COUNTY CONTROLLER SEARCH COMMITTEE
March 6, 2020
Minutes

Members Present: Crenshaw, Grebner (arrived at 3:01 p.m.), Koenig (arrived at 3:10 p.m.), Maiville, Naeyaert, Schafer, Sebolt (arrived at 3:08 p.m.), Slaughter, Stivers, Trubac, Treasurer Eric Schertzing, Clerk Barb Byrum, Linda Vail, and Becky Bennett.

Members Absent: Morgan.

Others Present: Michael Tanis.

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Crenshaw at 3:01 p.m. in the Human Services Building, 5303 S. Cedar, Lansing, Michigan.

Approval of the February 11, 2020 Minutes

MOVED BY COMM. NAeyaERT, SUPPORTED BY COMM. SLAUGHTER, TO APPROVE THE FEBRUARY 11, 2020 MINUTES OF THE COUNTY CONTROLLER SEARCH COMMITTEE MEETING.

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY. Absent: Commissioners Grebner, Koenig, Morgan, Sebolt.

Commissioner Grebner arrived at 3:01 p.m.

Chairperson Crenshaw stated that there were two additional applications the committee would be reviewing due to the applicants’ requests for confidentiality, and the committee would enter into closed session to review those applications.

Limited Public Comment

None.

1. **Review Applications for Controller/Administrator Position (Closed Session)**

MOVED BY COMM. MAIVILLE, SUPPORTED BY COMM. SCHAFER, AT APPROXIMATELY 3:03 P.M. TO MOVE THE MEETING INTO CLOSED SESSION PER MCL 15.268(f) TO REVIEW AND CONSIDER THE APPLICATIONS FOR COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR CONSISTENT WITH THE APPLICANTS’ REQUESTS FOR CONFIDENTIALITY.
THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY ROLL CALL VOTE. Absent: Commissioner Koenig, Morgan, Sebolt.

Commissioner Sebolt arrived at 3:08 p.m.

Commissioner Koenig arrived at 3:10 p.m.

MOVED BY COMM. GREBNER, SUPPORTED BY COMM. MAIVILLE, TO RETURN TO OPEN SESSION AT APPROXIMATELY 3:19 P.M.

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY. Absent: Commissioner Morgan.

Commissioner Schafer asked, if the committee were to discuss the candidates that were reviewed in closed session, whether the committee members should keep their purple sheets.

Chairperson Crenshaw stated that the opportunity to discuss the candidates were in closed session.

Discussion.

Chairperson Crenshaw stated that if the applicant made it to the interview session, the committee members would have the candidates’ information.

Discussion.

Chairperson Crenshaw stated that the committee would go through the applications in order that they were in the binder. He further stated that the committee could discuss Candidate No. 2965642, or if any of the committee members wanted to rank the candidate in their rankings, the committee could do that now.

Commissioner Stivers stated that she liked Candidate No. 2965642. She further stated that she thought their judicial experience was really unique.

Commissioner Stivers stated that in a pile of candidates who either had a Master of Business Administration (MBA) or a Master of Public Administration (MPA), she thought that experience would be unique. She further stated that with their emphasis on communications and abilities to work with others, it seemed like a person who would have a long career.

Commissioner Naeyaert stated that her opinion of Candidate No. 2965642 was the opposite of Commissioner Stivers. She further stated that she did not think that the County needed someone who had judicial experience because the County had a court system.

Commissioner Naeyaert stated that with their academic record as an Administrative Law Judge, she did not see how that would serve the County. She further stated that she did not see anything in their resume that encourages any kind of communication, other than attorney speak.
Commissioner Grebner stated his concern was that the County Controller/Administrator was running an organization that was four or five levels deep.

Commissioner Slaughter stated that he agreed with Commissioner Grebner. Chairperson Crenshaw asked if any of the committee members wanted to further discuss Candidate No. 2965642 or add them to their rankings.

**VOTE TOTAL FOR CANDIDATE NO. 2965642: Stivers.**

Chairperson Crenshaw stated that the committee would discuss Candidate No. 2966155.

Commissioner Naeyaert stated that she thought it was funny that Candidate No. 2966155 called themselves young and gifted. She further stated that, again, an extensive financial background duplicated the efforts of what the County already had.

Commissioner Naeyaert stated that she thought the candidate did not have the experience the County wanted, and that it would be kind of a gamble.

Discussion.

Chairperson Crenshaw asked if any of the committee members wanted to further discuss Candidate No. 2966155 or add them to their rankings.

