

**AT A WORKSHOP OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY
COMMISSIONERS HELD IN AND FOR GADSDEN
COUNTY, FLORIDA ON DECEMBER 15, 2015 AT 4:30
P.M., THE FOLLOWING PROCEEDINGS WERE HAD, VIZ:**

Present: Brenda A. Holt, Chair, District 4
Eric Hinson, Vice Chair, District 1
Dr. Anthony "Dr. V" Viegbesie, District 2
Gene Morgan, District 3
Sherrie Taylor, District 5-absent
Nicholas Thomas, Clerk of Court
Robert Presnell, County Administrator
David Weiss, County Attorney
Marcella Blocker, Deputy Clerk

INVOCATION, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Holt called the workshop to order at 4:33, asked everyone to stand for a moment of silence and then led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the U.S. Flag. A silent roll call was conducted by Marcella Blocker, Deputy Clerk.

GENERAL BUSINESS

1. Planning and Preparing for a County Administrator Transition

(Vincent S. Long, Leon County Administrator)

Mr. Presnell said they had reached out to Florida Association of Counties to get some expertise in Succession Planning for the County Administrator and their recommendation was Vincent Long, the Leon County Administrator and President of Florida Association of County Managers. Mr. Long appeared before the Board.

Mr. Long said this was an important decision and process they were about to embark on and congratulated them on starting the process so early.

He said that with the Florida Association of County Managers group, their mission was to promote excellence in County Government and at the request of counties over the past few years, they had been asked to provide assistance to Commissions in their selection process.

He mentioned that the Florida Association of County Managers Association was not the only resource available to them.

He said with recent recruitments they had assisted with, some things he suggested to keep in mind:

1. **It was competitive out there.** In saying that, he said the profession was evolving very quickly, there were 10,000 baby boomers daily going into retirement and public sector was on the leading edge of that and there was not enough young talent in the pipe line to replace City Managers and County Administrators at the rate at which they were retiring. He said succession was something to consider. It was a distinct luxury some Commissions didn't have because during tough economic times, some counties did not back-fill the

positions when people retired from the Deputy or assistants position. He also mentioned that non-traditional candidates should be considered.

2. **Process matters.** He pointed out the process they engaged in would help determine the quality of the candidates.
3. **Don't go it alone.** He said they may want to consider hiring a headhunter and was a decision that all Commissions had to make. He said they could design and put together a very elaborate process and test candidates.

He also mentioned that before they could agree on one thing, they had to agree on three: Position, Person, Process.

Position-He said with the position, it was critically important and they as a Board should come to some agreement early in their process about the role and responsibilities that the County Manager should have, not what they are. He added that would have a greater impact than the size of the County or the salary and develop a collective understanding of the position. He suggested before starting the process, the Board come to some type of agreement with developing the job description; setting timeline; deciding who conducts search and planning tasks after the application window closes

Process-He said they would need to give themselves time to make decisions along the way and some elements of the process; they would want to consider is the development of the job description and perhaps a workshop early on. He said he also understood there was an election coming up next November and said it would be a little of an balancing act and suggested they not get too far ahead before the new Board, if there were one, was seated. He explained some of the services that FACM could provide if the Board chose to go that route.

Person-Important attributes to keep in consideration was the understanding of the job and said there was no substitute for practical skills and experience that match the job description. He hit on Florida county government experience and said it was important and understanding the nuances and relationships on a technical side with budgeting and administration, but also working with judicial officers and constitutional officers. He also talked about "cultural fit" and said it was really important to get someone that aligns with it and hiring someone that capability of leading the cultural change in the organization if need be.

2. Questions and Comments

Chair Holt asked the commissioners if there were any questions or comments.

Commissioner Viegbesie said Mr. Long covered a lot of the items he had and the Board needed to come to an understanding of where they wanted to take the County and then could begin succession planning. He stressed that they needed to involve the current Administrator in the process to make the transition as smooth as possible.

Commissioner Morgan thanked Mr. Long and his team for coming over and talking with the Commissioners regarding this matter. He said this would be one of the most important decisions they would be making for the County and they needed to be honest among themselves with their expectations of the type of person they were looking for.

Chair Holt asked Mr. Long if he felt it better to make the decision before or after the election.

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Commissioner Morgan stepped out at this juncture of the meeting.

Mr. Long said the process could be put in place and stop short in November, have the “bones” in place and could allow new commissioners, if any, to put their input in.

Commissioner Morgan returned at this juncture of the meeting.

Chair Holt thanked everyone for coming.

MOTION TO ADJOURN

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, CHAIR HOLT DECLARED THE WORKSHOP ADJOURNED AT 5:20 P.M.

GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA

BRENDA A. HOLT, Chair
Board of County Commissioners

ATTEST:

NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk