

**Genoa Town Advisory Board
Special Meeting Minutes of February 19, 2008**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Chairperson Kitty DeSocio, Member Bill Donohoe, Member Brian Williams, Member Dave Whitgob and Clerk Greg Pace.

Also present was Darcy Worms from Douglas County Human Resources Department.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson DeSocio called the meeting to order at 7:02 P.M. at the meeting room at 2289 Main St., Genoa, NV.

PLEDGE TO ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Clerk, Greg Pace.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Action Item

Member Donohoe moved to approve the agenda. Motion seconded by Member Whitgob. Motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Member Donohoe thanked the Board members for taking time out of their schedule to attend this special meeting.

ADMINISTRATIVE AGENDA

1. **Discussion and possible action** regarding the selection of a candidate for the position of Genoa Town Manager. The candidates are: Melinda Clevenger-Klick, Alex Kloske, Sheryl Gonzales, Kimberly Petersen, and Michael Wolterbeek.

Chairperson DeSocio reviewed the previous special meeting (February 2, 2008) stating the Board had a lengthy discussion, the objective scoring had been tallied of the six individuals – there are five now – and a decision was made that it would be best for all five Board members to make this decision together.

Member Donohoe, who was not present at the February 2nd special meeting, listened to the tapes and CD of that meeting. He commented after listening to the recordings, we had a lot of good candidates. Member Donohoe said after listening to the Board discussion that took place after the interviews, he would agree that the Board did come up with the top three candidates. He said he did not agree with terminology such as “rolling the dice” and “gambling” pertaining to how we are going to vote. He does not think that is what we do here. He went on to say when you have qualified applicants as we have here, it’s tough to figure out who will be the best fit. Just having someone sit in the manager’s chair for a month or several months, doesn’t necessarily make them the best candidate. We need to think further than what is just comfortable. It has to be what is the best fit for the town and the other people who deal with the manager. He also said we have to think of who is eventually the most qualified. There has

not been a Town Manager – there have been three – who knew what Candy Dance was about when they were hired. Mr. Donohoe said one of the things Sheryl Gonzales was asked to do for the Town when she was hired as Events Coordinator, was to prepare a punch-list of how Candy Dance is put together and as of this date he doesn't believe we have seen it. If we had something like that in our hand, we would not be as apprehensive about hiring someone that has not done the job. Mr. Donohoe said we have other things in place that let us know when we need to do our filings and when meetings are with the County. He went on to say that he is not sure all the little things are actually on paper somewhere. So that was an important item to have in place.

Mr. Donohoe asked the other Board members what they felt now that they have had time to digest all of the information from that last meeting. After listening to the recording of the last meeting, he feels there was not consensus between the four Board members – he said he may be wrong, but that is the feeling he got.

Member Whitgob stated he concurs with Member Donohoe that listening to a meeting and actually participating in the meeting create a different dynamic. He feels the right questions were asked of the candidates and if there were a side-bar to any of the questions, the Board was careful to ask each candidate that same question to keep a level playing field. When it came time at the end to arrive at a decision and we were going in one direction, out of a concern to make sure that we made an informed Board decision, we decided to make sure all five members were involved. Member Whitgob went on to say that irrespective of the fact that we have not had a great experience with managers in the past, he would hope that we could fail well. This would be that whomever the Board chooses, we agree it is our job to make that person successful and that the Town's best interests are taken to heart. He would hope that the Town would embrace the same concept. He feels that any of these candidates could succeed.

Member Williams said he feels Candy Dance is the big thing. He would like to see a manager who is as the least familiar with it. He has some difficulty with two of the candidates who have not even been to Candy Dance. He feels there were pretty good candidates in the first round where applicants had been to Candy Dance and there was time, if they had been hired, to train them. He is now concerned whoever is hired, if they have never been to Candy Dance, where they are going to get the training. Member Williams said maybe there was a time that Candy Dance was handled by volunteers, but it has become such a big event and there are many other considerations such as the other festival permits. He feels yes, it would be rolling the dice, when you hire someone who has not even been to Candy Dance.

Member Donohoe stated that when the (Town's) people voted for the Board, they rolled the dice. He does not feel the terminology fits and is demeaning to the process. Member Williams said he would withdraw the comment.

Member Williams said the fact remains that we know a lot about one of the candidates and very little about the others. Any candidate is going to make mistakes as Town Manager. We are just aware of the mistakes of one of them, we do not know anything about the others.

Chairperson DeSocio said she agrees with some of what Member Williams said. She feels that Candy Dance is 50% of his person's responsibilities. She also feels that facilities maintenance, operation and administrative tasks are just as important as Candy Dance. There is longevity that we have to look at. What is going on right now with Candy Dance is very unsettled. Chairperson DeSocio said we need to diversify our revenue stream and think outside the box. She said the world is an ever-changing place and we need a balanced person in this job.

