

Tuesday, December 2, 2014

A special meeting of the Humboldt County Board of Commissioners was called to order on Tuesday, December 2, 2014, at 10:00 a.m. in the regular place of meeting at the Courthouse, Winnemucca, Nevada. Those present were Chairman Dan Cassinelli, Commissioners Garley Amos Jr., Mike Bell, Jim French and Marlene Brissenden, District Attorney Michael Macdonald, Administrator Bill Deist and Clerk of the Board Tami Rae Spero.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: Chairman Cassinelli asked for public comments. Lewis Trout appeared before the Board and offered comments on a recent article in the Reno Gazette Journal regarding evaluating applicants for a job and commented on concerns expressed by members of the Commission related to County Administrator candidate Dave Mendiola's lack of governmental experience and his work on the Regional Planning Commission which addresses that concern. No further public comment offered.

CONTINUATION OF PROCESS TOWARDS SELECTION OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR AND POSSIBLE SELECTION OF CANDIDATE TO OFFER THE POSITION OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR; TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF THE OFFER AND AUTHORIZE NEGOTIATION OF CONTRACT WITH PREFERRED CANDIDATE:

Jeanne Greene of POOL/PACT appeared before the Board and commented on the background checks, reference checks and credit checks done on the applicants and what those checks entailed; she continued informing the Board that each candidate was given one hour to prep for this interview and would then appear before the Board and give a presentation on three exercises that were assigned to them.

DAVID MENDIOLA: Mr. Mendiola appeared before the Commission and presented his presentation for the three exercises as assigned; each exercise was followed by questions from the Commission regarding the exercise. Chairman Cassinelli asked Mr. Mendiola about his knowledge regarding skills identified in the County Administrator Recruitment Hand Out for the ideal candidate profile including governmental accounting & budgeting and land & water issues. Mr. Mendiola commented on his qualifications and his ability to learn what he needs to know. Commissioner French commented on his view of Mr. Mendiola's qualifications and how they fit in with the ideal candidate qualifications.

BRENDA WILLEY: Ms. Willey appeared before the Commission and presented her presentation for the three exercises as assigned; each exercise was followed by questions from the Commission regarding the exercise. Following the presentation Ms. Willey provided a handout to the Commission addressing the concerns related during the prior meeting regarding her ability to serve as the County Administrator and she reviewed and responded to those concerns.

KEVIN KIRKEBY: Mr. Kirkeby appeared before the Commission and presented his presentation for the three exercises as assigned; each exercise was followed by questions from the Commission regarding the

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exercise. Following the presentation the Commission asked Mr. Kirkeby questions regarding knowledge of water rights and government finance including budgets, his research into the position and his knowledge of the issues with the communications system.

Chairman Cassinelli recessed the meeting at 1:01 p.m. to reconvene at 1:30 p.m.

Commissioner French commented on a discussion that he had with the Attorney General's Office regarding the open meeting law and how it applies to this process including the need to speak openly by candidate name; he discussed his impressions of each of the candidates, his thoughts as to what qualifications make an ideal candidate, how Mr. Mendiola's qualifications correspond to that, his concerns with comments made by Ms. Willey, Mr. Kirkeby's preparation for this process and ended by stating his choice of Dave Mendiola. Commissioner Amos commented on his impressions of each candidate including his concerns related to Mr. Mendiola and Mr. Kirkeby and noting Ms. Willey's years with the County and the resulting experience; he commented on the need to hire the position today and offered that he would not say more but stated that he would work with whomever was selected. Commissioner Brissenden commented on the importance of the position to the County and her impressions of each candidate including her concerns about Ms. Willey and Mr. Kirkeby and explained her support for Dave Mendiola. Commissioner Bell commented on his impressions of each candidate and the importance of experience in the position noting that Ms. Willey and Mr. Kirkeby have that experience, that the Commission had approved a higher salary for the position because of the need for experience so if someone with less experience was hired that decision should be revisited; he stated his first choice would be Ms. Willey and Mr. Kirkeby would be his second. Commissioner-Elect Ron Cerri commented on the quality of the interviews by all the candidates and the positive aspects for each candidate but did not offer a preferred choice. Chairman Cassinelli asked if there were any other comments. County Clerk Tami Rae Spero appeared before the Board and offered comments as to the three candidates including her concern about Mr. Mendiola's lack of government experience noting her belief that he could learn, her concerns about Ms. Willey's support within the organization as well as her performance through the years and noted the governmental experience of Mr. Kirkeby; she concluded by noting the importance of the Commission making the choice that is best for the County. County Treasurer Gina Rackley appeared before the Board and commented on the variety of the candidates, her conversations with Mr. Mendiola and Mr. Kirkeby and her concerns about Ms. Willey. Chairman Cassinelli asked Administrator Deist about his intentions and whether he would remain longer if someone with less experience was selected. Administrator Deist stated that he needs to know what the Commission wants but he is open to discussion. Commissioner French thanked the Administrator for his assistance with this process and suggested that once the person is chosen that then discussion could occur

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with them as to how long they felt they would need to work with the current administrator though he would not expect it to be more than a month or so. Administrator Deist noted the time line for contract negotiations and the upcoming holidays. Chairman Cassinelli agreed that there should be a contract. Commissioner French agreed. Commissioner Brissenden concurred and asked about the contract process. District Attorney Macdonald explained the process and what could be included. Discussion occurred regarding the process and the time line. Chairman Cassinelli commented on Mr. Mendiola's ability to do the job, the concerns that he has heard about Ms. Willey and the knowledge and understanding that Mr. Kirkeby has; he stated his agreement with Commissioner Amos that the position needs to be filled at this time. The following motion was made by Commissioner Brissenden and passed with Chairman Cassinelli, Commissioner French and Commissioner Brissenden voting aye and Commissioners Amos and Bell voting nay:

To appoint Dave Mendiola as our new County Administrator.

DISCUSSION AND DIRECTION REGARDING TRANSITION BETWEEN CURRENT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR AND NEW COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO TIME LINE AND OTHER MATTERS RELATED THERETO:

District Attorney Macdonald stated that the next step is to discuss the terms of the offer and/or conditions as well as authorization to proceed with the negotiation of the contract with the preferred candidate. Chairman Cassinelli noted that Mr. Mendiola does not have the experience that the other candidates did, so he does not believe that he should start at the top of the salary range plus he needs to be aware that if he can't handle the job he will need to be replaced. Commissioner French suggested starting him at the beginning of the range and allowing him to earn his way up from the merit increase perspective as that would seem to be the fairest way to go. Commissioner Bell questioned if the salary range was too high. Commissioner French explained why he did not believe you could change the range at this point noting that none of the candidates had experience as a county administrator, it is just the comparison between private and public sector and his reasoning for starting at the beginning of the range with the ability to increase over time. The Board concurred. Commissioner-Elect Cerri noted the need for Mr. Mendiola to rely on assistance to begin with including the need to keep the current Administrator for training and questioned whether he shouldn't start lower than the minimum. The Board asked for legal counsel's opinion. District Attorney Macdonald stated that the Commission establishes the range and they must live by it. Administrator Deist offered comments on the Commission vote and the discussion regarding salary and questioned the effect that could have on the candidate and his desire to come to work of the organization. Discussion ensued between the Commissioners about the issue. Upon reference to a probation period, District Attorney Macdonald explained that with that term the Board would be saying

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