

**CITY OF POLSON
COMMISSION SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES**

Commission Chambers

June 29, 2020

6:30 p.m.

ATTENDANCE: Mayor Briney, Commissioners, Howlett, Isbell, Martin, Marchello, Moll, Pardini, and City Clerk Cora Pritt

OTHERS PRESENT (who voluntarily signed in via Zoom): Larry Ashcraft, Lita Fonda, Dave Ritterhouse, and Gayle Siemers

CALL TO ORDER: (00:01) Mayor Briney called the meeting to order. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Roll call was taken.

APPROVAL OF PROPOSED AGENDA (00:43) –Commissioner Howlett motion to approve the proposed agenda. Commissioner Moll second. Commission discussion: none Public comment none.
VOTE: Unanimous Motion carried

PUBLIC COMMENT ON SIGNIFICANT MATTERS TO THE PUBLIC NOT ON THE AGENDA (01:12) – none

Prior to moving on to the New Business Mayor Briney took a few moments to thank the Search Committee for all of their hard work.

EVALUATE THE CITY MANAGER FINALIST CANDIDATES AND SELECT CANDIDATE(S) TO INVITE FOR FINAL ROUND OF INTERVIEW(S) (01:28)-Mayor Briney presented this agenda item. Mayor Briney explained the process for evaluating; there will be comment time for the Commission then the public. After all comments are completed then a motion may be given. Each candidate will be evaluated one at a time.

Brian Bender:

Commissioner Howlett commented she was very impressed with Mr. Bender. He presented himself well, was knowledgeable, seems to fit in all the brackets, is involved in the community, and gave clear staff direction.

Commissioner Martin commented that he concurred with Commissioner Howlett’s comments. Mr. Bender was very articulate, organized, connected with the State entities, has a clear record, has had no disciplinary actions taken against him, comfortable with small communities, would be able to hit the ground running, and his salary was okay.

Commissioner Isbell commented that Mr. Bender was the most personable, the strongest, and best suited, has experience in Montana.

Commissioner Moll commented that he agreed. Mr. Bender seemed to be a strong candidate, seems to like to engage in the community.

Mayor Briney commented that he liked the fact that Mr. Bender is familiar with Montana code, gave good solid answers, and is a good candidate.

Darcy Long:

Commissioner Martin commented that Mr. Long is the first candidate he would eliminate. Mr. Long had been removed from the job two different times. He would be familiar with a small staff. The removals were unfortunate but Commissioner Martin would eliminate Mr. Long first.

Commissioner Moll commented that he was not interested in having a second conversation with Mr. Long. Some of Mr. Long's comments raised red flags.

Commissioner Howlett commented that she like Mr. Long. He had strong equalities, was personable, has the education, and he is a leader. Commissioner Howlett felt his background was suited.
Public comment: none

Ed Meece:

Commissioner Howlett commented that Mr. Meece would not be a good fit. He is inexperienced, didn't present himself well. Answers were not good. He would not be a good match.

Commissioner Isbell seconded Commissioner Howlett's comments.

Commissioner Moll commented that Mr. Meece has 20 years of experience as a City Manager, Mr. Meece is a Montana guy and knows the people.

Commissioner Martin commented that Mr. Meece has a long background in city government. It does appear that Mr. Meece rides roughshod on getting things done.

Commissioner Marchello commented that he agreed with Commissioner Martin's comments. Mr. Meece was articulate, went straight through the questions and would like to see him come to Polson for the second round of interviews.

Mayor Briney commented that Mr. Meece makes him nervous. Mayor Briney received comments from some of the people who knew Mr. Meece while he worked in Livingston. The community had negative comments. Commissioner Pardini asked if the comments were from people who knew Mr. Meece. Mayor Briney answered yes. One of the comments was from a Commissioner.

Commissioner Martin commented that there had been an editorial in the Helena newspaper that was not very favorable to Mr. Meece. It appeared he was rough to work with.

Commissioner Pardini commented that Mr. Meece was the only candidate that had experience working with Tribal Government. Commissioner Martin commented that it was a friendly work situation.

Commissioner Isbell commented that it wasn't until he was asked about the Tribal work that he answered that he did have experience working with the Crow nation.

Public comment: none

Troy Smith:

Commissioner Howlett commented that she like Mr. Smith. The Search Committee had done their homework. All of the candidates possess the education needed. Mr. Smith has been to Polson. He is a very strong candidate.

Commissioner Martin commented that Mr. Smith is a strong candidate but Commissioner Martin has several reservations about him. Most of Mr. Smith's career has been in law enforcement. He has only been a City Manager for three years. Mr. Smith was about to receive a vote of no-confidence from the police department when he was shuffled around and put in as City Manager. That didn't bother Commissioner Martin but only three years of experience was the first reservation. Second reservation was the fact that Mr. Smith's experience has been with large organizations. Mr. Smith gave the smoothest interview, but the salary may be a tough negotiation. Commissioner Pardini asked where Commissioner Martin received his information and why wasn't it shared by Mr. Mercer. Commissioner Martin answered the *Denver Post*.

Commissioner Isbell commented that a simple internet search would give you answers about the candidates. Several of the nine candidates had issues but Mr. Mercer did not include that information.

Commissioner Howlett commented that there is no class entitled How to Become a City Manager. Most candidates have either a financial, planning, or law enforcement background. Mr. Smith had no major mistakes and he seemed eager to learn.

Commissioner Pardini commented that the cost of living in Polson may be less than the cost of living in Colorado. Commissioner Pardini stated that she hadn't expected to appreciate him as much as she did. Commissioner Pardini's concern is that Mr. Mercer was paid a lot of money and none of this issue was disclosed. The gentleman has higher pressure experience. He may help us. He would be Commissioner Pardini's first choice.

Commissioner Moll commented that he had Mr. Smith on his list. Commissioner Moll stated he wondered how Mr. Smith would fit in.

Public comment: none

Commissioner Martin motion to invite Brian Bender for a meet and greet and a final round of interviews. Commissioner Moll second. Commission discussion: none Public comment: none
VOTE: Unanimous Motion carried

Commissioner Howlett motion to invite Ed Meece for a meet and greet and a final round of interviews. Commissioner Moll second. Commission discussion: none Public comment: none
VOTE: Unanimous Motion carried

Prior to adjourning Mayor Briney asked the Commission if Action Minutes are agreeable. The Commission stated yes Action Minutes are agreeable.

Adjourn (35:41) - Commissioner Howlett motion to adjourn. Commissioner Martin second.
VOTE: Unanimous Motion carried.

ADJOURN: 7:06p.m.

Mayor Paul Briney

ATTEST: _____

Cora E. Pritt, City Clerk