Clerk Pace agrees with Member Donohoe about wanting what is best for the Town. He said he deals with the public everyday in his job, and he receives comments – pro and con – about our process, who we pick and the candidates. That weighs heavily upon what he looks at. Knowing that we hired a couple of people who knew nothing about Candy Dance and we got through it, and thinking about comments from Lisa Granahan who said that every year we think it is going to fail, we worry about it, and its comes through. Clerk Pace went on to say we do need to examine other possible revenue streams, widening our boundaries and expanding out tax base. We need to be responsive to what has been expressed by our constituents.

Member Donohoe asked to see the scores given to the applicants after their interviews. He asked how much weight we are putting on the scores. Clerk Pace said he did not think it had been binding in the past. Member Donohoe asked the Board how much weight they put on the scores at the interview. Member Whitgob said he felt it helped shaped their discussion and they were happy with the top three out of the six very qualified people.

Chairperson DeSocio asked the Board if they would like to discuss the applicants or open the meeting to public comment. Member Donohoe suggested opening the meeting to public comment.

Resident Kathy Diehl asked who the three top applicants are. Chairperson DeSocio gave the names: Kimberly Peterson, Sheryl Gonzales, and Alex Kloske.

A resident (name unknown and not given) asked if it was possible to have a resume of the applicants. Chairperson DeSocio said that information was passed out during the interview process and the material is not available at this meeting.

Resident Les Kynett asked if a slight over-view, including where they live and their background, of the top three applicants could be given. Chairperson said the opportunity to get this information was given at the previous interview meeting which was open to the public.

Kurt Hildebrand, editor of the Record-Courier, stated if the material was public when that meeting was held, it is still public material and since this is the topic of discussion, must be made available to the public under the Nevada Open Meeting Law. Member Donohoe handed a copy of the material to the resident (name unknown and not given).

Member Whitgob read the following information: Kimberly Peterson lives in Minden, Sheryl Gonzales lives in Gardnerville, and Alexander Kloske lives in Reno. He said they all went

through a process where they were interviewed and a background check was done. Each of them were asked a series of questions, they were each given the same opportunity, and they all did very well.

Resident Les Kynett asked if there could be a brief review of their immediate background. Member Whitgob read the following: Kimberly Peterson was with the San Jose Evergreen Community College District as an Executive Director, prior to that Foothill College in the Bay area. Sheryl Gonzales, Events Coordinator for Douglas County, prior to that with the City of La Mirada as an Administrative Assistant. Alexander Kloske the most recent was Bear Nevada Productions as Manager of Operations, and prior to that JS Sartin and Associates where he was Director of Special Operations and Managing Consultant.

Resident Lisa Bommarito, speaking on behalf of Ron Bommarito and herself, said two weeks ago she observed the candidate interviews for the Town Manager position. She said there was one outstanding individual who received the highest score without prejudice and without advantage. Her name is Kimberly Peterson. She observed her to be gracious, respectful and unflappable. Ms. Bommarito said she had absolutely no doubt in regard to her competence and qualifications. She believes there were others there that day who recognized her qualities as well. The personal and professional strengths that Ms. Peterson would bring to the table should be selected to fill the position. Ms. Bommarito said she does not believe there are any valid arguments against hiring Ms. Peterson. She said it saddens her heart to feel it is so necessary to make a public statement in this respect. To Mrs. Gonzales, we wish her all the best, but we do not believe that she is the most qualified and competent person for this particular position. She said she is sorry, Sheryl Gonzales has stimulated further division and controversy in an already negatively primed environment. This we do not want. We want a person who treats all town residents, all business owners, with respect. A person who will facilitate camaraderie and unity, not bias and controversy. We want a person with incorruptible integrity. That person responded to the advertisement in good faith, completed the process, was interviewed and received the highest score. Ms. Bommarito said her family has volunteered for various events and work groups for the past three town managers. We have no issues with any of them. We are sorry, we cannot support a person, or people, who stand on division or, even worse, use it as a tool. For the record, our support is for Kimberly Peterson, our support is for the Board members who can see clearly into the future and do the right thing.

Resident Les Kynett said he understands the Board has received several letters in support of candidates. He asked the Board to make those letters aware to the audience, both pro and con. Member Donohoe asked if it is thought the amount of letters that are received from people in town to the town, really gives us an idea of what is going on in the town. Resident Kynett replied that he does not necessarily think it is the amount but the content of the letter. Mr. Kynett said he feels it is important for the Board to acknowledge those letters whether they are good ones or bad ones.

