

Audit and Finance Committee Meeting Transcript – 2/19/2016

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>> Tovo: Good morning. We are still trying to round up a committee member so we can get started so I apologize for the delay. We've got two, still looking for a third.

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>> Tovo: Good morning. It is Friday the 19th of February and it is 9:16. Apologies for getting started late. This is the audit and finance committee and I'm the chair Kathie tovo and I think we have a short presentation about the municipal civil service so we'll welcome Ms. Kennedy in terms of -- our plan is to have this short briefing and break for executive session to review our discussion, to discuss who we want to interview and to compare our notes after our review of the applications. So we'll do that here soon, but we'll have the briefing first. Welcome, Ms. Kennedy. >> Thank you and good morning, Rebecca Kennedy, acting director in the human resources department. This morning we're going to go over background of the municipal civil service commission, the roles and review current members and what we've done in this recruit it process. As a little background, the municipal civil service commission was established by article 9 of the city charter and this was approved by the voters in November of 2012. As part of chapter 2-1 regarding city boards, the audit and finance committee will review commissioner applications and make recommendations to the full council for appointments. And then there's one stipulation that includes certain committee employees for appointments. The commission hears appeals and make final binding decisions in the case of discharges, denials of promotion and disciplinary action. Currently the commission is set to meet twice a month and the meetings generally last for an entire day and this commission is able to call special called meetings to accommodate any needs the commission has. Why we're here today, one of our commissioners, commissioner rubinett resigned and today we'll be looking at

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people to fill her term and so in this slide you will see our vice chair, Theresa Perez wisely, her commission expires in may as well as commissioner rubinett's and so we'll move forward with two names to fill the terms that expire in may of 2016. So the steps that we've taken to date on the selection process, human resources department and the city clerk have worked hand in hand on this to recruit candidates, to collect applications and then to screen those to bring forward to the audit and finance committee today. So the city clerk worked with the public information office to advertise the positions.

There was a 30-day solicitation from -- a little more than a 30-day solicitation from December 21st of 2015 to February 1st of this year. The requirement for applicants they are Austin residents and a registered voters and then we had some preferences that they have experience with employment, human resources and media relations. The office of the city clerk, this was a standard boards and commission application process where they accepted online and hard copies of the application forms. They insured minimum qualifications were met and identified candidates with a preferred background. So through the appointment process, once this body has identified individuals to interview, those individuals will be interviewed and then a recommendation will go forward to the city council. Appointments are subject to approval by majority vote of the council. And then additionally this body generally will recommend a chair and the chair has to be appointed every year. So as we move forward today,

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we'll want to get a name now for the unexpired term, but then for the two terms that come forward in may, we'll come back to this body around April to get these final recommendations for those two names and then we'll ask our -- what we've done in the past is have the municipal civil service commission recommend a chair to this body and we'll let you know who the commission is recommending as chair and then you can also recommend that person to council or somebody else. >> Tovo: I think I need to stop you there for just one minute. It sounded like you were talking about three names coming from this body between now and April and so I must have misheard you because we have one resignation and it sounds like that our goal today is to -- our goal after the interviews would be to recommend someone to fill that position immediately, and then we might also make some recommendations now about that term that's expired. >> Yes, ma'am. So as we -- today we'll look -- we want to fill that unexpired term now because currently the commission only has four people and we would want them to have five. The standard term comes up in may so if the person you appoint to the unexpired term you would like to carry over into the full term, that can be the same person. But what we would do is we would come back because my understanding from the clerk's office is as soon as you all make a recommendation, it will go to council and that we're not quite at that point of needing to fill the other two terms. >> Tovo: Now I get your point. Thank. >> And okay, we're done. >> Tovo: Any questions? Okay. >> Pool: I do have one question. >> Tovo: Councilmember pool. >> Pool: Would it be appropriate and possible at some point to get a report from the commission chair or vice chair about how their work is going and any

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recommendations they might make for improvements or just to give us a status report on the types of cases they've seen and any sort of training opportunities that might arise from the -- the types of cases that they've reviewed? >> We can -- >> Pool: Or is that something that's already anticipated. >> No, we can absolutely work with our chair and vice chair and see what we can pull together as a report from the commission, absolutely. >> Pool: I think that would be really, really helpful. Thank you. >> Tovo: Vice chair troxclair. >> Troxclair: I'm sorry if it's somewhere and I'm not seeing it, do we have a list -- I know you had a list of the current commissioners, but also a little about their backgrounds. >> We do that that list and we can provide it to y'all, their background. We'll try to get it pulled so we can have it when we go into executive session. >> Troxclair: Okay. Does -- I'm just curious if there are any -- like where the gaps in expertise are so we can make sure we have a well-rounded commission. >> Okay. >> Troxclair: Do you have any insight as just staff about that? >> When we -- when commissioner rubinett resigned she was a lawyer that had a lot of mediation background. Currently there are three other lawyers on the commission. They all tend to deal with employment law and then we have one individual who is not a

lawyer but has a very extensive labor background. That was her history. And I think she is one of your candidates that you will discuss today so you might have a little more in your packets regarding that individual. So we have strong labor backgrounds, which is preferable for this type of commission that they understand employment and employment law. >> Pool: And if I could, when you say labor, you mean not simply union but background and employment and labor law.

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Is that correct? >> That's my understanding. >> Pool: I'm looking at our preferences and the specific three things that are called out are experience with employment, human resources, labor relations or mediation. Labor relations and/or mediation. It stands to reason based on the preferences highlighted in the ordinance that set this both up that we would in fact be looking for people who have experience and a special insight into the law surrounding employment and labor relations and mediation areas. >> Yes, and our current chair, she held a contract with the city for many years regarding our employee grievance process and so she would hear the hearings in our previous process prior to mcs and then provide recommendations to the city manager. Our current vice chair, she worked very closely with employees on labor relations. And then also one of the other commissioners, commissioner Murphy, he also is a lawyer working with employees specifically on labor relations. So they have that experience, but not from the employees side, but not necessarily the management side. >> Tovo: Okay. Are you ready to go? The committee will now go into closed session pursuant to section 551.074 of the Texas government code to take up one item which is item 2, discussion regarding candidates for appointment to the municipal civil service commission. Is there any objection to going into closed session on the item announced? Seeing and hearing none, the committee will now go into **closed session.**

[10:31:02 AM]

>> We are out of closed session. We have no other business before us, so we're going to adjourn. I want to indicate that we had a great pool of candidates for the municipal civil service commission, and our intent is to interview a select group of those candidates next Wednesday, beginning at 9:00. Our staff at the city will be contacting those applicants who have been selected for an interview, as well as those who applied who will not be interviewed at this time. But we thank all of those individuals who applied for their interest in serving the city. If you were not selected, we hope you will consider other boards and commissions. Thank you very much. Again, we stand adjourned at 10:30 a.m.