

1 **MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE ORANGE CITY COUNCIL**, held on  
2 Saturday, February 20, 2010 at 1:30 p.m. in Council Chambers, 201 N. Holly Avenue, Orange City.

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4 **CALL TO ORDER**

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6 The Meeting was called to order at 1:30 p.m. by Mayor Strickland and roll call was taken.

7  
8 **ROLL CALL**

9  
10 **PRESENT:** Mayor Harley Strickland; Vice Mayor Tom Laputka; Council Members; Tom  
11 Abraham, Anthony Pupello, Gary A. Blair, William Crippen; City Clerk Deborah  
12 Renner

13  
14 **ABSENT:** Council Member Jeff Allebach

15  
16 **1. REVIEW PROCEDURES**

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18 Colin Baenziger, Baenziger and Associates, came forward and noted that there are six candidates who  
19 have each interviewed individually with the Council. He explained that each candidate will now come  
20 before the Council one at a time.

21  
22 Council Member Blair asked whether the question should be the same for each candidate. Mr.  
23 Baenziger responded that Council should ask whatever questions they wish to ask.

24  
25 **2. INTERVIEW CANDIDATES FOR CITY MANAGER:**

26  
27 **Tony Otte**

28 Mr. Otte came forward and stated that he has twenty-three years experience as a City Manager in three  
29 Central Florida cities. Mr. Otte stated that what distinguishes him from other managers is that he is an  
30 excellent communicator; he is an “excellent problem solver;” and he is dedicated to customer service  
31 excellence. Mr. Otte observed that Orange City is a “very attractive place,” citing the fact that there is  
32 “history,” it is home to a famous attraction, and is financially sound. Most importantly, he noted that  
33 there is “a Council here with a vision that has developed a plan.” He said that he believes he is an  
34 excellent match for the City. He thanked Council for inviting him to be part of the interview process.

35  
36 Council Member Abraham asked Mr. Otte to speak about the “three e’s”; economy, environment and  
37 ethics. Mr. Otte responded that the City has done an excellent job of boosting economic activity over  
38 the past 15 to 20 years. He noted that opportunities exist in the redevelopment of 17-92. He  
39 suggested that development of a specific economic development strategy was in order. He outlined  
40 methods he has used in the past to monitor businesses in the community. In regard to “environment”,  
41 Mr. Otte said that the land development code (LDC) should include provisions for protection of the  
42 environment. He suggested capturing the monies paid by developers when they can’t meet the tree  
43 requirements be placed in a fund which is used strictly to buy and plant trees in parks and rights-of-  
44 ways. In regard to “ethics,” Mr. Otte said that there is a code of ethics within the International  
45 City/County Management Association (ICMA) which requires a strong commitment to ethical  
46 behavior for all government workers.

1 Vice Mayor Laputka asked what provisions Mr. Otte was seeking in his contract if selected. Mr. Otte  
2 responded that he was looking for the standard contract which states that the Manager serves at the  
3 pleasure of the City Council. In exchange for this provision, there is generally a six-month severance  
4 provision for the Manager in the event he/she is removed without cause. Mr. Otte said that he is  
5 currently serving as Interim Director of Redevelopment for the City of New Smyrna Beach, but that he  
6 could start with Orange City within two weeks after notification.

7  
8 Council Member Pupello asked Mr. Otte what he felt was the most “burning issue” presently facing  
9 the community. Mr. Otte responded that it is the investigation in the police department, stressing that  
10 it should be addressed “fully and completely” and as quickly as possible. Council Member Pupello  
11 asked Mr. Otte to discuss his experience with grants. Mr. Otte said that his first job in the public  
12 sector was as a grant writer. He discussed his success with CDBG and FRDAP grants in Lake Wales.  
13 He said that he is familiar with many other grant programs available to municipalities. Council  
14 Member Pupello asked how many hours Mr. Otte currently works and how many he would expect to  
15 work if he came to Orange City. Mr. Otte responded that he has always worked fifty hours and  
16 beginning a new position, it could be higher.

17  
18 In response to a question from Council Member Crippen, Mr. Otte said that it was clear on the City  
19 tour that Orange City is “a city of the brand new and the historic.” He noted the difference between  
20 the “sparkling and shiny” and the “in some cases, the tired,” characterizing the difference as  
21 “striking.” Mr. Otte commended Council for adopting a development code with such high standards.  
22 He discussed options for revitalizing the 17-92 corridor.