**VOTE TOTAL FOR CANDIDATE NO. 2966155: None.**

Chairperson Crenshaw stated that the committee would discuss Candidate No. 1967248.

Commissioner Maiville stated that he would like to submit Candidate No. 1967248 as one of his top four candidates. He further stated that the candidate had both strong, county-government and some health-related experience, which he knew the County had a substantial investment in their health community.

Chairperson Crenshaw stated that, if any of the committee members wanted to rank this candidate, to please raise their hands.

Discussion.

Commissioner Grebner stated that the normal career chain for a County Controller in Ingham County was to have been a Controller of a smaller County, roughly of the Ionia County or Grand Traverse County size. He further stated that this candidate seemed to have that experience, but there were aspects of their resume that made him suspect that the person was going to be a colorful individual.

Discussion.
Chairperson Crenshaw stated that was stood out for him was that, in their cover letter, the candidate talked about collaboration in planning. He further stated it was apparent that the candidate took their time to do the research to understand what Ingham County was facing and what the Board of Commissioners was looking for.

Commissioner Naeyaert stated that the candidate had all types of experiences that could benefit the County.

**VOTE TOTAL FOR CANDIDATE NO. 1967248:** Crenshaw, Grebner, Koenig, Maiville, Morgan, Naeyaert, Sebolt, Slaughter, Stivers, Trubac, Treasurer Eric Schertzing, Linda Vail, and Becky Bennett.

Discussion.

Chairperson Crenshaw stated that the committee would discuss Candidate No. 2967275.

Discussion.

Chairperson Crenshaw asked if any of the committee members wanted to further discuss Candidate No. 2967275 or add them to their rankings.

**VOTE TOTAL FOR CANDIDATE NO. 2967275:** None.

Chairperson Crenshaw stated that the committee would discuss Candidate No. 2969428.

Commissioner Naeyaert stated that she liked Candidate No. 2969428 because of their experience. She further stated that she appreciated the candidate’s work in drafting the Michigan Department of Treasury’s tobacco tax collection.

Commissioner Naeyaert stated that she appreciated the candidate’s work in tax-incentive policies and with disadvantaged businesses. She further stated that the candidate had a lot of policy work, and that Dane County in Madison, Wisconsin was a good-size County.

Commissioner Sebolt stated that he would be interested in interviewing this candidate.

Chairperson Crenshaw stated that, if any of the committee members wanted to rank this candidate, to please raise their hands.

**VOTE TOTAL FOR CANDIDATE NO. 2969428:** Crenshaw, Koenig, Maiville, Morgan, Naeyaert, Sebolt, Slaughter, Trubac, Clerk Barb Byrum, and Becky Bennett.

Commissioner Schafer stated that his only concern was that he was aware of what state employees made when they approached Level 17, 18, and 19, and it included a substantial salary and benefits. He further stated that was sometimes surprised when state employees would want to leave once they reached those levels.
Commissioner Stivers stated that the Level 17 pay was about what the County offered.

Commissioner Naeyaert asked Becky Bennett, Board of Commissioners Director, if the candidates knew what the pay range was.

Becky Bennett stated yes.

Chairperson Crenshaw stated that the candidates had indicated to Trillium Staffing Solutions what pay range they were willing to work with or accept.

Chairperson Crenshaw stated that the committee would discuss Candidate No. 2970150.

Commissioner Trubac stated that he liked Candidate No. 2970150.

Commissioner Naeyaert stated that she thought the candidate’s experience was too small to come up to this position level. She further stated that the candidate was the City Manager of a community in her district, and that there was not enough experience to operate at this position level.

Commissioner Maiville stated that he agreed with Commissioner Naeyaert.

Discussion.

**VOTE TOTAL FOR CANDIDATE NO. 2970150: Trubac.**

Chairperson Crenshaw stated that the committee would discuss Candidate No. 2972139.

Commissioner Stivers stated that she liked this candidate because of their education experience, as well as Accounting and an MBA, and emphasis on communication skills. She further stated that the candidate’s military experience might be useful for their battleground office.

Commissioner Naeyaert stated that she thought the candidate had too much financial experience, but she respected their National Guard service. She further stated that if they chose a candidate that was too heavy on finance, it oversteps the bounds of the Finance Department.

Commissioner Sebolt stated that he did not see where this candidate had any management experience, or being in-charge of the day-to-day work product of other people, so he did not think that it would be a good fit since they would be overseeing an office of employees.

