

**DeFuniak Springs City Council**  
**Special Meeting Minutes**  
**Council Chambers**  
**April 15, 2021**

The following Council members were present: Mayor Bob Campbell, Mayor Pro-Tem Robert McKnight (Seat 2); Councilmember Todd Bierbaum (Seat 1); Councilmember Kevin Crystal (Seat 3); Councilmember Henry D. Ennis (Seat 4), and Councilmember Wayne Graham (Seat 5). Staff present: City Attorney Clay Adkinson, City Clerk Maryanne Schrader. Finance Director Debra Gibson was excused.

Mayor Bob Campbell called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. stating the purpose of the meeting is to discuss the hiring of a City Manager.

City Attorney Clay Adkinson stated the Council had met and the consensus was to select the top candidate and extend the offer to Robert Thompson.

**Motion** by Councilmember T. Bierbaum and seconded by Councilmember K. Crystal to select the top candidate, Robert Thompson, and make an offer of employment.

**Vote:** Councilmember Robert McKnight, aye; Councilmember Todd Bierbaum, aye; Councilmember Kevin Crystal, aye; Councilmember Henry D. Ennis, aye; and Councilmember Wayne Graham, aye. All Ayes. Motion passed.

City Attorney Clay Adkinson advised the offer was contingent on the city completing a background check and a negative pre-drug screening process. He went over the core elements of the offer stating it is not a binding contract and that Council was not attempting to negotiate a contract at this time, so we do not need to lay out specifics.

City Attorney Clay Adkinson reiterated the formal offer starts the process and then we will come back with a contract per the Charter requirements.

Discussion ensued on the terms of the draft offer. The Council discussed whether to start with an employment contract one year or for a longer term.

A member of the public, Ms. Joan Sangl, said one year is very contentious adding an initial evaluation should occur after six months.

City Attorney Clay Adkinson advised the Charter covers the criteria mentioning a five Council vote is required to hire and four affirmative votes to fire.

Councilmember K. Crystal said he does not want to get into a situation where we would have to buy the city manager out. City Attorney Clay Adkinson stated per Florida Statute, we are permitted to offer up to twenty weeks in the severance package.

Discussion ensued on the amount of the relocation expense, reimbursement, and whether to require receipts.

The next discussion was what to offer for the base salary, and whether the candidate realized he would not have a deputy city manager.

Councilmember R. McKnight requested the offer state “CDT” instead of “CST”.

Councilmember K. Crystal stated he preferred to stick with the one year, mentioning the responsibilities will be less considering the size of the city.

**Motion** by Councilmember R. McKnight and seconded by Councilmember T. Bierbaum to offer a one-year employment contract, with a base salary of \$109,000, an increase to \$120,000 after six months, a relocation expense of \$7,000, and the time changed to CDT.

City Attorney Clay Adkinson mentioned he would remove the claw back in the draft and add the negative pre-employment drug screen provision.

**Motion** amended by Councilmember R. McKnight and seconded by Councilmember T. Bierbaum to include the negative pre-employment drug screen provision.

Public Comments – Dr. M. Henderson asked what would entice him to move for one year, and Mayor Campbell said the salary had not been posted prior to receiving his application. Councilmember K. Crystal stated the candidate asked for \$95,000 on his application.

City Attorney Clay Adkinson read the last paragraph of the draft for clarification and highly advised not giving reasons for the one-year contract offer. He mentioned Mayor Campbell could call him to tell the candidate that is what the Council has approved him to offer.

Councilmember R. McKnight called the question.

Councilmember W. Graham added we should offer at least eighteen months. Mayor Campbell said this person is experienced and we will counter, if the one year offers bothers him.

Council-elect T. Vallee said a one-year contract also gives him an opportunity to bump up the pay in the contract negotiations.

Resident Diane Pickett asked about the decreasing salaries of the candidate in the last five years. Councilmember R. McKnight replied that the candidate left the DC area, so it is a different economic environment regarding the cost of living.

**Vote:** Councilmember Robert McKnight, aye; Councilmember Todd Bierbaum, aye; Councilmember Kevin Crystal, aye; Councilmember Henry D. Ennis, aye; and Councilmember Wayne Graham, aye. All Ayes. Motion passed.


City Attorney Clay Adkinson will edit the draft and return it with the following bullet points:

- One Year Employment Contract. Following the completion of one year of satisfactory employment, the City Council will consider entry into a mutually agreeable contract for a longer term.


- Base Annual Salary of \$109,000.00, with an increase to a Base Annual Salary of \$120,000.00 following the first six (6) months of employment and receipt of satisfactory employment evaluations from the City Council.
- Relocation expenses in the amount of \$7,000.00.
- Benefits commonly conferred to all City employees will be provided, including, but not limited to, retirement through the Florida Retirement System; insurance; and paid-time-off (“PTO”).
- This offer and the terms herein are contingent on the City completing all necessary background and reference checks with satisfactory results, a negative pre-employment drug screen, and the subsequent approval of a full contract that is mutually agreeable.

Mayor Campbell adjourned the meeting at 5:43 p.m.

Approved:

  
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Mayor Robert “Bob” Campbell

Attest:

  
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Minutes submitted by Maryanne Schrader, City Clerk  
*Proper notice having been duly given*