23  
24 Council Member Blair asked Mr. Otte how he would promote business in the City and what types of  
25 businesses he envisioned coming here. Mr. Otte responded by discussing his past accomplishments in  
26 Leesburg and Lake Wales. He said that part of the solution for Orange City is to develop a marketing  
27 strategy for the businesses. Council Member Blair asked what experience Mr. Otte has had with  
28 developing parks and trail systems. Mr. Otte discussed his experience with a trail segment that was  
29 built in Lake Wales during his tenure. In response to a question from Council Member Blair regarding  
30 how to handle a “split council,” Mr. Otte stated that “the key to any dispute is communication.” He  
31 said that he encourages Council Members to bring forward their questions until they are satisfied.

32  
33 Mayor Strickland asked Mr. Otte to discuss the most “challenging” question he received from a citizen  
34 last night and what were the concerns voiced to him by citizens. He said that he was asked a question  
35 regarding how he felt about Council Members questioning staff. The Mayor asked Mr. Otte to  
36 comment on the excerpt from the book “Sustainable Governance” which he had provided to Mr. Otte.  
37 Mr. Otte responded that he is a “high productivity, but results-oriented person” and that he was  
38 impressed by the paradigm shift suggested in the book to results rather than efficiency. He discussed  
39 the increase in collaborative efforts between cities and counties.

40  
41 Mr. Baenziger read a question submitted from the audience by Michelle Polgar. In response, Mr. Otte  
42 stated that his management style is “management by objectives” which is based on setting objectives  
43 to achieve the goals set by Council. He said that he is a proponent of “open forum” meetings with  
44 citizens and holds those periodically. Mr. Otte characterized himself as an “accessible” person.

45  
46 Mr. Otte thanked Council for allowing him to be part of the interview process. He stated, “Orange

1 City is a very attractive place. Whoever you select is going to have a very good platform to work for.”

2  
3 **Rex Taylor**

4 Mr. Taylor advised that he was “born and raised and educated” in the Midwest. He came to Florida in  
5 1981 and became the City Manager in Leesburg. He said that he has worked in local government for  
6 his entire career. Mr. Taylor advised that he has been the Manager in Leesburg, Vero Beach, and  
7 South Palm Beach.

8  
9 Council Member Blair asked how Mr. Taylor proposed to promote business in Orange City and what  
10 types of businesses he saw coming here. He asked Mr. Taylor what he has done in the past to attract  
11 businesses. Mr. Taylor responded that he was disappointed to see that the City no longer has a  
12 Chamber of Commerce which may mean the City will need to take a more active role in economic  
13 development. He said that it appears Orange City is a little weak in “value added jobs” such as  
14 manufacturing, etc. He observed that the best economic engine at present is the hospital and  
15 associated jobs. He suggested that line of business should be strongly supported. Mr. Taylor  
16 suggested that effective economic development involves a major commitment of time and effort. He  
17 noted that “tools” such as incentives are also required. He cautioned that today, land must be ready to  
18 go before promoting it for commercial or industrial uses.

19  
20 Council Member Blair asked what experience Mr. Taylor has had with developing parks and trail  
21 systems. Mr. Taylor said that he has not been involved in these types of developments in the past. He  
22 discussed a model currently being used in Boca Raton and suggested that it could be adapted for use  
23 here.

24  
25 Council Member Blair asked Mr. Taylor how he would deal with “a split Council.” Mr. Taylor  
26 responded that any Manager has experienced differences of opinions in their Council, characterizing it  
27 as “human nature.” He said that he would work with the Council as a “collegiate body.” He  
28 acknowledged that there would be differences of opinion at times and said that he could live with it as  
29 long as it is for the “good of the community.”

30  
31 Council Member Crippen asked what attributes of the City Mr. Taylor would market to businesses he  
32 is trying to attract to the community. Mr. Taylor responded that it appears Orange City wishes to  
33 retain its “small community charm” and stated, “and I think that’s what you should be marketing.”

34  
35 In response to a question from Council Member Pupello, Mr. Taylor said that he thought contact with  
36 citizens and citizen groups is “extremely important.” He said that although there are many issues to  
37 attend to when beginning work in a new City, the citizens are very anxious to meet the new Manager.  
38 He noted the good turnout at the reception last night. Mr. Taylor said that he likes to be out in the  
39 community meeting people because it provides the opportunity to correct misconceptions and for the  
40 Manager to get feedback on “the pulse of the community.”