Chairperson DeSocio said she is not going to read them, there are nine letters in support of Sheryl Gonzales. A discussion was held regarding when the letters were received

Member Williams discussed how at the previous meeting it was decided to wait to vote until the full Board was present. In regards to the letters, he said he wanted to find out before tonight's meeting what were the community objections and community support. There were two people who spoke against Ms. Gonzales via email and there are nine letters that support her.

Chairperson DeSocio said this is bias as not one of the individuals (who submitted a letter), sat through the interviews. They do not know the qualifications of the other individuals and were not engaging in the process. She is not saying it takes away from the validity of the letters, just making a point

Member Whitgob felt another word other than bias should be considered. These letters are talking about the person and whether or not they see positive traits in this individual in contrast to some of the comments that have been made about this individual. We are looking for some sort of balance. Member Whitgob said irregardless of who is in the position, they will have their champion and their critics, it comes with the job. He discussed what he feels the qualities are the person should possess. He said the Board has to make the right decision and then live by it.

Member Donohoe said it is nice that we have received letters regarding a person that has worked here. At same time, it would be hard to receive letters from the townspeople about other candidates when they have no idea who they are. He said that he has received calls and had chats with people and has had positive and negative comments about Sheryl Gonzales. The other candidates are an unknown commodity. It doesn't mean they are not qualified.

Resident Bill Brooks said he obtained a copy of the resumes and took time to review them. This opportunity was available to all of the citizens. This will be the 5 ½ candidate in just over three years. Mr. Brooks said you will never have a consensus in this town on anything. You need to look at who has the best qualifications for continuity. There has to be a good, solid revenue base from another source, or we need to make sure Candy Dance is successful and the net was down. Mr. Brooks said the Board has to live with their decision and so does he. He does not want to see this town stalling or going backwards.

Member Whitgob said we are trying to arrive at an informed decision and is a tough one. He agrees there have been too many managers in a short period of time and we need to step back and ask why. He feels time is of the essence and the upcoming Candy Dance will be a milestone. Member Whitgob said he appreciates comments regarding bring in someone fresh, but it is not uncommon for corporations to promote from within as part of a mentoring process. Often that person will need a little grooming in order to take the next step.

Member Williams agreed that promoting from within you usually know what you are getting. He feels it is difficult to know the background of the candidates because of the limitations on the application for a civil servant job.

Clerk Pace said he feels it is very important in a small town like this to have choices on who to hire. He said that whatever we do, we have to stand behind the decision

Clerk Pace moved to offer the position of Town Manager to Sheryl Gonzales. Motion seconded by Member Williams.

Chairperson DeSocio asked if there was discussion. Member Whitgob said he feels that we have discussed this.

Member Donohoe said this would not be his first choice. Chairperson DeSocio agreed it was not her's either.

Motion passed 4 – 0. Chairperson DeSocio did not vote.

2. **Discussion and possible action** regarding approval of compensation for the candidate selected as Town Manager. The salary range is \$42,272.88 to \$56,534.40 annually.

Chairperson DeSocio said we have already decided that we were not going to go above the mid-point. The amount is approximately \$49,472.00.

Resident Bill Brooks asked what the value is of the benefit package that accompanies the salary.

Darcy Worms, Douglas County Human Resources, gave the following information. PERS is 20.25% of the salary. Medical benefits depend on what is chosen, the most expensive option is \$826.30 per month, and then there is FICA, workers compensation which are minimal compared to PERS and benefits. This adds up to approximately \$20,000 annually.

Chairperson DeSocio said based on the low, net revenue from Candy Dance maybe we should not go mid-point. She is not sure how we know that as she has not received final numbers for Candy Dance.

Member Whitgob asked about the procedure whether or not it is a negotiation or do we make an offer. Ms. Worms said you make a formal offer of whatever you decide and she and the Chairperson can get together with Sheryl Gonzales to present the offer.

Chairperson said basically we need to just approve the range of the offer. She said if the range is approved by the Board today, we can have negotiations with Ms. Gonzales and we do not have to come back in front of the Board to approve the amount to approve the salary. We have no choice with benefits.

Member Whitgob moved that Darcy Worms meet with Sheryl Gonzales to negotiate within the salary range of \$42,000 to \$50,000 and not to beyond that range. Motion seconded by Member Donohoe. Motion passed unanimously.

Member Whitgob thanked Kimberly Peterson, who was present, and said that she impressed us all, she was present at many meetings, and we are very fortunate to have her take an interest in the town. Kimberly Peterson thanked everyone for their time.

ADJOURNMENT

Clerk Pace moved to adjourn the meeting. Motion seconded by Member Williams. Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 8:05 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Kris Wilkison