the smaller cities and counties. A void in that a lot of people come in and it's a stepping stone to move up. I'm not stepping anywhere but to Arcadia. Always found Arcadia an intriguing place. The potential here is amazing. Why we have not gotten there yet I don't know. It's going to take a team effort to turn it around.*

WORK SESSION
CITY ADMINISTRATOR INTERVIEWS
MARCH 5, 2009
Continued

7187

Interview of Mr. Paul Mercier cont.

Question #9. What are some techniques that you would use in handling critical issues with the council and public? *I feel at times our role whether as manager or elected official is to somewhat be cheerleaders. Not to dodge the issues or sweep them under the table but to work together. And when you have disagreements sometimes again the sunshine the elected officials can't do it, but the manager can that is to address the issue and come up with a solution with the players involved and make sure that when they walk out of the office door everybody is smiling. Because people want their government to be responsive, people want their government to be efficient.*

Question #10. What do you see as the role of a city administrator and what would your role be in the development of effective goals and objectives for the City of Arcadia? *I think a manager has to be lead by policy and procedure. When you don't like the policy or the procedures then the council members need to come together to try and come up with a change. Often times someone will say I don't like this outcome. Well the people followed the process. Keeping abreast of the process to make certain that it is current and working with people to get the outcomes you want. I think that is the critical part of that question.*

The interview of Mr. Lawrence Miller commenced at 4:45 p.m. Mayor Fazzone welcomed Mr. Miller. Recorder Baumann read the questions to Mr. Miller.

Question #1. How knowledgeable are you with Florida Government and Government in the Sunshine Law? *I am very familiar with Florida government and Sunshine laws having been the Assistant City Manager for the City of Sarasota. In terms of understanding Sunshine Law, the City of Venice is going through its gyrations revolving around it because of the issue that cropped up as far as the Sunshine Laws are concerned between different elected officials. So in terms of understanding how that operates and it's a problem if it's not followed. I think that is a perfect example of what can happen when Sunshine Laws are not followed. As far as Florida laws are concerned I've been involved with numerous projects, Newtown is a part of the City of Sarasota that is being re-designed, part of that effort as it relates to getting clearance in terms of our re-development plan, the comprehensive plan how it meshes with the cities overall comprehensive plan and the Dept of Community Affairs as it relates to that. I have also gone up to Tallahassee to meet with various representatives and senators as it relates to the budget with things as tight as they are for all municipalities and counties and states for that matter. When I worked for the City of Sarasota I did go up there and lobby the representatives and senators revolving around the budget and how that would affect our city. That is the extent of my interactions in Florida Government and Sunshine Laws.*

Question #2. How familiar are you with the needs of a small city? The City of Arcadia is small and rural and at times at a disadvantage when it comes to competing with larger municipalities for state and federal dollars, how can you improve on this situation and assist in bringing in dollars for improvements to the City? *Again having worked with the City of Sarasota especially as it relates to the Newtown area as Economic Development Coordinator for them I sought to bring business into the Newtown area. I also worked with Federal Government with the Community Development Block Grants. Putting together the program that would satisfy all of the Federal Rules and Regulations from HUD. We got 1 million dollars for community development block grant to do various things in Sarasota. I was in charge of a storefront*

WORK SESSION
CITY ADMINISTRATOR INTERVIEWS
MARCH 5, 2009
Continued

Interview of Mr. Lawrence Miller cont.

Question # 2 cont. *rehabilitation program that helped to make the storefronts more attractive. Looking at small municipality in terms as this one there are a number of things you have to do in terms of looking at what business would fit. It's not like a larger city so those things in terms of economic development I think those are attributes that I would bring to the city to go ahead to help improve the quality of life as it relates to individual being able to get jobs and business in the community so that it flourishes. We looked at funds from the Federal Government and private concerns as far as bringing the money in. I was the Executive Director of Elmcors Youth & Adult Activities in New York which was a small non-profit organization. I have written grants to numerous organizations for money, and received a 15 million dollar grant from Samsung which was for a mother and child program. So it is those kind of things I have experienced as far as writing grants and meeting contractual obligations that I would bring to the table in terms of working with in a small rural community like this one and seeing about going ahead and applying for various grants.*

Question #3. How would you manage a staff of many departments, be responsive and accountable to an elected body of officials, foster a relationship or cooperation with county officials and deal with citizens concerns in a timely manner? *One of my main responsibilities with the City of Sarasota as the assistant city manager was to work with the various departments, especially when the city commissioner had complaints from various constituents as to the services that were being provided to those citizens. I worked to make sure that the city agencies were responsive to those individual complaints and worked with the city commissioners to go ahead and make sure that the services that the department heads were involved would act more responsive towards the citizens at large. I also as I mentioned before I have gone to Tallahassee so I've worked with different representatives and state senators I've worked with the congressman for this particular area. Yes in terms of that I want to get to the county. I've worked with county commissioners and there is a difference in terms of how they view things and how the city commission have to operate. I understand how that is an issue relative to providing services to the people of that particular city as far as working with people is concerned I'm a very garrulous individual. I know how to go ahead thru the experiences I've had both on the federal, state and local level work with different people to bring about the results that people are looking for, especially the ones that I'm responsible too.*

Question #4. How familiar are you with preparing a Zero Balance Budget? What techniques will you use to keep the city council fully advised as to the financial condition and needs of the municipality at all times? *In terms of the city, a Zero based budget in terms of make sure that the city is operating from a perspective of going ahead and paying for what it can pay not a budget that is a deficit budget but one which you go ahead and make sure that you not only look at what's going on right now but you look at what's going on in the future as best you can possibly predict as to those expenses come up. The situation as it relates to what would I do to keep the city commission fully advised is always have my door open and to be proactive in terms of reaching out to various city council members to make sure that they were fully informed. I would always set up a meeting with them on a one on one basis to make sure that they understood exactly where we stand. It's not that difficult in terms of where being able to reach out and touch base with different individuals. My thing is to get out into the community, get out to the council people to make sure that they understand exactly, where it is we are going and also have regular staff meetings. So that is how I would address that.*

WORK SESSION
CITY ADMINISTRATOR INTERVIEWS
MARCH 5, 2009
Continued

7189

Interview of Mr. Lawrence Miller cont.