41  
42 Council Member Pupello asked Mr. Taylor to discuss what he believes the role of the City Manager  
43 should be. Mr. Taylor responded that the foremost role is to manage the municipal operations on a  
44 daily basis. The Manager should also provide leadership to the Council and the community.

45  
46 Vice Mayor Laputka asked Mr. Taylor what he expected in a compensation package. Mr. Taylor

1 responded that he would work in the advertised salary range. The Vice Mayor asked when Mr. Taylor  
2 could start work. He said that he would have to review his current contract to see when his obligations  
3 are up and would come to the City shortly thereafter. He suggested that it would be between thirty to  
4 sixty days.

5  
6 Council Member Abraham asked Mr. Taylor about the “three e’s” and asked him to summarize their  
7 earlier discussion on this subject. Mr. Taylor noted that there are already many positive things  
8 happening in the economic area, such as the hospital and related professions, however, some “value  
9 added” jobs are needed. Regarding environmental issues, Mr. Taylor cited the examples of alternative  
10 water and energy sources. Mr. Taylor said that environmental issues such as runoff must be  
11 addressed. Mr. Taylor said that he considers himself to be a very ethical and professional person. He  
12 said that he follows the code of ethics of the International City Manager’s Association. He shared that  
13 he has filed ethics complaints against fellow Managers in the past and that action was taken as a result  
14 of those complaints.

15  
16 Mayor Strickland asked whether Mr. Taylor had any comments on the book he had asked the  
17 candidates to read. He said that what he took away from the book was the concept of greater  
18 participation of the people in the democratic process and how that can be enhanced. He urged caution  
19 to avoid a situation where no one has the authority or responsibility to be able to act when necessary.

20  
21 In response to an invitation from Mayor Strickland to expand on any of the questions he had been  
22 asked today, Mr. Taylor commented that the district election system will likely result in new people on  
23 the Council. He stressed the importance of creating a “collegial body.” He noted the importance of  
24 having a Chamber of Commerce,

25  
26 In response to further questioning from the Mayor, Mr. Taylor stated that the atmosphere at the  
27 reception was not really conducive to in-depth conversation. He said that he was very surprised and  
28 impressed that the Mayor and Manager of DeLand came to the event. He said that the questions were  
29 more general in nature and that he didn’t really notice any “burning issue” among the citizens.

30  
31 Council Member Blair asked Mr. Taylor to discuss his vision of the “downtown/17-92 corridor.” Mr.  
32 Taylor responded that DOT’s vision of 17-92 is that it was designed to move traffic while the City has  
33 a goal of implementing traffic calming devices and making it a destination point. He suggested that an  
34 “overlay district” which would address many possible issues may be in order. In order to be  
35 successful, any plan must include a way to reduce traffic on the road. Mr. Taylor expressed his  
36 confidence that achieving this goal is “doable” and takes a good deal of time to accomplish.

37  
38 Mr. Baenziger read the following question from the public; “Describe your management/leadership  
39 style and how you apply it in your city. Also tell us how you relate to citizens, staff and Council.”  
40 Mr. Taylor advised that he believes in “team building.” He stressed the importance of open  
41 communication between himself and staff, as well as himself and Council. He said that he sees  
42 himself as a “participatory manager.” Mr. Taylor discussed a number of different means he has used  
43 to provide information to the public. In response to a final question from the public, Mr. Taylor said  
44 that he is leaving his current job because “it’s time to move on.” He said that he needs some new  
45 challenges. He reassured Council that he has seen nothing in Orange City that “scared” him.

46

1 **Cynthia Hall**

2 Ms. Hall began by stating that she has lived in Central Florida since the early 1980's. She discussed  
3 her previous work in the public sector. She advised that her latest position was as County Manager for  
4 Lake County. Ms. Hall expressed her confidence that her background would be of benefit to Orange  
5 City.

6  
7 Council Member Abraham asked Ms. Hall how she would apply "the three 'e' s" to her service in  
8 Orange City. Ms. Hall discussed how she became involved in local government. She advised that  
9 she specialized in revenue projections in her early career. In regard to the "environment" aspect, Ms.  
10 Hall said that Lake County created the first "green building" ordinance among other measures for  
11 conservation. Ms. Hall said that she defines ethics as "a combination of honesty, professionalism and  
12 dependability. She stated that it is "top priority" for everyone in local government to achieve those  
13 qualities.

