

CITY OF PELICAN RAPIDS COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES – 06-08-04

Mayor Wayne Runningen, Council Members David Gottenborg, Ben Woessner, Denise Magnusson and John E. Waller, III were present. No one was absent. Deputy Clerk-Treasurer Glenys Ehlert, Library Director Pam Westby, City Attorney Scott Dirks, Charles Krekelberg, Jackie Backstrom and Elroy Backstrom were also present.

Mayor Runningen reconvened the continued meeting of 05-28-04. The only item on the agenda is the City Administrator's position. Choices include continuing with a Plan A form of government with a City Administrator or holding an election to allow the voters to endorse a Plan B form of government with a City Manager.

City Attorney Scott Dirks reviewed and compared Plan A and Plan B form of governments.

Most city governments in Minnesota, 600, are Plan A which is what the City of Pelican Rapids is.

Plan B form of governments have tended to be adopted by larger cities.

Under Plan B, a City Manager would appoint personnel and exercise control over all departments. There would be no Library Board unless it was part of a joint powers agreement with multiple entities.

Charles Krekelberg discussed the fact that a city manager will do the day to day grunt work. This form of government frees the council to deal with policy decisions and it gives the city manager the authority to deal with the day to day situations. "With Plan B, we have a much better handle on where we are and where we are going," said Krekelberg. He continued with the question, "Where are we going to be 10 or 20 years from now and how are we going to get there." City Council has to become more policy oriented, suggested Krekelberg.

"Person needs to work towards the vision set by the City Council," Dirks said.

"What is it we need this person to do?" Krekelberg questioned.

Library Director Pam Westby said communications would be an important quality in city administration.

Council Member Gottenborg said this is an important time to define our vision.

City Administrator Richard Jenson has taken on a lot of responsibility in other departments. A suggestion is that the new person could make the supervisory/department head positions stronger.

Krekelberg pointed out that Council Members bring their ability to make decisions. "An administrator could just carry out what you say and the administrator could also be challenging you as Council Members," he continued.

Dirks said Council could hire an administrator who turned out to be perfect. A year down the road, the Council could decide to have an election to see if a move to Plan B would be approved by the community.

"Our job now is to come up with a really good administrator job description," Council Member Woessner.

Dirks, "Hire the best city manager type of administrator available."

"Council will need to redefine their role in relation to the city administrator," said Krekelberg.

Mayor Runningen said Richard Jenson will be retiring 09-10-04.

Council agreed they will take the time needed to draft the job description.

"We have good staff who will work together," Mayor Runningen said.

Council Members Gottenborg and Woessner offered to serve on the committee to write a draft position description.

Elroy Backstrom suggested asking Perham what they would do different.

Mayor Runningen suggested reviewing descriptions from several communities.

Motion by Waller, seconded by Magnusson to appoint Council Members Gottenborg and Woessner to work on the city administrator job description as a City Council subcommittee. Council will consider the committee's report on 07-12-04. Motion passed unanimously.

"This is time well spent because I have a better idea about the differences," said Council Member Woessner.

Meeting adjourned at 6:15 p.m.

Glenys Ehlert, CMC
Deputy Clerk-Treasurer