

To: The Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Kenneth (Ken) Parker, FCCMA/ICMA Senior Advisor

Subject: City Manager Selection Process

Date: April 8, 2020

Recently, your City reached out to Carol Russell with the Florida City-County Management Association (FCCMA) to see if Senior Advisors could assist the City of Cocoa in recruiting your next City Manager. That call was referred to me. My name is Ken Parker. Currently, I serve as the FCCMA Senior Advisor Coordinator. There are currently nine active Senior Advisors in Florida.

Senior Advisors are retired city and county managers with lengthy experience and who are respected within the public management field. We are appointed by the FCCMA Board of Directors and the Executive Director of the International City/County Management Association. We are not paid. All of us are volunteers.

Senior Advisors provide, at no cost:

- Career and employment counsel to FCCMA and ICMA members;
- Guidance and counsel to members regarding ethics questions or concerns;
- Assistance to cities and counties with the Council-Manager form of government.
- Assistance to cities and counties that are considering adopting the Council-Manager form of government.
- Assistance to civic groups regarding the Council-Manager form of government; and
- Assistance to members-in-transition with guidance and direction as they seek new employment opportunities.

Upon request by the governing body of a municipality whose population is under 10,000 and for counties whose population is under 50,000, Senior Advisors can provide limited Manager search services. Our services are based upon two criteria, population and availability of a Senior Advisor or Senior Advisors. We do not charge for our services; but, we do request the City cover all travel related expenses. Generally, travel expenses are mileage, meals and hotel if required to stay overnight at a location. We request that the City make all hotel reservations and to pay for them directly rather than the Senior Advisor submitting receipts to the City for reimbursement.

Senior Advisors do not do any background searches on candidates. Those are the responsibility of the city or county. For your information, background investigations can cost about \$2,500 per candidate if done by an outside firm. Normally national search firms provide this service as part of their proposal. Senior Advisors are not consultants, but serve as colleagues and counselors.

In the case of Cocoa, you do not meet the first criteria, population. Therefore Senior Advisors are not available to assist you in your search.

With that said, I think there are several policy questions that your City Council needs to answer before you embark on a Manager search.

- Because you have an election in November, do you want to delay the decision on selecting a new manager until after the election? That does not mean that you have not prepared the documents, advertised, and received resumes. I've seen it done both ways. I worked with a city and the current Council wanted to make the decision prior to the new Council taking office. That worked for that City since only one seat was up for election. I worked with another city and they decided to wait until after the election before they began the process because there was going to be a major change in the composition of the City Council because of term limits and decisions made by two Councilors not to seek re-election. The decision of when to advertise and which Council selects is totally up to the City Council. Applicants will ask questions concerning the election if the current Council is making the hiring decision.
- Do you want to involve citizens in the development of recruitment materials and in the screening process? If so, then you would need to appoint members to the citizen group.
- Do you want to hold community listening sessions conducted by either the City Council or the citizen advisory group?
- Do you have an interim candidate that you desire to appoint as City Manager? If the City Council has an internal candidate, I would strongly recommend that you not begin the search process until after you decide whether to employ the internal candidate or if the internal candidate states clearly that she/he will not be a candidate and will not apply for the position.

You and your staff are in the midst of responding to a pandemic. The earliest date for the stay at home order being lifted is May 1. It may be later than that. Also, this is budget time for cities and counties in Florida. I am aware of certain city charters who require that certain budget documents to be submitted as early as the end of May. I have not read your charter nor your code of ordinances to determine when budget items have to be submitted to the City Council. Each city is different regarding when budget documents have to be submitted to the City Council. The preliminary tax rate is set before August 1. I know you are all aware of your City's and State requirements related to the budget.

In my opinion, the City Council has three options available.

1. Employ a full service firm to handle your recruitment. It is my understanding that you have received proposals from firms who specialize in recruiting managers and top level staff. These firms have highly qualified people to assist the City Council in hiring the right person. They have extensive networks. They work with the City Council in developing a profile of characteristics the City Council desires to have in its next manager. They recruit based upon charter requirements

and the profile. They do not wait for applicants to apply. They contact those in their network that most closely meet the job profile and encourage them to apply. The firms are responsible for all the background checks and verifications. They help the City Council manage the interview process. They may assist the City Council in developing interview questions.

2. The second option is for you to handle the recruitment process internally. That means your staff would develop the entire recruitment packet. They would be responsible for advertising for the position. They would be responsible for accepting all resumes. The City would be responsible for conducting all background and verifications. Some cities choose to employ an outside firm to conduct the background and verifications. I always recommend to any city to do the highest level of background investigation. It is far more than criminal and civil records check and related files. It includes reviewing social media and other media. It verifies education. It includes employment verification. It may include review of personnel files. Your internal staff would be responsible for managing the interview process.

If you choose to conduct the search in house, I told your Administrative Services Director that Senior Advisors would provide them with examples of recruitment materials that other cities have used. We could provide the Council with a questionnaire that would help develop the candidate profile. I indicated that I would review documents and provide her with input. I did indicate to her that we could assist the City Council with resume review.

3. The third option is to employ an internal candidate and not advertised. In my opinion, this is the first question that you must answer.

If I were involved with you in preparing documents and advertising for the City Manager position, the following process would take place:

- One month to develop position profile and recruitment documents. I want the City Council to adopt these documents before the position is posted.
- Advertise for one month.
- Two weeks for the review of resumes and provide the City Council with a list of qualified candidates.
- City Council would determine which candidates from the qualified list they want to interview.
- Background and Verifications can take up to one month. I always recommend the background and verifications be completed prior to interviews.
- Schedule interviews.

- Select a manager and approve contract.

Most managers have a notice provision in their contracts if they are currently employed. Some cities and counties are willing to waive the notice provision. Most are not. Each Manager contract is different. The usual notice requirement is 60 days. I have seen some that are 90 days.

A nationwide search firm may be able to cut some time off this schedule since they do this on a regular basis.

If I or another Senior Advisor can assist you, please feel free to call us. I'm looking forward to attending your meeting and answering your questions.