

CALHOUN COUNTY
PROCEEDINGS OF THE
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

December 11, 2008

The Special Session of the Calhoun County Board of Commissioners convened at 1:39 p.m., Thursday, December 11, 2008 in the Commissioners Meeting Room, Calhoun County Building, 315 West Green Street, Marshall, Michigan.

Roll Call: Present: Comrs. Arnquist, Bolger, Moore, Rae, Segal and Solis. Present via. Teleconferencing: Comr. Todd.

County Staff Present: Asst. County Administrator Bradley Wilcox, Finance Director Mark Stuhldreher, Interim County Administrator Don Gilmer, Senior Services Manager Carl Gibson, Extension Director Rita Klavinski, Deputy Equalization Director John Hippensteel and Deputy Clerk/Board Aide Mary Lou Barrett.

CITIZENS' COMMENTS:

Mr. Gerry Keller, Battle Creek resident, advised that he received the amount of additional expenses incurred for conducting Board meetings in other than the county seat, and thanked Mr. Stuhldreher for his prompt response.

SPECIAL ORDER OF BUSINESS:

Selection of a County Administrator/Controller

Consultant Charles Blockett provided an overview of the selection process; i.e., advertising, his recommendation of 24 candidates out of 48 to the County Administrator Search Committee, candidate interviews, the candidates' forum, and preliminary background interviews and reference checks. Mr. Blockett recommended that selection of a candidate be contingent upon successful negotiation of an employment agreement and a commencement date, and completion of a background and reference check.

Mr. Blockett addressed the advisory panels' consolidated results and comment cards from the candidates' forum provided to the Board.

Comr. Moore inquired whether employer site visits were conducted as part of the candidates' reference and background investigations. Mr. Blockett responded no. Comr. Moore inquired whether the reason no employer site visits were conducted is because the Committee did not direct the visits or whether it was a matter of timing. Mr. Blockett responded that employer site visits are not normally within the selection process.

Chairwoman Segal thanked Mr. Blockett and requested each Commissioner advise their top candidate choice.

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Comr. Arnquist selected Charles Londo as the most qualified candidate.

Comr. Rae selected Kelli Sproule as his choice.

Comr. Moore voiced concern that the selection decision is being done by the current Board; further, that the Board is making the decision without completion of the background and reference checks. Comr. Moore stated that he believes Charles Londo should be selected due to his extensive county government expertise. Comr. Moore stated that why the Board is going “down this road” without completion of the background checks is beyond him, pointing out that this is a very important decision that should not be rushed, and again inquired why the current Board has to make a choice today without all the information.

Comr. Solis advised that he is looking for someone who is innovative, not more of the same; therefore, he supports the selection of Kelli Sproule.

Comr. Bolger advised that he supports the selection of Charles Londo due to his well-rounded approach to budgeting and collaborations.

Comr. Todd selected Kelli Sproule due to her financial background.

Chairwoman Segal stated that she believes the county needs new knowledge, therefore, her choice is Kelli Sproule.

Comr. Moore inquired whether Ms. Sproule had been previously interviewed for the Finance Director position and then chose not to come to Calhoun County. Chairwoman Segal responded “Yes, at that time.” Comr. Moore pointed out that Ms. Sproule chose to stay in the college environment, and that he wants someone committed to staying with the county staff; further, pointed out that Ms. Sproule was not one of the two top choices of the advisory panels. Comr. Moore stated that the appointment of the County Administrator/Controller is a key appointment and that he was struck by the fact that a year ago Ms. Sproule decided not to come to Calhoun County. Comr. Moore further pointed out that the county already has someone with financial experience and needs someone with experience in being an Administrator.

Comr. Arnquist inquired whether the Interim County Administrator/Controller would like to offer his opinion. Interim County Administrator/Controller Don Gilmer declined to offer his personal opinion.

Res. 194-2008

“Motion by Comr. Rae, supported by Comr. Solis, adopt the following: Resolved by the Calhoun County Board of Commissioners offer the position of County Administrator/Controller to Kelli Sproule, contingent upon successful negotiation of an employment agreement and a commencement date, and completion of a background and reference check.”

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Comr. Bolger inquired whether the current Board shall establish the negotiation perimeters such as salary. Chairwoman Segal advised that the salary range is \$93,000 to \$110,000. Comr. Rae pointed out that the issue of the employment agreement has been discussed right from the beginning. Comr. Bolger inquired regarding deferred compensation and travel allowance. Chairwoman Segal advised that the Board discussed keeping the agreement as simple and straight forward as possible.