Eric Schertzing, County Treasurer, stated that the Finance Department was pretty good, but it was a one-person show, and Gerald Ambrose, former County Controller, had a handle on all of that.

Commissioner Stivers stated that the candidate’s experience, in particular with special education and work with the Americans with Disabilities Act, to her was an important background and she felt that the candidate would be considerate of diversity. She further stated that that experience would be valuable.
VOTE TOTAL FOR CANDIDATE NO. 2972139: Stivers.

Chairperson Crenshaw stated that the committee would discuss Candidate No. 2973543.

Commissioner Naeyaert stated that she loved Candidate No. 2973543. She further stated that she liked having someone who knows the history and people of Ingham County, and already had established relationships.

Chairperson Crenshaw stated that, if any of the committee members wanted to rank this candidate, to please raise their hands.

VOTE TOTAL FOR CANDIDATE NO. 2973543: Crenshaw, Grebner, Koenig, Maiville, Morgan, Naeyaert, Schafer, Sebolt, Slaughter, Trubac, Treasurer Eric Schertzing, Clerk Barb Byrum, Linda Vail, and Becky Bennett.

Commissioner Grebner stated that looking at all of the resumes together put them into a new context.

Commissioner Naeyaert asked Commissioner Grebner to explain that further.

Commissioner Grebner stated that he had explained it. He further stated that he might have thought about Candidate No. 2973543 differently with a different collection of people to compare it to, but this was the collection of people they had.

Chairperson Crenshaw stated that the committee would talk about the collection of people in a minute.

Chairperson Crenshaw stated that the committee would discuss Candidate No. 2977236.

Chairperson Crenshaw stated that he liked Candidate No. 2977236.

Discussion.

Chairperson Crenshaw asked if any of the committee members wanted to further discuss Candidate No. 2977236 or add them to their rankings.

VOTE TOTAL FOR CANDIDATE NO. 2977236: Crenshaw, Schafer, Stivers, Treasurer Eric Schertzing.

Discussion.

VOTE TOTAL FOR CANDIDATE NO. 2969428: Koenig, Morgan, Naeyaert, Sebolt, Schafer, Stivers, Slaughter, Trubac, Clerk Barb Byrum, and Becky Bennett.

Discussion.
Chairperson Crenshaw reviewed the top four candidates for each of the committee members.

Chairperson Crenshaw stated the total votes for each of the candidates.

**Candidate No. 2973543**: 10 votes

**Candidate No. 2967248**: 10 votes

**Candidate No. 2969428**: 8 votes

**Candidate No. 855493**: 6 votes

**Candidate No. 2977236**: 3 votes

**Candidate No. 2972139**: 2 votes

**Candidate No. 518128**: 2 votes

**Candidate No. 2970150**: 1 votes

**Candidate No. 2965642**: 1 votes

**Candidate No. 2966155**: 0 votes

**Candidate No. 2967275**: 0 votes

Chairperson Crenshaw asked the committee members how they felt about the candidate pool that Trillium Staffing Solutions provided.

Commissioner Naeyaert stated that Trillium Staffing Solutions brought the committee a wealth of experience in different levels. She further stated that the committee had four potential candidates, and she thought that Trillium Staffing Solutions gave them what they needed.

Commissioner Grebner stated that the question the committee was being asked whether if the committee members were happy or satisfied with the pool of candidates. He further stated that he would answer no and yes.

Commissioner Grebner stated that he thought it was not a great pool of candidates, but if the committee tried again, he did not think they would get better candidates.

Commissioner Grebner stated that previous Ingham County Controllers had been the Clinton County Controller, or the Chief of Staff to a governor. He further stated that he thought that two of the candidates reached that level of having substantial experience running an organization the size of Ingham County.
Commissioner Stivers stated that if any of the committee members were not happy with the pool, she did not see any harm in the committee trying again. She asked if the committee could proceed with their favorite candidates, and also try again.

Chairperson Crenshaw stated that, in his opinion, if the committee wanted to try again, they should not interview anyone. He further stated that the committee should wait until all of the candidates were ready to be interviewed, and then conduct one-round of interviews.

Commissioner Stivers stated that trying again would not mean the committee could not also interview the current candidates, and that it would mean they would have to wait.

Chairperson Crenshaw stated, the longer the committee waited to interview the current candidates, the committee could lose those individuals.

Commissioner Schafer stated that he was satisfied with the pool of candidates, and that the committee should vote to move forward with the process. He further stated that delaying the vote would tell the candidates that they were not wanted.

