

Preparation and Events for Interview Weekend

The following is a complete list of items that need to be addressed for the Interview Weekend. It probably contains more detail than necessary, but we felt it best to list as much as possible so nothing is forgotten.

Pre-Interview Tasks

Notification: Colin Baenziger & Associates (CB&A) will notify the finalists who have been selected to be interviewed. We will also advise the alternate to be prepared in the event one of the finalists withdraws his or her candidacy. *Responsible Party: CB&A.*

Preparatory Material: As soon as the finalists and alternate have been selected, the City should send each of the finalists and the alternate as many of the following materials as are available: the current year budget summary, an organizational chart, the latest certified audit and management letter, any city strategic and long range plans, enabling legislation and other materials that define the role and duties of the City Manager, and any evaluations of the organization completed in the previous twelve months. The City should also try to include other materials, such as housing guides, welcome kits from the Chamber of Commerce, maps of the area, etc. *Responsible Party: The City.*

Candidate Travel: We will ask the candidates to make their own arrangements to get to the City. That will include the purchase their airline tickets, with the cost reimbursed directly by the City after the candidate is interviewed. *Responsible Party: CB&A*

Candidate Lodging: We will ask the City make reservations for the candidates at a local hotel and pay the hotel directly (thus avoiding the sales tax). *Responsible Party: The City.*

Interview Tasks

City Tour: We highly recommend the City conduct a tour for the candidates and their spouses during the early afternoon on Friday. A van or small bus will be needed, and a knowledgeable staff member should be assigned to conduct the tour so that everyone hears the same information. We suggest the tour start at 1:00 P.M. *Responsible Party: The City.*

Candidates Meet the Staff: Many local governments want the candidates to meet their senior staff, and conversely, the candidates like to meet the staff people with whom they would work. There are several ways to accomplish this. One is a "meet and greet" which normally lasts an hour. Another is to divide the senior staff into groups of three from different departments, such as someone from Public Works, Human Resources, and Parks and Recreation forming a group. The candidates then rotate among the groups, spending 30 to 45 minutes with each group. Normally, meeting the staff occurs just after the city tour. *Responsible Party: The City.*

Realtor's Tour: Many candidates and spouses have questions about residential neighborhoods, schools, medical facilities, and other city amenities. A real estate professional can usually answer those questions. Since the spouses will likely be free during the formal interviews on Saturday,

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we suggest they be provided a list of area Realtors to contact for a tour. *Responsible Party: The City to provide a list of Realtors.*

Reception: The City will choose a location for the candidate reception, and typically, it is held at a public facility, a local restaurant, a country club, or other suitable location. It can be scheduled to begin at 6:00 P.M. and usually lasts about an hour and a half. The City will need to determine who should be invited. In addition to the elected officials (and their spouses) and the candidates (and their spouses), chairpersons of key committees are often invited, as well as other city officials and local business leaders. With the entire governing body in attendance, the reception must be noticed as a public meeting to avoid violations of public meeting statutes. As an open public event, news media representatives will usually attend, as well as some members of the public. In some cities and counties, the local Chamber of Commerce has sponsored the event and assumed the cost. The reception provides the first opportunity for the elected officials to meet the finalists, and although the event need not be lavish, it should put the city in its best light. We are often asked if alcohol should be served, and that is a matter for the City to determine. Occasionally, it can be revealing to see how candidates react when alcohol is made available. We also recommend the city provide name tags for everyone. Something simple such as the self-adhesive name tags which can be purchased at an office supply store works well. We suggest the candidate name tags be one color while all the other attendees be given name tags of a different color. That makes it easy for the elected officials and the public to identify the candidates. *Responsible Party: The City.*

Interview Morning Breakfast: The City will arrange a light Continental breakfast on the morning of the interviews. Coffee, juice, Danish, and fruit are usually served 30 minutes before the start of the one-on-one interviews. Normally, the candidates eat very little so the City should not plan on a large meal. *Responsible Party: The City.*

One-on-One Interviews: The candidates will rotate between the offices assigned to each of the individual Commission Members at 40-minute intervals, according to a pre-determined schedule. What works best is if the Commission Members can be arranged in such a way that the candidates rotate one office to the right or to the left to each time. Sample questions will be included in materials which CB&A will provide. A CB&A representative will usher each candidate to the appropriate elected official at the appropriate time and keep the process on schedule. *Responsible Party: CB&A and the City.*

Interview Day Lunch: The City will arrange for a light lunch for the elected officials and the candidates. It is served immediately after the one-on-one interviews. Usually, about 30 minutes are allocated for lunch. *Responsible Party: The City.*

Public Interviews: Public interviews will be held immediately after lunch. The CB&A representative begins with a 5-minute session to discuss procedures, and will then usher the first candidate to the podium and briefly introduce him or her. The Mayor typically welcomes the candidate and asks to briefly describe his or her background. Each elected official in turn then asks the candidate one or two questions, and any follow-up questions. If time permits, more questions may be asked. Typically, each candidate interview lasts between 15 and 25 minutes because the elected officials asked most of their questions in the morning. While we provide a

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schedule, we do not rigidly enforce it in the afternoon. We also recommend that staff provide a copy of the sample questions we included in our proposal materials at the elected official's seats. Referring to those sample questions not only gives the elected officials material to work with, but it prevents repetition of questions. *Responsible Party: The City with CB&A assistance.*

Recap and Discussion: At the conclusion of the last interview, the CB&A representative will briefly recap the day's events, and confirm the time, date, and location for the vote on the selected City Manager. Occasionally, elected officials want to discuss the day's events and the candidates. Some elected bodies also want to make the selection of the manager that day. While that can be done, we recommend the elected officials consider what they have learned for at least a day or two before making their selection. Initial impressions are often tempered by two or three days of reflection. *Responsible Party: CB&A.*

If you have any questions, please let us know, and we will be happy to provide answers.