Chairwoman Segal asked Mr. Blockett if there is an opportunity to have a second round of interviews. Mr. Blockett responded "If the Board so chooses," however, pointed out that the holidays are fast approaching. Mr. Blockett advised that he shall attempt to be flexible.

Mr. Blockett recommended that the resolution state that Kelli Sproule is selected as the number one candidate, further, that an alternate also be named.

Chairwoman Segal inquired whether negotiations would be harmed if the media were to report that the Board has selected two candidates. Mr. Blockett pointed out that the media is currently present and that the public will know who voted for whom.

Comr. Arnquist concurred that there should be a second round of interviews and advised that she is available next week. Chairwoman Segal advised that she has not been a part of the Search Committee process and requested Committee Chairman Rae provide his insight.

Comr. Rae pointed out that the Committee was provided with a ton of information regarding the candidates and that some members of the Committee made inquiries regarding the candidates on their own. Comr. Rae addressed the candidates' forum, and advised that he spoke with the chief executive officers of Springfield and Battle Creek and other public officials in attendance. Comr. Rae stated that he feels comfortable with his selection of Ms. Sproule as he likes her vigor, energy, enthusiasm, and commitment to strategic planning.

Comr. Solis stated that he is not necessarily opposed to a second round of interviews; however does not sense that a second round of interviews would reveal something that the Board does not know, and believes that it would be more of a "fishing expedition." Comr. Solis stated that unless there is a reservation, he does not believe a second round of interviews should be conducted.

Comr. Arnquist addressed college experience versus county governmental experience, pointing out that Charles Londo is a Chief Executive Officer while Ms. Sproule is a Chief Operating Officer.

Comr. Arnquist pointed out that Commissioner Todd did not attend the candidate interviews, nor the candidates' forum; and that if the Board were to conduct a second round of interviews, Commissioner Todd would have an opportunity to meet the candidates prior to voting. Comr. Arnquist questioned whether Commissioner Todd could make himself available to attend interviews next week.

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Comr. Bolger advised that he could be available on all the days next week, except Monday when he shall be out of town. Comr. Bolger pointed out that originally the interviews had been scheduled for next week, therefore, a second round of interviews would not place the Board behind schedule.

Comr. Moore advised that he could attempt to be available next week. Comr. Moore questioned whether all of the top five candidates received an interview by telephone. Mr. Blockett responded that he interviewed 27 candidates by telephone, however, that Ms. Sproule and one other candidate was not included within the 27. Comr. Moore questioned the reason for no phone interview with Ms. Sproule. Mr. Blockett responded "Time."

Comr. Rae advised that he is willing to conduct a second round of interviews, however, that he believes it is time to either "fish or cut bait." Comr. Rae pointed out that the process has been conducted and that he believes it is time to make a decision.

Comr. Solis stated that he believes the lack of a phone interview with Ms. Sproule is inconsequential. Comr. Solis advised that he was a member of the advisory panel when Ms. Sproule was interviewed for the Finance Director position, and concurred with Commissioner Rae that it is time for the Board to make its decision.

Comr. Todd requested to be excused from the meeting. Chairwoman Segal requested Commissioner Todd remain as there is a motion on the floor.

Comr. Rae called for the question to cease debate and vote upon the question on the floor.

Roll call vote: Yes - 4 (Comrs. Rae, Segal, Solis and Todd)
No - 3 (Comrs. Arnquist, Bolger and Moore)
Motion CARRIED

Res. 195-2008

"Motion by Comr. Bolger, supported by Comr. Moore, adopt the following: Resolved by the Calhoun County Board of Commissioners reconsider Resolution 194-2008."

Roll call vote: Yes - 7 Motion CARRIED Unanimously

Res. 194-A-2008

"Motion by Comr. Rae, supported by Comr. Solis, adopt the following: Resolved by the Calhoun County Board of Commissioners offer the position of County Administrator/Controller to Kelli Sproule, contingent upon successful negotiation of an employment agreement and a commencement date, and completion of a background and reference check."

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Roll call vote: Yes - 7 Motion CARRIED Unanimously

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting adjourned at 2:30 p.m. at the call of the Chair.

mlb