14  
15 Vice Mayor Laputka asked Ms. Hall how she thought she would get along with the Council. Ms. Hall  
16 responded "very nicely." She said that she enjoys working with "different personalities." In response  
17 to a question from the Vice Mayor regarding compensation, Ms. Hall stated that she would be seeking  
18 compensation within the advertised range of \$80,000 to \$120,000. She said that she would request  
19 some additional vacation accrual. In addition, Ms. Hall said that she would want some sort of  
20 severance package. She advised that she is not currently working and could start right away.

21  
22 Mayor Strickland asked Ms. Hall to comment on the handout he provided to her and the other  
23 candidates. She responded that, in her opinion, it is "exactly the direction that local government needs  
24 to go." Ms. Hall discussed her impressions in further detail. The Mayor asked Ms. Hall to comment  
25 on the reception last night. She responded that she had a very favorable impression of the "synergy of  
26 the citizens and the City government." She said that the citizens she met seemed "very engaged and  
27 very interested in City government." Ms. Hall said that she found the event to be "very welcoming to  
28 all of us." In response to a final question from Mayor Strickland, Ms. Hall stated her understanding of  
29 the City's most pressing needs as (1) resolution of the Police Department issue, (2) issues surrounding  
30 water, (3) SunRail station, (4) redevelopment of Highway 17 92 and (5) cost of solid waste collection.  
31 Ms. Hall said that she enjoys working with citizens.

32  
33 Council Member Pupello asked Ms. Hall how long she would stay if she accepted the position. Ms.  
34 Hall replied, "As long as you would like me to." In regard to a question regarding keeping officials  
35 informed, Ms. Hall said that each person is different and it would be up to her to learn the  
36 communication style of each Council Member and to provide them with what they need. Council  
37 Member Pupello asked Ms. Hall how should would go about "building a good relationship with  
38 Volusia County." Ms. Hall responded that she already has a good relationship with the County. She  
39 said that first, she would meet with the County Manager and that she has worked with Chairman  
40 Bruno on the MyRegion.org project.

41  
42 Council Member Crippen asked Ms. Hall to share what personal characteristic of hers will most  
43 benefit the City if she is hired. She responded that it is being "responsive" and "business friendly."

44  
45 Council Member Blair asked Ms. Hall to discuss her vision of the redevelopment of 17-92, along with  
46 her strategy and her accomplishments in this arena. Ms. Hall responded that the corridor poses an

1 opportunity to “invigorate” the area. She suggested the use of street signs and signage changes and  
2 possibly streetlights. She said that medians could be very beneficial. Ms. Hall said that she heard  
3 from Council that it is important to maintain the “small town” ambience of the area. She discussed her  
4 experiences with redevelopment in Lake County. In response to additional questions from Council  
5 Member Blair, Ms. Hall said that she has had a great deal of experience with developing new parks in  
6 Lake County, citing several regional parks which were built, some with trail systems.

7  
8 Council Member Blair asked, “How would you deal with a “split Council”? Ms. Hall responded that  
9 her job is to provide Council with as much information as possible so that they can make an informed  
10 decision.

11  
12 Council Member Abraham asked Ms. Hall whether she spoke Spanish. She responded that she spoke  
13 enough to “get by.”

14  
15 Mr. Baenziger read a question from the audience; “Please describe your management/leadership style  
16 and how you apply it in your City and also, how you relate to citizens, staff and Council.” Ms. Hall  
17 listed communication and relationship building among her strengths. She said that staff is the most  
18 important part of getting things accomplished and that it is important to let them know that they are  
19 valued. Ms. Hall also stressed that she expects a lot from staff. Ms. Hall said that her management  
20 style is “professional, dedicated, honest, a bit of levity and results-oriented.” She said that she enjoys  
21 talking with citizens and fosters those relationships with them. She said that staff thrives on  
22 recognition and that she believes in empowering them.

23  
24 Mayor Strickland adjourned the meeting for a brief recess at 3:24, resuming at 3:27.

