MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL COMMISSION MEETING

TOWN OF LADY LAKE, FLORIDA

February 11, 2021

The special meeting of the Lady Lake Town Commission was held in the Commission Chambers at Lady Lake Town Hall, 409 Fennell Blvd., Lady Lake, Florida, with Mayor Kussard presiding. The meeting convened at 1 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Kussard

ROLL CALL

| Commissioner (Ward) | Present |
| --- | --- |
| Kussard (One) | YES |
| Holden (Two) | YES |
| Vincent (Three)  | YES |
| Hannan (Four) | YES |
| Rietz (Five) | YES |

STAFF PRESENT

Thad Carroll, Interim Town Manager; Pam Winegardner, Finance Director; and Carol Osborne, Staff Assistant to Town Clerk

Others present: Colin Baenziger of Colin Baenziger & Associates; Nancy Slaton, Interim Town Clerk; Mike Burske, Parks and Recreation Director; John Pearl, I.T. Director; Julia Harris, Assistant to the Town Manager (via Teams)

NEW BUSINESS

## Discussion Concerning Status of Employment Offer to Mr. Matt Campbell and Potential Extension of Offer to Other Candidates if the Commission Decides to Rescind the Offer to Mr. Campbell

Mayor Kussard read a prepared statement stating her reservations regarding the response received from Mr. Campbell. She stated that Mr. Marchant was the second choice, although she is reticent about offering him the position because of comments he made during the meet and greet which sounded as if his family may be reluctant to relocate to Florida. After pointing out how well Mr. Carroll has been handling the interim position, how well he works with Commissioners, residents and developers, she recommended that Thad Carroll be offered the position of Town Manager.

Commissioner Hannan stated that he would like to discuss the points in Mr. Campbell’s letter.

Mayor Kussard requested that he not discuss the points if they are a negotiable contract item.

Commissioner Hannan stated all contracts are negotiable. He went through each item and gave his opinion. He stated he does not agree with the request for 20 weeks of severance pay requested by Mr. Campbell.

Derek Schroth noted that is the maximum allowed by law.

Commission Holden stated that he disagrees with several of the points mentioned by Commissioner Hannan. He noted that over half of the Town is within The Villages, and other than police and streets, those areas are mostly managed by them. He stated he was disappointed with Mr. Campbell’s interview. He suggested the Commission select another candidate.

Commissioner Rietz stated that he thought this meeting was to discuss further negotiations with Mr. Campbell; not to rescind the offer. He stated he does not see residency as an issue since it was not required. He asked why this was not discussed at the time of the interviews. He noted that the previous Town Manager was also the Town Clerk and that is why she received a higher salary. Commissioner Rietz stated he feels Mr. Campbell is the right person and items can be negotiated.

Commissioner Vincent stated that he spoke with representatives of several surrounding municipalities regarding their interview process and none were conducted by committee; they were individually interviewed by each Commissioner. He stated he was not happy about the way the interviews for the Town Manager position were conducted.

Commissioner Vincent stated after reading Mr. Campbell’s letter, he is not confident that he is a good fit for the Town, although terms could be negotiated.

Mayor Kussard stated that she is in favor of offering the Town Manager the same benefits as other employees receive, which may be based upon position and length of employment.

Commissioner Hannan requested that Town Attorney Derek Schroth reply to Mr. Campbell’s letter spelling out the Commissioners’ response to his suggested terms.

Commission Holden stated he does not want to move forward with Mr. Campbell after reading the requests in his letter.

Mayor Kussard asked for a consensus from the Commissioners whether they would like to negotiate further with Mr. Campbell.

Commissioner Hannan, Commissioner Rietz, Commissioner Vincent were in favor on responding to Mr. Campbell’s letter.

Mayor Kussard was not in favor of negotiating with Mr. Campbell. She stated that she is not in favor of bringing in someone from the outside; that Mr. Carroll should be considered.

Commissioner Vincent stated this position should have been advertised with the Florida League of Cities. He stated that Mr. Carroll may be overworked by being Growth Management Director and Interim Town Manager since he is now short-staffed.

After further discussion, Mayor Kussard asked Mr. Baenziger if he advertised this position with the Florida League of Cities.

Mr. Baenziger replied that it was advertised with the Florida League of Cities.

Commissioner Holden reiterated that he is not in favor of Mr. Campbell.

Mayor Kussard stressed that she is not in favor of any of the candidates that were interviewed, and other candidates may need to be looked at. She feels the Town has an excellent team of employees and they need to find someone with the right fit.

Commissioner Vincent stated that he had a caucus with his constituents, and they all felt the Commissioners should negotiate with Mr. Campbell.

Commissioner Holden stated that he makes rounds and feels this town is being run inefficiently and believes an outside person is a better fit. He stated he would like to see Mr. Lawrence as Town Manager as he is a former police chief.

Commissioner Rietz stated that all five Commissioners made an offer to Mr. Campbell and he responded with a counter-offer. It was his opinion that the Commission needs to negotiate terms.

Commissioner Hannan agreed.

Town Attorney Schroth stated it appears three Commissioners want him to respond to this letter. He asked for a consensus on terms and after discussion on each item noted by the Commissioners, the following terms were decided upon:

1. The residency requirement is for the Town Manager to live within 35 miles of the Town limits.
2. The daily schedule is to be the same schedule as employees, although there will be exceptions.
3. The salary offered is to be $120,000 yearly.
4. The benefits will be the same as employees.
5. Severance will be two weeks in the first year graduating with accruals of two additional weeks each consecutive year of employment.
6. A one year contract will be offered.
7. A vehicle allowance or mileage reimbursement is still up for negotiation.
8. Pets are not allowed to be brought in to work in Town Hall.

By a consensus of 3 to 2 (Kussard/Holden), the Commission agreed that Mr. Campbell be offered the non-negotiable terms noted above as a counter-offer for the Town Manager position.

Commissioner Holden and Commissioner Rietz both stated they felt the package offered to the Town Manager should have been pre-determined prior to making an offer.

Mayor Kussard stated part of the terms were included in the brochure, such as the salary and that residency was preferred. She stated Mr. Baenziger spoke with the Commissioners and she asked him for confirmation.

Mr. Colin Baenzinger confirmed that the target salary was $120,000 after speaking with Commissioners, although it was noted that someone with more experience may be paid a little more. He explained why severance is typically offered at 20 weeks as someone may be giving up a job and will be giving up security to come to work here. He stated vacation for a senior executive is often more than that of regular employees.

After more discussion, Mayor Kussard requested that Town Attorney Derek Schroth report on his conversations with Mr. Campbell regarding the employment offer.

Mr. Schroth stated that he would contact Mr. Campbell by telephone and email to offer these negotiated terms.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:12 p.m.

s/ Nancy Slaton, Interim Town Clerk

s/ Ruth Kussard, Mayor

Minutes transcribed by Nancy Slaton, Interim Town Clerk