

Town Council Special Meeting
Town of Paonia, Colorado
March 13, 2014

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

A Special Meeting of the Town Council held Thursday, March 13, 2014 was called to order at 6:41 p.m. Those present were Mayor Neal Schwieterman, Trustees Brian Ayers, Eric Goold, Ross King; and Chief Scott Leon; Public Works Director Travis Loberg; Finance Officer Cindy Jones; and Deputy Clerk Corinne Ferguson. Trustees Amber Kleinman and Sarah Sauter were absent.

Mayor Schwieterman determined a quorum was not present, explained that no motions or decisions could be made, and proceeded with the meeting.

New Business

Town Manager – Public Input

Mayor Schwieterman gave a synopsis of the Town Manager Assessments timeline of events for Wednesday, March 12, 2014 and Thursday March 13, 2014. A Special Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 18, 2014 at 7:30; following the Hawks Haven Road Agreement and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Access work session. It is anticipated that there will be a quorum present for the upcoming Special Meeting. The question of whether Trustees Elect David Bradford, Charles Stewart, and Suzanne Watson will be able to attend an executive session during the meeting has yet to be determined. A decision contingent upon successful completion of a stringent background investigation could be made at the Special Meeting on March 18, 2014 or at any scheduled meeting thereafter.

Mayor Schwieterman thanked everyone who attended the assessments throughout the day and noted that all were fatigued after an intense two day process. Town Manager candidates Gwendolyn Hallsmith and Barbara Peterson chose to attend the special meeting, Bruce Smith chose not to attend. Following some discussion and a strong recommendation from Dave Knutson, Town Human Resources Advisor, it was determined with only two candidates present no questions or comments addressed to the candidates would be permitted out of fairness to the absent candidate.

Mayor Schwieterman opened the floor for public comment. Nine people addressed the Board of Trustees and one letter was read in to the record regarding the Town Manager position.

Two (2) in town residents and two (2) out of town residents spoke in favor of Barbara Peterson for the Town Manager position citing her knowledge of Paonia's history and unique culture, availability to townspeople outside of business hours, commitment to the Town, longevity, education in preparation for the position, and her passion for the betterment of the Town.

Two (2) in town residents and one (1) out of town resident spoke against hiring from within for the Town Manager position citing the need for more transparency in Town government, inability to effectively manage department heads who are currently not her subordinates, Town needs fresh eyes from the outside, a new perspective on budgeting, and more timely responses to public on issues and information requests. Ms. Peterson's lack of Town Manager experience in comparison to Ms. Hallsmith and Mr. Smith, and the past hiring of inexperienced people not being in the best interest of the Town were also noted.

Two (2) in town residents not advocate for a specific candidate. Their statements were that transparency has gotten better at the Town level but still needs improvement, too many people move to Paonia thinking it will be the environment they desire only to leave within a year or two leaving the companies they work for up in the air, and that the, long-term commitment, attitude, and capability of the existing candidate needs to be heavily regarded as an asset.

Human Resources advisor Dave Knutson requested the people that attended either Wednesday evening or any of the Thursday assessments and chose to speak please raise their hands. Four (4) people raised their hands. Trustee King thanked Mr. Knutson for his efforts and asked if Ms. Hallsmith or Ms. Peterson had anything to share. Discussion ensued again on the fairness to Mr. Smith and it was decided that Ms. Hallsmith and Ms. Peterson would not address the Council during the meeting. Trustee Goold encouraged the public to engage in conversation with individual trustees and the Town Manager candidates outside of the meeting. Mayor Schwieterman agreed with Trustee Goold, encouraging people to stay and talk following the meeting and added that a valuable thing that came from this process is that many worked together for a better community and that in itself makes us a better community.

7:17 p.m. Meeting adjourned.

Mayor, Neal Schwieterman

Deputy Clerk, Corinne Ferguson