25  
26 **Ronald McLemore**

27 Mr. McLemore said that he has had a long career as a City/County Manager.

28  
29 Council Member Blair asked Mr. McLemore his vision for 17-92 and how he would accomplish that,  
30 noting any prior experience he has had with redevelopment. Mr. McLemore said that this has been an  
31 important focal point of his career. He noted his accomplishments in Winter Springs, particularly the  
32 development of a new Town Center. He observed that 17-92 was designed to be “a raceway.” He  
33 advised that the challenge will be to make the area a non-threatening, pedestrian-friendly place in  
34 order to nurture the development of business. Mr. McLemore said that “curb appeal” is very  
35 important to investors. He advised that an overlay zoning district would be required, followed by  
36 involvement with regional economic development efforts. Finally, Mr. McLemore said that if the  
37 Council is committed to the effort, money would have to be dedicated toward it to be successful.

38  
39 In regard to further questions from Council Member Blair, Mr. McLemore said that he envisioned 17  
40 92 as home to retail, specialty, and office along with residential development. He said that high tech  
41 businesses could be sought in the outlying areas. He reiterated the importance of how the community  
42 presents to developers along with the availability of amenities and housing for their workers. Mr.  
43 McLemore said that he has had “a great deal” of experience in developing parks and trail systems  
44 which he discussed in detail. He noted that one of the parks he redeveloped in Winter Springs was  
45 voted the best park in the United States three years ago.

46

1 Council Member Blair asked Mr. McLemore how he would “deal with a split Council.” Mr.  
2 McLemore responded, “very gingerly.” He stressed the importance of staying focused on the issue  
3 rather than allowing it to become personal. He discussed the importance of providing Council with all  
4 of the facts necessary to make a decision, noting that it fosters trust.

5  
6 Council Member Crippen asked what “branding elements” of the Orange City area would contribute to  
7 attracting visitors and/or businesses to the area. Mr. McLemore responded that the springs and the  
8 river are nationally recognized. He suggested that it would be necessary to build on those existing  
9 assets. Mr. McLemore suggested that opportunities for eco-tourism abound. He advised that the City  
10 should have a plan for economic development.

11  
12 Mr. McLemore said that coming to a new community is “invigorating” in the sense of learning the  
13 Council’s dreams and aspirations for the City and focusing the resources of the community on the  
14 process and providing a structure to facilitate movement toward the recognized goals.

15  
16 Council Member Pupello asked Mr. McLemore to elaborate on his previous comments regarding “the  
17 art of the possible.” Mr. McLemore said that because of limited resources, it is important not to waste  
18 too much time and energy on what can’t be done. He also discussed the importance of timing.  
19 Council Member Pupello asked what Mr. McLemore perceives to be the “most burning issue” ahead  
20 for Orange City and how it should be addressed. Mr. McLemore responded that there are several  
21 issues. First, the “police situation” needs to be dealt with. Next, the solid waste issue needs to be  
22 “fixed.” Regarding 17-92, he said that he would work with Council to develop a strategy. Finally, the  
23 water issue is “huge” because of the amount of money and the politics involved. He expressed his  
24 disagreement with the Water Management District on this issue. He warned that if not handled  
25 properly, “water bills could be like mortgages.”

26  
27 Vice Mayor Laputka asked Mr. McLemore to discuss the compensation package he would expect  
28 from the City. Mr. McLemore responded that it would have to be more than he is currently making.

29  
30 Council Member Abraham asked Mr. McLemore to discuss his ideas on the “three e’s”. Mr.  
31 McLemore predicted that economic recovery in the Country would be slow and steady. He advised  
32 that ethical leadership is “a must.” He said that it is necessary to be “good stewards” of the  
33 environment. He said that strong requirements for businesses will result in more businesses which  
34 will be sustainable. Successful businesses welcome high standards. Mr. McLemore discussed the  
35 importance of “being frugal.” Council Member Abraham noted that sometime during 1991-1993, Mr.  
36 McLemore worked as a development consultant. He asked whether Mr. McLemore has completely  
37 severed his relationship with that company. Mr. McLemore responded that it had ended in 1995.

38  
39 Mayor Strickland asked Mr. McLemore to comment on the handout he had provided to the candidates.  
40 Mr. McLemore responded that he did not receive the handout. He commented that he did see changes  
41 on the horizon for local government. The Mayor asked whether any particular issues stood out during  
42 his meetings with Council Members this morning. Mr. McLemore responded that there appeared to be  
43 “a lot of continuity” in the comments from Council which indicates a shared agenda. He said that he  
44 enjoyed the reception last night, noting the high level of interest among the public in preserving the  
45 City’s historical assets.

