

City of Rio Communities Special Workshop Minutes  
Monday November 6, 2017

- Mayor Gwinn called to order the workshop at 10:00 am.
- Present: Mayor Mark Gwinn; Councilors, Bill Brown, Peggy Gutjahr, Arturo Sais and Thomas Scroggins.  
Present: City Manager Bob Skerry, Municipal Clerk Lisa Adair and EDC Chairman Jim Winters.

### **Human Resources – Discussion**

- Mayor Gwinn said the purpose of this special workshop is to discuss human resources and explained that he has talked with several HR companies. He further explained that the city is going into our fifth year and it's time to educate ourselves about options for human resources.
- Mayor Gwinn introduced Jill Avey from Southwestern HR Consulting. He said she is here to explain what an HR consultant can offer our city and how we can benefit.
- Ms. Avey said Southwestern HR Consulting is an HR consulting firm located in Albuquerque that has been in business five years. She gave her history as well as the history of the company.
- Ms. Avey explained they are updated with current legislation and have a grasp of what's going on in all the communities.
- Ms. Avey said the city has a good website, a compensation range and a personnel handbook. She said the job descriptions look good and as always there is fine tuning so that the city is protected in the hiring process. She said her organization is particularly strong in the hiring process which is the foundation of the organization and begins with the job description. She said they would create simple documentations that protects the city.
- Ms. Avey said three key things to look for in HR advisement are education, certification and experience and her team offers that.
- Councilor Sais asked if there would be a preplan and a post plan explaining how much time would be required for a project.
- Ms. Avey explained the preplan would be to evaluate all processes or a particular process to identify what needs to be done. She said they would offer an HR prioritized list of things they recommend and that have the most eminent need in terms of risk and exposure.
- Councilor Gutjahr clarified that the process, if Ms. Avey is hired, would be that she would prepare an assessment of where we are now and what needs to be done.
- Councilor Sais said that Ms. Avey will be working with the staff and asked how council would be kept abreast about what is going on.
- Ms. Avey explained the process would be to first address the point of contact and then they would eventually go to the employees and then give council a review.
- Councilor Scroggins asked Ms. Avey if she has other local government clients.
- Ms. Avey said she does have a contract with Albuquerque to handle investigations and their responses to the EEOC, the NM Human Rights Board and the Department of Labor. She then explained other ways they have experience with government/city process.
- Councilor Scroggins said most municipalities are statutory and can only do what the State says we can do and Albuquerque is home rule which can be a significant difference.
- Manager Skerry said another process would be for him to come up with a scope of work for what we know we need. He said the issue of benefits is where we have a problem being competitive and then said he likes the idea of dealing with the things we know we need to fix while we can afford to do that.

- Manager Skerry said we're having this discussion because we're small and started with volunteers and are still trying to manage with a small staff. He said the council has taken the approach of keeping taxes low and go after grants. He further explained that, if we get federal grants, they can be audited for six years and if they find violations, we have to return the money.
- Mayor Gwinn explained that Jill has explained to him that they have a process in place to make sure we would be staying up with EEOC processes. He said if something needs to be corrected, now is the time to do it rather than waiting for the state to come in say we're doing something wrong.
- Ms. Avey recommended, when it comes to government contracts, they review any sections that have to do with requirements for HR. She said there will be requirements around hiring practices and retention of records and her team is proficient in that.
- Manager Skerry explained that he attended a self-insured training which turned out to be mainly about HR changes. He said some things are changing quickly and things that were right last year may not be right this year.
- Ms. Avey explained that they would always review all documents before changes are made or discussed to give an idea of what would be involved and how much time would be required.
- Councilor Brown said he is very interested in the overall review process and said he would like the focus to be on the job descriptions, wage scale and personnel policy, specifically the benefit package, as well as work policy and procedures.
- Councilor Sais asked about hiring processes and language barriers that may exist. He said to provide a service to our citizens, the hiring processes should include Spanish.
- Manager Skerry explained we have a Title 6 plan that addresses that issue and meets state requirement for making accommodations for language.
- Ms. Avey said they don't have a consultant fluent in Spanish but they partner with an organization that translates anything they need.
- Councilor Gutjahr asked if there would be an assessment of our personnel policy and how it deals with evaluations and how the staff feels about working among themselves.
- Ms. Avey explained they would look at policies and how they are implemented because it is very important that implementation goes along with how the policy is written.
- Mayor Gwinn said he would like this matter to be on the agenda for the workshop and the regular meeting on November 14.
- Councilor Brown asked if this would require an RFP.
- Manager Skerry explained that Ms. Avey is asking us to hire a consultant for \$95.00 per hour. He said the first thing to do is to find out what it would cost to get an assessment.
- Manager Skerry said we shouldn't advertise for a position until we have job descriptions. He said we need more than a part-time finance clerk and the job description for that position needs to be written to indicate it is more than a finance clerk because of the budget and audit processes.
- Manager Skerry began a discussion on the need for hiring a Fire Chief and an Assistant Fire Chief for the fire department that are compensated in some manner.
- Councilor Brown said there is a huge gap between the job descriptions and the wage and salary scale which includes retirement.
- Councilor Sais said we need to establish a living wage for each position and a benefit package so that we can draw qualified people.
- Manager Skerry agreed and then continued the discussion on getting good people but keeping it as small as possible. He then explained the roles of Council and the City Manager in the hiring process.

- Councilor Scroggins asked if we put out a request for proposal and hire someone, can we rehire that person or do we have to go through all the hoops again. He said he agrees with Jill that there is a special relationship that develops between a human resources consultant and an organization, and we should try not to change every year.
  - Manager Skerry said we could have a rolling contract.
  - Councilor Gutjahr asked if we are looking at doing some type of retainer.
  - Mayor Gwinn said we can put them on a retainer like we could a lawyer, but he doesn't know if Jill will do that.
  - Councilor Sais said he would like to see an assessment and then go from there.
    - a) Public questions (3) minutes to address the Council**
      - No public comments.
- The City Council workshop was adjourned at 11:15 am.

Respectfully submitted,

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Lisa Adair, Municipal Clerk  
 (Transcribed by Pamela Johnson, Deputy Clerk)

Approved:

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Mark Gwinn,  
 Mayor

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Margaret (Peggy) Gutjahr,  
 Councilor Mayor Pro-tem

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William (Bill) Brown,  
 Councilor

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Arturo R. Sais,  
 Councilor

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Thomas Scroggins,  
 Councilor

Date: \_\_\_\_\_