Question #5. What do you have to offer the City of Arcadia? *What I have to offer the City of Arcadia is an individual who comes in early and leaves very late. Try to work and get the job done. What I have to offer is someone who is very experienced in providing services to the consistency that I'm involved with. As you can see from my credentials as far as my career I've worked with a variety of different individuals may it be those who are at risk and disadvantage to those who are well off and I treat everyone the same and I make sure that I address the needs of all those that I'm responsible for. I'm a person who in terms of working with individuals I think I'm easy to work with. I'm also a fair and firm administrator.*

Question # 6. Do you feel that you are qualified to run the day to day operations of the city and what experience or qualifications make you the best candidate for the job of City Administrator of Arcadia? *What I bring to the table in terms of being the best person for the position is the fact that I come from a variety of different avenues as far as my background is concerned. I bring things to the table in terms of trying things new. I look at things and try to get buy in from everyone. I look at the situation from a perspective of opportunism as far as trying to get things done and achieve a particular goal. In terms of day-to-day operations I feel that I am eminently qualified in terms of the day-today- operations as it relates to the city, because again my experience and education as it relates to where I've been and what I've done. I think that I bring certain things to the table as it relates to working with individuals. I've worked in large organizations like the MTA where you have over 55,000 employees; I've worked as an executive director where I had 100 employees who reported to me. And I worked as the Executive director of the Suffolk Human rights Commission where I had 10 employees reporting to me. So I've had a variety of different levels of responsibility as it relates to managing.*

Question # 7. When would you be available to start? *I would be available to start the first or second week of April*

Question #8. What is so appealing to you about this position that you are willing to leave where you are now? *What is so appealing about this position is that I have the opportunity to grow and learn and be involved with something that I believe that I can make a significant contribution to. I believe that in terms of being here I can have the one-on-one type of relationship that is necessary to help move an entity forward. All too often become you're in sometimes as big situation you get into things where things fall between the cracks. The city of New York is so big sometimes that different things happen that people don't even realize that something happened that hurts the community and it makes it tough to be able to get things done. In a small community like this one everyone is close to one another, we have open access you can get to me I can get to you we can work together to make sure that things are done in a proper fashion. I believe that I bring certain things to the table that make sure that people can. It's one thing in terms of interpersonal skills to have people think that your open and It's another thing for people to believe that your door is open that they actually will come in and talk to you and get things done. So I think that is what I bring to the table and also what I like about this particular municipality.*

WORK SESSION
CITY ADMINISTRATOR INTERVIEWS
MARCH 5, 2009
Continued

Interview of Mr. Lawrence Miller cont.

Question #9. What are some techniques that you would use in handling critical issues with the council and public? *Techniques I would use in terms of I guess you're talking about very tough situations that happen from time to time in municipalities, I think it goes back to what I said about working with people. I think about putting together a strategic plan that not only talks about what's happening right now but what is going to happen in 5 or 10 years from now and try and understand how we can get certain goals and have objectives in mind go that we are able to get to these particular goals. I'd like to make sure that my people are thinking along those same lines in terms of what would they like to see happen in a particular point in time as it relates to that plan. In other words every department would have a goal to achieve and we would move forward in terms of dealing with that. And as things come up we would have to adjust and I would work with different people in the community when we need to adjust those things. I would have a situation where I would take suggestions from people in the community about different things that are happening and I would be very forth coming in terms of working with individuals to make sure that we are addressing their particular needs. My way of dealing with tough situations is to look at the situation from the perspective if I were in that situation and how I could go ahead and resolve that situation for that individual. I would be open to everyone and want to work with people to make sure that that happens in a timely fashion.*

Question #10. What do you see as the role of a city administrator and what would your role be in the development of effective goals and objectives for the City of Arcadia? *My role would be to act as a sounding board to both the city council, the people in the community, community organizations and bring my experience I've had to the table in terms of how I believe working together we can achieve these particular goals. I think that in terms of looking at the community and getting a sense of the lay of the land as to both those who are in particular positions as it relates to the city as far as elected positions. There are also people out there that have an impact upon the city as it relates to the quality of life may it be the religious community, faith based organizations, non profits, the business community has a very big effect upon the community. So my thing would be to reach out to each and every one of them and learn what it is as far as their goals and objectives are concerns and work as a facilitator to make sure that we're all on the same page and that we're all gotten buy in and were all moving in the same direction in terms of these goals and objectives. I want to make sure that we get a consensus as to where we're going and how we're going to get there, and that we're going to get there together. And that there are not going to be people who are going to be left out , if they want to be out there It's not because we put a barrier up. So that's how I would handle that.*

The interviews for March 5, 2009 were concluded. The meeting was adjourned.


CITY RECORDER


PRESIDENT