46

1 Mr. Baenziger read a question from the audience; "Please describe your management/leadership style  
2 and how you apply it in your City and also, how you relate to citizens, staff and Council." Mr.  
3 McLemore characterized his "management behavior" by stating that he believes strongly in  
4 "teamwork." He expressed his belief that people want to be a participant in the solution. He said that  
5 he has been very successful in developing a united team as opposed to using a disciplinary approach.  
6 He said that his door is always open to the public. Mr. McLemore said that he applied for the job in  
7 Orange City because it is closer to where he lives and that it is an opportunity to be a Manager again.  
8 He discussed at length his managerial style and approach to promoting team work.

9  
10 **Jamie Croteau**

11 Ms. Croteau advised that she is currently Assistant Manager for the City of Ocoee and has worked  
12 there for four years. She said that she applied here because she is "very interested in the area."  
13

14 Mr. Baenziger read a question from the audience; "Please describe your management/leadership style  
15 and how you apply it in your City and also, how you relate to citizens, staff and Council." Ms.  
16 Croteau responded that she has a "fairly open" management style. She said that for the most part,  
17 people want to do a good job. She said that she would offer help if they appear to be going off course.  
18 Ms. Croteau stated, "I would say that I expect people to perform at the level they should be performing  
19 and to do what they need to do." She said that she responds to most of the citizen complaints in her  
20 current position and believes in an "open door policy." She said that she does not like to be "blind  
21 sided," therefore, if any controversial issues loom, she would discuss them with Council individually  
22 and that she would hope Council would let her know if there is anything they would like to discuss.  
23 She talked about her management style, citing her accomplishments in Seminole County.

24  
25 Council Member Blair asked Ms. Croteau to discuss her vision of the redevelopment of downtown/17  
26 92 area. She said that times have changed in the past year or two and it would not be feasible to  
27 develop a CRA with Volusia County. She said that much streetscaping and beautification would need  
28 to be done. She discussed the possibility of doing an "incubator program" with UCF. She discussed  
29 the need for a "vision" and then engaging in serious planning prior to move forward. In response to a  
30 further question from Council Member Blair, Ms. Croteau said that Orange City has "a great retail  
31 center" which tends to draw more retail. She recommended drawing in more professional  
32 development, reemphasizing the possibility of an incubator program in partnership with UCF. She  
33 suggested that a business association to replace the Chamber would be valuable.

34  
35 In regard to a question from Council Member Blair regarding development of parks and trails, Ms.  
36 Croteau said that she has worked with parks master plans. When asked by Council Member Blair how  
37 she would deal with a "split Council," Ms. Croteau said that she has worked in such situations before,  
38 and said that the important thing is to treat everyone the same and to communicate with Council. She  
39 discussed the importance of "vision" and said that after reviewing the City's plan, she felt it could be  
40 more succinct and clearly written.

41  
42 Council Member Crippen asked Ms. Croteau to discuss the City's biggest "most burning issue." She  
43 advised that it is the police department issue. Long-term issues are water supply and sewers.  
44 Discussing her personal attributes, Ms. Croteau described herself as "approachable" and "open."  
45 Council Member Crippen asked what would be the biggest drawback to being City Manager. Ms.  
46 Croteau responded, "possibly the question about the divided Council."

1 In response to a question from Council Member Pupello, Ms. Croteau said that citizen contact is very  
2 important, especially in a municipal setting. Meeting the needs of the citizens will also benefit the  
3 Council. Ms. Croteau said that her long-term career goal is to be a City Manager. She said that she  
4 hoped she would stay for a long time, much longer than the average.

5  
6 Mayor Strickland asked Ms. Croteau to comment on the handout he had given out. She responded that  
7 municipal government is closer to the people. Her observations were that most of the Council needs a  
8 stronger vision and that input from the citizens is important. She said that she was “struck” by the  
9 number of citizens at the reception last night, and how engaged they were in the process.

10  
11 Vice Mayor Laputka asked Ms. Croteau what her expectations regarding a contract would be. Ms.  
12 Croteau responded that she already is making at the top of the pay range. She said that she would  
13 expect a standard contract with some form of severance. She said that she understood that moving to  
14 the City would be a requirement at some point in the future, noting that she does currently own a  
15 house she would have to sell. She said that if she were selected, she would have to give a two-week  
16 notice at her current job and would then like to take a small break before starting.

