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City nails down timeline for selection of permanent city manager

By Pippa Fisher



The council discusses the process for selection a new city manager at the June 4 special meeting. Photo Jeff Heyman, City of Lafayette

The city council held a special meeting June 4 with Paul Kimura, principal of Avery and Associates, the executive search firm hired by the city to recruit the next permanent city manager following Steven Falk's resignation last year. It is likely that the position will be filled in early August.

Kimura brought all council members up to speed on progress and the process to fill the position.

With much emphasis placed on transparency and inclusion as a city strategic goal, the council has pushed for as much public involvement as possible through the process. The recruitment firm has conducted community outreach over the past few months including a town hall meeting, interviews with members of the community and a community survey, which at the time of the meeting had received 67 responses.

Now that the filing period for applications has closed Kimura said that they had an applicant count of 35 individuals. He will be recommending through his own interviews with candidates a list of between 10 and 12 which the council will examine, narrowing the list to potentially around five for in-depth interviews.

The council spent time discussing ways in which it could involve the public in the interview process, while Kimura reminded council members that the decision can only be made by them. "This is the council's decision," he said, noting that it had been elected to make such decisions. "This is one of the most important decisions you will have to make." Kimura explained that a panel made up of city staff and members of the public would be advisory only and said that he sees the public involved in only about 10 percent of his recruitments.

Council Member Steven Bliss suggested bringing together a panel of community members by reaching out to people who might be interested in serving in such a role for a lottery-style selection of five members of the public. Further details on this will become available over the next few weeks.

Council Member Cam Burks described this solution as "totally fair, honest and transparent."

"I'm proud of what we accomplished tonight as it connects exactly to our City Council Strategic Goal of Transparency and Inclusion," said Burks after the meeting. "Including the public in this process, in this transparent manner, is absolutely essential, and we accomplished that tonight."

According to the city's announcement, the timeline will be as follows:

July 8 - Avery will present its initial recommendation of candidates to the council. The council will decide which of the candidates presented it wishes to interview.

July 19 - The council will interview the candidates it selected from Avery's initial recommendations.

Aug. 2 - The council will hold subsequent interviews with the finalists selected after the first round of interviews. Community and staff panels (TBD) will also be held with the finalists.

All interviews will take place in closed session to ensure candidates' confidentiality. Kimura pointed out the risk of losing qualified candidates who could choose to opt out if their names were to become public.

To fill out a survey residents may go to https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/KFHP7N7#_blank.

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