Commissioner Naeyaert asked Ms. Bennett how much it would cost if the committee tried again. She stated that she was satisfied with the pool of candidates.

Ms. Bennett stated that it would not cost any more than what was already being paid, which was $25,000.

Commissioner Trubac stated that he was satisfied with the pool of candidates and should proceed with interviews.

Linda Vail, Health Officer, stated that, in her experience, if the committee interviewed these candidates, and then looked for other candidates, the current candidates could not be hired. She further stated that the committee could not keep them in consideration and then look for other candidates.

Discussion.

Commissioner Koenig stated that she thought it came down to if the committee wanted to interview three or four people. She further stated that she liked interviewing three people.

Commissioner Sebolt stated that he was satisfied with the pool of candidates. He further stated that he found five candidates, even though he was only required to find four candidates.

Commissioner Sebolt stated that being a part of another search committee made him worried about the applications, but he was pleasantly surprised by their quality. He further stated that he would rather interview the current candidates, and then take the risk of deciding not to move forward with any of the candidates, and try again.
Commissioner Slaughter stated that he was satisfied with the pool of candidates. He further stated that he agreed with Commissioner Koenig about interviewing three people.

Treasurer Schertzing stated that he would like to put it out there that the committee did not receive an application from a County Controller or Deputy Controller from around the State of Michigan. He further stated that he wondered what was going on.

Commissioner Maiville stated that he was going to speak to that as well. He further stated that he reiterated Commissioner Grebner’s comment that he was satisfied, but not happy, and that it might have been the County’s own fault.

Commissioner Grebner stated that he was in favor of interviewing four people, instead of three people, because there is a chance that one of the candidates becomes unavailable, or that something turned up in a background check.

Chairperson Crenshaw stated that he was in favor of interviewing four people.

Chairperson Crenshaw asked the committee members who supported interviewing four applicants to please raise their hands.

Chairperson Crenshaw stated that the top four candidates were: Candidate No. 2967248, Candidate No. 2969428, Candidate No. 2973543, and Candidate No. 855493.

Chairperson Crenshaw stated that the next step was scheduling interviews. He further stated that Ms. Bennett had Jury Duty the first week of April, and he was not sure how quickly turn around could be done.

Barb Byrum, County Clerk, stated that Spring Break was April 6th to April 10th.

Commissioner Schafer asked Chairperson Crenshaw if the committee had to wait until April.

Chairperson Crenshaw stated no.

Discussion.

Chairperson Crenshaw asked if the committee members were available the week of March 23rd and March 27th.

Discussion.

Chairperson Crenshaw stated that Daneen Jones from the Human Resources Department was having a retirement party in the afternoon of March 27th, but that did not preclude the committee from scheduling interviews in the morning.

Commissioner Stivers stated that she was unavailable in the morning.
Chairperson Crenshaw asked if March 25th worked for the committee members.

Commissioner Naeyaert stated that she was unavailable.
Discussion.

Chairperson Crenshaw stated that the committee could schedule the interviews on March 27th, and then could take a break because the retirement party was in the same building. He further stated that the Board of Commissioners could present Daneen Jones with the resolution that will be passed by County Services Committee, and then continue interviews.

Chairperson Crenshaw stated that Ms. Bennett would reach out to the candidates to see their availabilities on March 27th, starting at 12:30 p.m.

Chairperson Crenshaw asked the committee members to meet at 12:00 p.m. in the Human Services Building to have lunch. Chairperson Crenshaw stated that Ms. Bennett will send out an email with options for the committee members. He further stated that he would like to have lunch done before the interviews, no eating during the interviews.

Commissioner Stivers stated that she could not be at the Human Services Building until 12:30 p.m.

Chairperson Crenshaw asked if the committee wanted to have hour-long or 45 minute-long, with a 15-minute break, interviews.

Commissioner Schafer stated that 45 minute-long interviews would be good.

Chairperson Crenshaw stated that questions will be sent out to the applicants before the interviews that will be sent back to the committee to be reviewed.

Commissioner Naeyaert asked if the committee would be using the same pool of questions used for the Animal Control Director.

Chairperson Crenshaw stated no. He further stated that Ms. Bennett had a list of questions that she would email out to the committee members after the meeting.

Chairperson Crenshaw stated that the committee members could review those questions, and if any of the committee members had suggestions, to email those to Ms. Bennett and to cc his email. He further stated that he hoped that the list could be sent out by next week so that there would be a quick turnaround for the applicants to send back their responses.