17  
18 Council Member Abraham asked Ms. Croteau to recap her discussion with him regarding the three  
19 “e’s”. Ms. Croteau responded that ethics is an important issue for any City Manager. She discussed  
20 the importance of a trusting relationship with the Council and providing them with accurate  
21 information. She said that the water supply is probably the biggest environmental issue facing the  
22 City. Ms. Croteau said that the economy is an issue for all cities now. She noted that there has been  
23 an erosion of the commercial tax base and that this will continue through 2013.

24  
25 Mayor Strickland asked how Ms. Croteau would recommend preparing for future trends. She  
26 responded that there would probably be some federal assistance to commercial enterprises such as has  
27 been seen for residential. She noted that the City has a fairly healthy economy and is probably better  
28 situated than most.

29  
30 In response to a question from Council Member Abraham, Ms. Croteau said that she worked with  
31 Cindy Hall in the past.

32  
33 In closing, Ms. Croteau observed that she is the only candidate who has not been a City or County  
34 Manager. She said that in some ways that can be an advantage because she does not have any  
35 “preconceived notions.”

36  
37 In response to a final question from Council Member Blair, Ms. Croteau said that if selected, she  
38 would need “at least a couple weeks” break in addition to her notice to her current employer before  
39 starting work here. Regarding her previous experience, Ms. Croteau said that she ran a \$43 million  
40 construction project for the courthouse in Seminole County and that the project came in on time and  
41 under budget. She said that she would have “no problem rocking the boat” when she needed to or  
42 standing up for herself or staff.

43  
44 **John Drago**

45 Mr. Drago came forward and stated that he lives in the City of Apopka. He said that he began his  
46 career in fire service and then moved into city management. Mr. Drago advised that he worked for the

1 City of Okeechobee for eleven years and then was City Administrator for the City of Longwood for  
2 ten years.

3  
4 Council Member Abraham asked Mr. Drago to revisit their previous discussion regarding the three  
5 “e’s”. Mr. Drago discussed his redevelopment theory and talked about how to foster orderly  
6 development in a manner the City wants by making changes to the land development code. He said  
7 that to help the local economy, the code could be amended to remove impediments to development.  
8 He cautioned against putting certain things in the comprehensive plan as they then become in the  
9 control of the State. In regard to the environment, Mr. Drago observed that government was too quick  
10 in the past to approve proposed development, citing specific examples of where it should be limited.  
11 Mr. Drago commented on the final “e”, ethics, stating that ethics begins with the Council and “trickles  
12 down” to the Manager and to staff.

13  
14 Council Member Laputka recalled his previous discussion with Mr. Drago on redevelopment and  
15 stated how much he enjoyed it. He asked Mr. Drago what his contract requirements would be if he  
16 were selected as City Manager. Mr. Drago responded that based on the advertisement, he was  
17 confident that an agreement could be reached. He said that he could begin work within a week or less.  
18 Mr. Drago advised that he would consider moving to Orange City if he were hired.

19  
20 Mayor Strickland asked Mr. Drago to comment on the excerpt he had been given. Mr. Drago  
21 responded that the information was “pretty sound.” He said that he believed some of the provisions in  
22 the document could be implemented at the local level, but that it would require a “culture change” in  
23 the organization of the City. He said that a shift back to focus on how government can serve the  
24 people is needed. He suggested that the citizenry be surveyed to discover their feelings on growth  
25 management. He said that the citizens should have input on growth issues which will affect them. He  
26 stressed that rules should be developed for the convenience of the public, not for staff. Mr. Drago  
27 noted that local government is the closest to the people and is the most responsive to the people  
28 making it the easiest to change.

29  
30 Mayor Strickland asked Mr. Drago to comment on the reception last night. Mr. Drago said that it was  
31 the best attended reception he has attended yet and that the people were the friendliest. He said that he  
32 was treated very well and enjoyed the event. He said that the message he received was that people  
33 want to see that the community grows in a more positive way and that they have a little more  
34 participation in how it grows. Mr. Drago discussed the importance of “perception” and how important  
35 a person’s first contact with the government is in making an impression as to how the organization is  
36 run.

37  
38 In response to a final question from Mayor Strickland, Mr. Drago said that the common theme he  
39 heard from the Council was the desire to improve the community and to move forward in a positive  
40 way. He said that he found Council to be “open” and to thinking “totally out of the box.”

41  
42 Council Member Pupello asked Mr. Drago to elaborate on their previous discussion on doing things  
43 “up front” and the dividends that can bring. Mr. Drago suggested that it could be beneficial for a  
44 Council Member to have quarterly meetings with members of their District. Council Member Pupello  
45 asked Mr. Drago what the most “burning issue” facing the City is. Mr. Drago responded by noting the  
46 areas of annexation, water supply, and economic development. He said that he would have to meet

1 with Council so they could prioritize the issues.

