




MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor and Council

From: Marc A. Ott, City Manager 

Date: April 25, 2016

Subject: Austin Energy General Manager recruitment update

This memorandum provides a status update on the Austin Energy General Manager recruitment process.

As you know, I have engaged Mycoff, Fry & Prouse a well-respected national executive search firm specializing in the utility industry. As we expected, with their expertise and contacts our nation-wide recruitment effort yielded a well-qualified applicant pool.

Initial screening –

The search firm has spent the last few weeks interviewing applicants in order to identify a group of potential candidates. During that process, the applicants also had the chance to explore the General Manager position more fully. They were informed about the structure and opportunities regarding municipally owned utilities, the Austin community and some of our unique challenges, and the General Manager's roles/responsibilities. As you can expect, some natural "screening" occurred during that process. Several applicants dropped out of the recruitment due to a variety of reasons. For example, some applicants chose not to continue once they understood the public sector issues (such as the upcoming public interview/engagement process), some applicants dropped out because Austin can't meet their salary demands, etc., and of course, the search firm eliminated some based on the applicant's lack of experience.

Executive Team Screening –

The search firm did an excellent job...many of the applicants on their list could succeed as the General Manager. We obviously needed to begin to narrow the search to progress toward the "best fit". Therefore, as we do for all my executive recruitments, my executive team and I reviewed the final prioritized list and undertook a series of actions intended to narrow the list to the "best of the best". We now have four applicants that are proceeding to the finalist selection process. In this case, I am choosing to bring forward the finalists for public engagement. I have attached their summary bios for your information.

Next Steps

I have established several methods to seek feedback from City Council, Austin Energy customers and stakeholders, and City employees for my hiring decision. We are setting up the following input sessions:

- Council - I will set up a block of time reserved for you and your staff to meet each applicant. We will be contacting your staff to work out the details. I hope to hear your feedback regarding the applicants after you get a chance to meet them. If we don't connect, please contact Assistant City Manager Goode to share your impressions. This time will be reserved for Council and Council staff only. The public's opportunity will be as follows.
- Public engagement – The public can engage the applicants in a town hall meeting set for May 2nd at 6:30 p.m. at Austin Energy's Town Lake Center on Barton Springs. We will send out a notification to the stakeholder list we collected during the profile development phase and a media release extending the invitation to the general public. At this event, there will be opportunities to meet each applicant, ask questions, and then evaluate their "fit" for Austin. We will provide materials for the public to document their impressions.
- City Employees – All employees can attend the town hall meeting and provide input through that process. I will also provide additional opportunities for Austin Energy employees to provide feedback.

I will take all the feedback I receive from the remaining process, seek any additional answers to questions that may result from these next evaluation steps, and then make my hiring decision as soon as possible. I hope to make an announcement by mid-May.

SUMMARY BIO'S

Deborah L. Kimberly is the Vice President of Customer Energy Solutions at Austin Energy. She has broad experience in utility-related policy. Prior to coming to Austin Energy in 2013 she held executive positions with the Salt River Project which oversees utilities for central Arizona including the Phoenix metropolitan area. She is a graduate of Stanford University and holds a Masters in International Management from the Thunderbird School of Global Management in Tempe, AZ.

Terrance P. Naulty currently serves as the General Manager and CEO of the Owensboro Municipal Utilities in Owensboro, KY. A nationally-recognized leader in the electric utility industry, he has previously worked at the executive level with Reliant Energy in Houston and Duke Energy in Cincinnati. He holds a B.S. in Environmental Engineering and graduate management coursework from University of Louisville and Indiana University.

Jacqueline A. Sargent is the General Manager and CEO of the Platte River Power Authority in Fort Collins, CO. She has nearly 30 years working in the electric utility industry. Previous executive assignments include Vice President of Power Supply and Renewables Integration for Black Hills Corporation in South Dakota and overseeing Power Supply and Market Operations for Austin Energy from 2010-2012. She holds a B.S. in Electrical Engineering and a M.S. in Technology Management, both from South Dakota School of Mines and Technology.

James N. West is the Assistant General Manager of the Snohomish County Public Utility District (PUD) in Everett, WA. He brings nearly 40 years of experience in the energy business, having worked in a broad range of positions with the Tennessee Valley Authority for almost 30 years. Prior to moving to Snohomish County PUD he worked as the Director of Product Management for the CURRENT Group in Germantown, MD. He is a graduate of the University of Tennessee with both a Bachelor of Science in Economics and a Master of Business Administration.