

City of Ann Arbor

301 E. Huron St.

Ann Arbor, MI 48104

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Meeting Minutes - Draft

Tuesday, May 14, 2019

5:00 PM

Special Meeting

Larcom City Hall, 301 E Huron St, Basement, conference room

Independent Community Police Oversight Commission

CALL TO ORDER

Meeting called to order at 5:01 p.m. At that time Interim Chair Stephens explained why this meeting was called. "I did ask that we have this meeting after the article referencing HR director Robyn Wilkerson came out on Friday." "I spoke with a couple of commissioners and now we are here."

Approved as presented

ROLL CALL

Present 8 - Jane Lumm, David Santacroce, Mashod Evans, DeAndre Caldwell, Mohammad Othman, Frances Todoro-Hargreaves, Robin Stephens, and Ali Ramlawi

Absent 5 - Sharifa Kerene Moore, Jude Walton, Zaynab Elkolaly, Lisa Jackson, and Bonnie Billups

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Approved as presented

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Leslie Stambaugh, Chairperson for the HRC commented; the HRC was not included in the interview process. Not invited to be part of the phone interviews, nor did she participate. Being a participant in the paring down of candidates from four to three people is a critical piece of the process.

NEW BUSINESS

Police Chief Process

Commissioner Jackson has a statement she want read into the record (letter attached) Chair, Robin Stephens read the letter. Chair Stephens had an opportunity to speak directly to Howard Lazarus, City Administrator and the Mayor about these issues.

Howard Lazarus, has an opening statement: HR follow the standard approach of recruitment in any significant position. There was more outreach on this position than we normally do, recognizing that the

position "we all want to get right." Mr. Lazarus discussed the additional concerns once the text became public. Mr. Lazarus put a Q & A out after he heard the concerns. Mr. Fournier and Ms. Bennet will ensure confidence going forward in the final stages. Mr. Lazarus asked commissioners to refer to the letter from SGR and went on to say "we followed the highest standard of integrity no compromising of it." Ms. Wilkerson was involved early on putting together an RFP, she didn't do that by herself there were reviews by the City Attorney office and Howard Lazarus reviewed it as well. Ms. Wilkerson and Ms. Bennett had phone interviews with three identified companies that were selected; Strategic Government Resources (SGR) was identified as the top tender, well known and well respected in municipal executive recruiting. The contract didn't exceed \$25,000.00 so didn't require council approval. Douglas Thomas, Senior Vice President was lead on the AAPD chief search. Mr. Douglas was a city manager for the state of Michigan, his letter states the selections has been fair and impartial, and resulted in three exceptional talented individuals to choose from for our next police chief.

Chair Stephens - How did we go from four to three candidates?

Mr. Lazarus explained when conducting the phone interview one of the candidates answers were not responsive to the questions. Mr. Lazarus made the decision not to bring him in because he didn't think he would be successful in the environment that exist here for the next police chief.

Chair Stephens - When there were four candidates, then there was the phone screening that brought it down to three. Ms. Bennett is part of that according to the Q & A. Did you work at that time directly for Ms. Wilkerson?

Ms. Bennett - Ms. Wilkerson was gone.

Chair Stephens - But prior to that was she your boss? Were you given any instructions by anyone out of HR who may or may not have reported to Ms. Wilkerson in terms of how the telephone screening process was to proceed?

Ms. Bennett explained she followed the interview process we use for all our positions, worked with John Fournier and Margaret Radabaugh to review interview questions, compiled a short list of questions and provided those to the phone interview panel members.

Council member Lumm commented she received the questions just prior to the phone interviews and she was invited to the phone screening by Ms. Wilkerson via email on April 4, 2019.

Mr. Lazarus discussed that Margaret Radabaugh is the city attorney who's responsible for personnel matters. It was his decision to reach out to the four council members who are the liaisons. Council member

Ramlawi stated; we were all invited to the phone interviews: Council member; Grand, Ackerman, Lumm and myself.

Commissioner Santacroce asked; Is a polling of the questions, is this standard procedure for all city jobs of this caliber?

Ms. Bennett - Yes, we have a designated set of questions we ask during the phone interview and every candidate is asked the same questions.

Commissioner Othman discussed generating trust between the community and the city government, and the importance of the police department. He suggested hearing first-hand about any situations. The biggest concerns transparency and trust.

Mr. Lazarus discussed how we always try to be open and transparent some times restrictions are put on things based on personnel actions involved as well as our ability to investigate performance matters, while respecting people rights and privacy.

Chair Stephens discussed being a part of the task force, hearing from the community members who really worked hard to make sure this commission could exist, one of the biggest concerns: transparency and communication. For a person of color it is an issue of trust. To pass on to the people who were behind the initiative that the City say yes, it's fine is not acceptable.

Commissioner Santacroce asked - Ms. Wilkerson only participated in finding the people to do the job search and no further participation, other than managerial though the selection process and that was the end of it? If we take it at face value, what other issues remain?

Council member Lumm discussed we have a lot of concerns if they are satisfied the candidates are coming into town this week.

Commissioner Caldwell stated; If Ms. Wilkerson was involved in the process, then we need a time-out and possibly a do-over, that would be the end of it.

Commissioner Hargreaves asked; "Did she have any contact with SGR while they were going through their vetting system or giving them any kind of instructions or anything?"

Ms. Bennett replied; I was the point of contact with SGR they worked with Robyn Wilkerson in the beginning of the process, but when they posted the position and started sending weekly updates to let us know how we were doing, everything was directed towards me and I shared with Robyn Wilkerson and Howard Lazarus. I shared the numbers with her on a weekly basis.

Commissioner Evan discussed it is an issue where a culture do exist when this is permissible even not uncovered or discovered. To speak to the many citizen who worked on the task force it's the culture of trust and mistrust, an issue of bias, privilege, race, for what many people are

frustrated.

Chair Stephens read a statement from Commissioner Kerene Moore (who couldn't be here tonight) The person who received the text messages, clearly Ms. Wilkerson was quite comfortable sending them to her, and that person received them and that person is still employed. What does that say and how does that speak to the culture to what is acceptable behind the scene in the City of Ann Arbor government. Council Ramwali commented "This is a good exercise, and stating things on the record."

Mr. Lazarus made two points: He became aware of the text messages on April 5th spoke with Ms. Wilkerson on the morning of April 6th and informed her she was going to be placed on administrative leave, we launched a review of the circumstances, and she choose to resign the following week.

Chair Stephens discuss how ICPOC commission was invited at the end of the process and moving forward being open, transparent and trustful. Council member Lumm discussed she's participated in numerous police chief searches each process different, different techniques, council panel, police officer panel, executive leadership administrative panel. We didnt participate until it was a final pool, the process was done administratively. Commissioner Caldwell discussed what is the City objection to starting the process over, don't want it to become an issue with the department and the community; is that a fair situation to put the new police chief in, to start the process over to ensure objectivity?

City Attorney Stephen Postema addressed Commissioner Caldwell concerns; The commission has to take into consideration, no public participaton until they are finalist, applicant won't consent to a broader participation because their jobs might be in jeopardy.

Mr. Lazarus addressed commissioner Caldwell concerns he discussed the process was fair, involved community surveys, outreach in the beginning. The process was free of organizational bias Ms Bennett, Mr. Fournier and I stated that Robyn Wilkerson did not advertently influence the process at all.

At the end no motion was on the floor. Robyn Wilkerson was not directly involved in the first set of candidates, except for administrative scheduling.

[19-1109](#) ICPOC Special Meeting

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Stephens that the meeting be Adjourn. On a

voice vote, the Chair declared the motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 6:28 p.m.

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