

**DUVAL COUNTY TOURIST DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL**  
**LEADERSHIP TRANSITION AND HIRING SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

Monday, February 14, 2021 - 2:00 P.M.  
Don Davis Room, City Hall

TDC Members In Attendance: Aaron Bowman (Chair), Dennis Thompson, Angela Phillips

TDC Staff: Lillian Graning (TDC Executive Director), Phillip Peterson (Council Auditor's Office), Reece Wilson (Office of General Counsel), Jeff Clements (Council Research Division)

Also: Michael Corrigan and Sarina Wiechens – Visit Jacksonville Inc., Diane Moser – Employee Services Department

**WELCOME**

---

Chairman Bowman called the meeting to order at 1:30. The members agreed to the distribution of questions to be posed to the interviewees and agreed that they would restrict themselves to the prepared list of questions, not adding any ad hoc questions. Ms. Moser talked about how to handle questions posed to the committee by the candidates. Mr. Bowman said the desired start date for the position is March 14<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Moser said that one of the six candidates chosen for interviews was unavailable today and was not scheduled for an alternate time.

Don Staley with the Tuscaloosa Tourism and Sports Commission in Alabama was interviewed with a series of 9 questions.

Brian Fike with Visit Jacksonville Inc. was interviewed with the same set of 9 questions.

Cecile Harper with Duval County Public Schools (formerly employed with several Central Florida theme parks) was interviewed with the same set of 9 questions.

Orenthius Hill with the Florida Sports Foundation was interviewed with the same set of 9 questions.

Brian London with Visit Florida Inc. was interviewed with the same set of 9 questions.

Following the interviews the committee discussed the relative merits of the candidates and listed their top ranked candidates:

Mr. Thompson: 1) Don Staley, 2) Brian Fike, 3) Orenthius Hill

Ms. Phillips: Orenthius Hill, Brian London and Cecile Harper, not in any particular order.

Mr. Bowman: 1) Cecile Harper, 2) Brian Fike, 3) Don Staley

Given the diversity of the rankings, Mr. Bowman suggested several possible ways to arrive at a conclusion with more discussion and possibly a cumulative points process. Ms. Moser said that assigning points makes those rankings a public record that must be released upon request. After some discussion Orenthius Hill, Brian Fike and Cecile Harper emerged as the 3 candidates with the most consensus. With Ms. Moser's consent, the committee asked TDC Executive Director Lillian Graning her opinion of the interviews and her impression of the candidates and she described the strengths and weaknesses she observed in the answers to the questions. Mr. Bowman asked Michael Corrigan, CEO of Visit Jax, for his impression of the candidates, which he gave. He said the candidates all have strengths in different areas and the ultimate selection might come down to the TDC's vision for the position and which candidate has more relevant experience and strength toward meeting that vision.

Ms. Moser said that she and Ms. Graning will sit down with the committee's top choice and explain in detail what the position involves and what resources are available so they have a good understanding of whether it's a good

fit for them before they make a decision. Ms. Graning said that roughly 70% of the job duties are contract and process-oriented, with 30% being more about strategy, creative thinking, and interpersonal relationships with various constituencies. Mr. Bowman noted that the TDC hired the current executive director with the expectation that it would be a two-person office, with one position concentrating more on contract and grant management processes and the other more on TDC board and external constituency relations and strategic thinking. The committee discussed the relative importance of the two aspects of the position given the 70/30 ratio of contract and grant management functions to board relations and strategy. Mr. Bowman said he envisions that after the hiring of a new City Council Secretary is accomplished, the Council office will be able to share a partial position with the TDC to perform many of the routine administrative tasks freeing up the Executive Director for more high-level functions.

Ms. Phillips asked if it would be possible to arrange second interviews with the top two candidates to delve more deeply into their qualifications and their understanding of the job. After further discussion the committee selected Brian Fike and Cecile Harper as the two candidates for second interviews. Mr. Bowman suggested that Ms. Moser discuss the committee's concerns about the two candidates with them to help them understand better what the job consists of and what the committee is looking for. The committee asked Ms. Moser and Ms. Graning to try to arrange for interviews on February 24<sup>th</sup> prior to the regularly scheduled TDC meeting (8:30 and 9:00 a.m. before the 10 a.m. TDC meeting). Mr. Bowman said he hoped that in-person interviews would help the committee gain a better understanding of the candidates and their expectations of the position. Ms. Graning and Ms. Moser will try to develop an exercise for both of the candidates to work on in advance of their interviews that might help clarify the committee's concerns.

Adjourn 5:07 p.m.

The minutes for this meeting was unanimously approved at the TDC meeting on February 24, 2022