

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS
CITY OF COLUMBIA HEIGHTS
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
NOVEMBER 15, 2018**

The following are the minutes for the Reconvened Meeting of the City Council held at 7:00 PM on Monday, November 13, 2018 in the City Council Chambers, City Hall, 590 40th Avenue N.E., Columbia Heights, Minnesota, reconvened on November 15, 2018 at 6:00 PM.

1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Mayor Schmitt called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

Present: Mayor Schmitt, Councilmember Murzyn, Jr., Councilmember Buesgens, Councilmember Novitsky , and Councilmember Williams (via telephone)

Also Present: Walt Fehst, City Manager; Jim Hoeft, City Attorney; Kelli Bourgeois, Human Resources Director/Assistant City Manager; Joe Kloiber, Finance Director; Lenny Austin, Police Chief; Gary Gorman, Fire Chief; Joe Hogeboom, Community Development Director; Kevin Hansen, Public Works Director; Renee Dougherty; Library Director, Ben Sandell Communications Coordinator; and Katie Bruno, City Clerk/Council Secretary

A. Discussion of City Management position

Mayor Schmitt expressed her disappointment regarding the lack of communication in this process. She indicated she was frustrated with Manager Fehst for his lack of assisting them in this process. Schmitt asked Fehst if a letter of resignation has been submitted. Fehst responded that following his initial plan to retire in July, Mayor Schmitt asked him to stay through the end of the year for the budget process. Fehst stated that if the Mayor would have requested assistance; he would have helped. Schmitt indicated she has been working on an employment agreement, and has discussed it with Kelli Bourgeois.

Councilmember Novitsky requested the City Manager submit a written resignation prior to filling the position. Novitsky indicated that he was not aware of the proposal at the November 13th meeting, and was upset at the way the information was relayed to the council. Novitsky stated that while he thinks Kelli is a good candidate, there are no other applicants to compare. Fehst stated that all council members were made aware that Bourgeois was a finalist for another position. Fehst indicated that he had thought Novitsky was aware of the situation.

Councilmember Buesgens stated that Bourgeois is highly qualified, and it would be smart to promote her.

Councilmember Murzyn, Jr. stated that we have a very competent person who has been excelling in her job, and it would be unfortunate to lose her.

Councilmember Williams stated that he had always thought that Bourgeois was being mentored for the position for the time when Fehst was to retire.

City Attorney Hoeft stated that a City Manager is hired at will, taking that into consideration, the council could terminate the newly appointed city manager with a majority vote. Hoeft also stated the council could make the offer contingent upon the City Manager's retirement.

KT Jacobs-4104 Monroe stated her concerns are with the process, not the qualifications of the candidate.

Jacobs asked for the entry level salary for this position. Fehst suggested for a city our size, \$142,000-\$145,000.

Ramona Anderson-4132 Stinson requested the council conduct interviews, to seek the best person for the job.

Tia Wilke-4064 Reservoir Blvd requested more transparency in the process.

Clara Schmidt-691 47th Ave NE questioned why would get into a bidding war with another city, when there may be equally qualified candidates. Schmidt also commented that this promotion would result in another vacancies requiring replacement, resulting in an increase to the budget.

Shelley Johnson-1027 43 ½ Ave commented that various processes are practiced in business, including succession planning. Johnson stated that training costs should be considered.

Stan Hoiium-1105 42 ½ suggested the council try to work towards a unanimous decision.

City Manager Fehst commented that the applicant indicated that if she received a reasonable offer from Columbia Heights she would withdraw her applicaiton, because she likes working here. Fehst acknowledged this is not the typical hiring schedule; it is where we are at.

Ted Landwehr-4034 7th St stated that the full council should be making the decision for the next City Manager, while keeping everything transparent.

Joe Kloiber, Finance Director shared his experience with the interview process, indicating that an interview does not compare to having a four year track record of an internal candidate.

Cliff Johnson-1027 43 ½ Ave NE added his opinion that this process looks bad to the public.

Councilmember Buesgens requested Chief Lenny Austin offer his perspective. Councilmember Novitsky objected to Buesgen's request.

Mayor Schmitt indicted that all of the division heads submitted letters of support for the candidate.

The Mayor announced the council would be recessing to an executive session to further discuss the item.

The meeting recessed at 7:00 PM.

The meeting reconvened at 8:01 PM.

Mayor Schmitt reported that the Council went over an Employment Agreement for the position of City Manager to be offered to Kelli Bourgeois. Schmitt shared the following summary of the agreement; Base annual salary \$140,000, up to \$5,000 contributed to deferred compensation plan, consideration of 32 Days of PTO; pending finance approval. An automobile allowance of \$400/month if a hybrid vehicle is purchased, if not the car allowance will remain at \$200/month. Termination benefits would be 3 months for the first year, 6 months after one year.

Motion by Councilmember Buesgens, seconded by Councilmember Murzyn, Jr. to approve the offer to Kelli Bourgeois consistent with the terms outlined in the summary. 4 Ayes - 1 Nay, Motion Carried. Ayes; Schmitt, Buesgens, Williams, and Murzyn, Jr. Nay; Novitsky

12. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Councilmember Buesgens, seconded by Councilmember Murzyn, Jr. to adjourn. All Ayes, Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 8:08 PM.



Respectively Submitted,
Katie Bruno, City Clerk/Council Secretary