Commissioner Grebner asked if the committee would be doing background checks on the applicants before the interviews.

Discussion.

Ms. Bennett stated that Trillium Staffing Solutions would be conducting background checks.
Commissioner Grebner stated that he would like to make a suggestion about the background check. He further stated that if there happened to be any media about the person that was substantial, it would be good to provide that information to the committee. Commissioner Grebner stated that he had never been a fan of canned questions. He further stated that the questions should be about the person’s life, not about canned situations that could be rehearsed.

Chairperson Crenshaw stated that he thought that they were talking about two different things. He further stated that there were a set of pre-questions sent out to the candidates, and it returned before the interview, and the committee members could ask questions based off of those questions.

Chairperson Crenshaw stated that there were a set of canned questions that every candidate gets out of fairness to each of the candidates. He further stated that one of the candidates was a current employee, and because the committee members could be bias, it provided an equal opportunity for all candidates.

Commissioner Grebner asked if he could not ask questions when he looked at their resumes, for example, why a candidate had left the City of Shelby.

Chairperson Crenshaw stated that he would be ruled out of order pursuant to employment law.

Commissioner Koenig asked why Commissioner Grebner could not ask that type of question.

Clerk Byrum stated that the committee members could ask the candidate, but not the employer.

Commissioner Sebolt stated that, because the candidate’s information would be subject to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), there should be a list of standard questions that all of the candidates were asked. He further stated that it not preclude the committee from asking additional questions that were not on that list, but the Human Resources Department should provide them with a list of topics that cannot be asked.

Discussion.

Commissioner Trubac stated that, for clarification, the committee members would have a list of questions, but then the committee members could ask additional questions.

Discussion.

Chairperson Crenshaw stated that that was how he preferred to ask questions. He further stated that he liked to follow-up to a question, not going off-script and asking about a specific situation that they were involved in because that could create bias.

Commissioner Trubac stated that he understood that concern, but he agreed with Commissioner Grebner in terms of the fact that these candidates were different people with different backgrounds, and the committee members might need more clarification on their backgrounds.
Chairperson Crenshaw stated that the list of topics from the Human Resources Department will provide guidance as to what can and cannot be asked.

Commissioner Schafer stated that, as far as background checks, the 9-1-1 Director was offered employment based on passing the background check.

Discussion.

Chairperson Crenshaw stated that the background checks will be completed before the interviews on March 27th.

Ms. Bennett stated that background checks could not be done unless they submit to one.

Clerk Byrum stated that the committee would want to interview the candidates, and then tell them that if the committee offered them the position, it would be contingent on a background check. She further stated that if the committee decided wanted to move forward with a candidate, then before the committee offered the position, the committee could complete the background check because the candidate already signed the release waiver.

Ms. Bennett stated that the media-based background check could be done quickly.

Discussion.

Commissioner Koenig stated that Clerk Byrum was correct, but she thought that she would rather not have any hiccups along the way.

Treasurer Schertzing stated that there were bigger picture issues in Ingham County about how background checks are completed.

Commissioner Koenig stated that she would rather know more now than later.

Ms. Bennett asked if the committee members wanted the candidates to sign the release waiver for the background check when she scheduled their interviews.

Commissioner Koenig stated that she wanted to know if the candidates were free-to-fly.

Clerk Byrum asked Commissioner Koenig what her test was for free-to-fly. She further asked if operating with a suspended license was acceptable, or if it included felonies and misdemeanors.

Commissioner Koenig stated that every one of those was important to know.

Discussion.

Clerk Byrum stated that, in her field when Clerks conducted background checks, the candidate either get a thumbs-up or a thumbs-down, so she questioned if the committee would be able to determine if they could run a lien.
Commissioner Koenig asked Ms. Bennett who the County used to do background checks.

Ms. Bennett stated that the County has used the Sheriff’s Department. Clerk Byrum stated that the Sheriff’s Department could not do that.

Commissioner Koenig stated that asked if it was in Trillium Staffing Solutions’ contract to conduct background checks.

Commissioner Naeyaert stated that she did not think that the Human Resources Department should have anything to do with background checks.

Chairperson Crenshaw stated that he agreed with Commissioner Naeyaert.

Discussion.

Announcements

Commissioner Stivers stated that courtesy of Community Mental Health (CMH), there were hand-sanitizers and tissues for the committee members.

Public Comment

None.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:08 p.m.

BARB BYRUM, CLERK OF THE BOARD