2  
3 Council Member Crippen noted the accomplishments on Mr. Drago's resume and asked him to share  
4 his thoughts on revitalizing the 17-92 corridor. Mr. Drago responded that it depends on how willing  
5 the business owners are to accept change. He discussed the importance of "curb appeal" and gaining  
6 the cooperation of the business owners. He said that if the drivers passing through town on 17-92 do  
7 not find it user-friendly and appealing, they will continue through to DeBary or Sanford.

8  
9 Council Member Blair asked Mr. Drago what experience he has had with developing parks and trails.  
10 Mr. Drago responded that in Longwood, a master plan was created for seven parks, of which five were  
11 completed. He said that the City created a link to the County trail system. He explained that in order  
12 to keep out undesirables, "the neighborhood has to have control of the street." Mr. Drago explained  
13 that happens when people get out into the neighborhood which requires that it be "user-friendly."

14  
15 Council Member Blair asked Mr. Drago how he would deal with a "split Council." Mr. Drago  
16 responded that he treats everyone the same and provides them with the same information.

17  
18 Mayor Strickland said that Congressman Mica's office was very complimentary of the train station in  
19 Longwood. He asked how that was accomplished. Mr. Drago responded that staff had enough  
20 "foresight" to know the train was coming and that the existing standard development model would not  
21 work. In anticipation of the "Hometown Democracy" movement, visioning sessions were held.  
22 These were followed by a review to ensure that any needed changes to the code were in place to  
23 relieve impediments. In Longwood, a "Heritage" district was created that had a separate set of  
24 standards strictly for the train station. Funding for the design of the station was obtained with the  
25 assistance of Congressman Mica. Mr. Drago provided further background on the changes in the  
26 development process which were made to improve specific areas.

27  
28 Council Member Abraham asked whether Mr. Drago had an opportunity to review the audit. He said  
29 that he felt the City should be proud of the audit.

30  
31 Mr. Baenziger asked Mr. Drago a question from the audience. He asked him to describe his  
32 management style and how he relates to citizens, staff and Council. Mr. Drago responded that today's  
33 Managers must be adaptable to a wide variety of value systems in the workplace and the community.  
34 He noted his longevity at his previous places of employment. He said that it is important that his  
35 relationship with the Council be based on trust, is factual and is candid. In regard to motivating staff,  
36 Mr. Drago said that he believes in giving them as much power as they can absorb while working to  
37 remove impediments to their performance. He noted that the first contact the public has is with a staff  
38 person and that person needs to have empowerment to resolve the issue at hand. He also suggested  
39 that staff should have the authority to make adjustments to resolve citizen's issues sometimes.

40  
41 Mr. Drago said that he saw this job opportunity as "a good fit" for him professionally. In closing, Mr.  
42 Drago said that he hoped Council had a good understanding of him and what he could do as City  
43 Manager. He said that his past experience and proven leadership would be a "pure benefit to this  
44 Community."

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46 **Recap and Next Steps**

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Mr. Baenziger noted that the next meeting will be on March 1st at 7:00 p.m. at which time the new Manager will be selected. He asked that Council be prepared to announce their top two candidates at the meeting. A vote will be taken at the meeting to see if one candidate stands out in the voting. Council Member Crippen suggested that Council choose the top three candidates.

Council Member Abraham asked whether Council would have an opportunity to discuss the contract terms during the meeting on March 1st. Mr. Baenziger responded that the Mayor and City Attorney would be negotiating the contract, but that there should be some opportunity for discussion. Mayor Strickland noted that Council had been previously asked to provide their comments/concerns regarding the contract to the City Attorney. Council Member Abraham questioned when Council as a whole would get to discuss the Manager’s salary. Mr. Baenziger responded that all of the candidates had indicated they would accept a salary within the advertised range of \$80,000 to \$120,000. Mayor Strickland added that his concern was for the overall contract terms rather than starting pay. Council Member Abraham recalled that Mr. McCue left in 2007 as a budget-saving measure and asked that Council not forget that.

Mayor Strickland thanked the City Clerk and other staff who worked to make the weekend interviews a success.

**3. Adjourn**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted

Approved on

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Deborah J. Renner, CMC, City Clerk

April 27, 2010