

The Smithfield Town Council held a Special Meeting on Monday, September 28, 2015, at 7:00 pm. in the Council Chambers of the Smithfield Town Hall. Mayor John H. Lampe II presided.

Councilmen Present:

M. Andy Moore, Mayor Pro-Tem  
Marlon Lee, District 1  
Perry Harris, District 2  
Travis Scott, District 3  
Emery D. Ashley, At-Large  
Charles A. Williams, At-Large

Councilmen Absent

Roger A. Wood, District 4

Administrative Staff Present

Jim Freeman, Interim Town Manager  
Shannan Williams, Town Clerk

## **Public Forum: Town Manager's Selection Process**

Interim Town Manager Jim Freeman addressed the Council and the public on the Town Manager's search process and explained it in entirety. Mr. Freeman explained that this meeting was being held to provide the public the opportunity to discuss with the Council the desired traits and competency skills of the next manager. Prior to the meeting, staff compiled a survey that was distributed to the Council and Department Heads. Those results were shared with the public in the form of a PowerPoint presentation. The presentation is on file in the office of the Town Clerk.

- Billie Stevens questioned who would be reviewing the applications. Mr. Freeman responded that the Council would develop criteria of the desired traits, characteristics, experience, etc... and staff would screen the applicants based on that criteria; unless the Council chose to review every application received. Mrs. Stevens stated that she would like to see the community more involved during the interview or application review process.

Councilman Ashley stated that the Council was charged with hiring a manager four years ago and he recalled reviewing many applications. Mr. Ashley stated that he was not opposed to the community being involved in any part of the process where they could be.

- Tony Nixon questioned who would vet the applications. Mr. Freeman stated that has not been determined at this time, but Council could charge the Town attorney, private investigators or even staff with that task.
- Daniel Sanders representing the Johnston County NAACP stated that employees were scared to speak with the manager. It was his opinion that the Town needed someone who was not afraid to speak with the people and meet with the people. He encouraged the Council to look for someone that had an open door policy.
- Billie Stevens representing the Downtown Smithfield Development Corporation and the Appearance Commission stated that the manager should be more involved in the board meetings. She stated that the manager should foster a working relationship with the local boards so that everyone could work together.
- Marcia George stated that she would like a manager that is more involved with the whole community. She further stated that it was important to get out of the office and get out on the street and see what is actually happening in the neighborhoods. Ms. George explained that there was a lot of work that needed to be done in the African American communities in Town and the manager should be visible in the neighborhoods.

- Tony Nixon suggested that the manager have a roundtable discussion with all the employees once a year to discuss issues related to the Town. He further suggested that the Manager issue “A State of the Town” address and become more involved in the employees’ day to day operations.
- Rick Childrey Executive Director of the Greater Smithfield Selma Chamber of Commerce stated that it was important that the manger be involved in the community and meet with the citizens and the business owners.
- Tom Stevens stated that he has seen a metamorphosis in the Town. He felt that open discussion and open communication was key to moving Smithfield in the right direction.
- Kathleen Lanc stated that she was new to the Town, but that it was an amazing little Town. She felt that the Town needed a manager with vision. She stated that the Town has a lot of opportunity as long as the right person is in place to lead the Town.
- Michelle Watson stated that Smithfield is a great Town that seemed to be caught in a time warp. She would like to see a manager that can strike a balance between the past, present and future. Someone who will consider and work for every community. Someone that will have a vision to look into the future needs of the citizens for things like transportation to Raleigh and surrounding areas. She would like Smithfield to be a place people come to visit and then want to stay.
- Andy Byrd stated that he did not feel education was as important as experience. He felt that the Town needed someone local who was not going to use Smithfield as a stepping stone. He would like the next manager to be conservative, efficient, mature and experienced. He cautioned the Council about entering into lengthy contracts with the next manager.
- Pat Jackson stated that the Town needed a manager like Chief of Police Michael Scott. She stated that he was professional and open-minded. She stated that one could sit down and have a conversation with him because he listened and spoke with extreme knowledge. She further stated that if you spoke with Chief Scott, he would always take the time to personally follow-up and address any concerns.
- Sonny Howard stated that the Town needed someone with a vision beyond today. Someone that could think outside the box to grow Smithfield.
- Tim Johnson stated that the Council, Manager, Department Heads and Employees all needed to be on the same team with the same set of goals working together.

Mayor Pro-Tem Moore expressed his appreciation to those in attendance and expressed his disappointment for the Chamber not being completely full. He stated that the Council will continue to work hard for the citizens of the Town and will diligently search for a new manage that will be in the best interest of the Town.

Councilman Ashley stated that the Council does take this decision very seriously. The key is putting everything together and it takes a lot of work. Mr. Ashley encouraged the citizens to continue to express their views and opinions with the Council and to become involved.

Councilman Lee stated that each point was well taken and that we should all be working as a team. Smithfield is one Smithfield and not sections. He stated that at times, we can agree to disagree, but we always need to be working to make one great Smithfield.

Councilman Harris stated that hiring a Town Manager is rather involved and background investigations don’t necessarily get all of the details. He stated that it is the Council’s job to make sure that they are getting the whole picture when hiring a manager. Mr. Harris stated that Mr. Johnson was correct in saying that everyone needs to work together as a team.

Councilman Scott stated that he felt that this was a very productive meeting and encouraged the citizens to call the Council to discuss anything that they feel is important.

## **Adjourn**

There being no further business, Councilman Harris made a motion, seconded by Councilman Ashley, to adjourn. Unanimously approved.

The meeting adjourned at 7:56 pm.

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John H. Lampe II, Mayor

ATTEST:

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Shannan L. Williams, Town Clerk