

TOWN OF REDINGTON SHORES  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
**SPECIAL MEETING**  
**MINUTES**

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 4, 2003 – 7:00 P.M.

Present upon roll call: Commissioner Armstrong, Commissioner Reynolds, Commissioner Holmes, Vice Mayor Lishamer and Mayor Beyrouti

Selection of Town Administrator – Commissioner Holmes

Commissioner Holmes told the Commission additional information has been brought forward on the three candidates during the course of the day. Commissioner Holmes asked Mr. Chambers to start the review process of the candidates. Mr. Chambers reported to the Commission that after the final six candidates were picked he did extensive background work, reference checking, and newspaper work. Mr. Chambers in detail went through with the Commission references of each candidate. Listed are brief points from the references checked:

**Mark Eckert:**

Comments from the former personnel director of Cocoa Beach: excellent city manager, city was in debt when he arrived and when he left the city had a healthy reserve fund. Turned the city around financially. Mr. Eckert was an excellent teacher to employees, showed the employees how to be excellent employees. Ran the city like a business. Quite and laid back, but don't let the laid back approach fool you. He would be an excellent city manager for the Town of Redington Shores. Part of the problems he had in Cocoa Beach was running into resistance from residents in regard to change.

Comments from a former purchasing agent in Glenn County where Mr. Eckert was most recently the County Administrator. Mr. Eckert is a very dynamic individual in terms of his management and enthusiasm. He is very progressive and proactive. If there is a vision of any kind he is the man to make it happen. Mr. Eckert has a habit of using inappropriate language when getting irritated, but Mr. Eckert is working on this issue.

Comments from City Manager of Brunswick, GA. First comment made was that in intergovernmental relations, Mr. Eckert was the first County Administrator that he was able to effectively work with. Very professional, no nonsense manager. The citizens very well respect him. Gets the job done. The advice he would give Mr. Eckert would be to work on his inappropriate language problem.

Comments from County Commissioner from Glenn County. Mark is a very capable individual. Very pleased with his performance while he was with the county. Very good contract management skills. Advice would be to think back on his mistakes and work on them for the future. If he had the authority to hire him back, he would do it immediately.

**Paul Sabiston**

Comments from a City Manager from Glen Haven a neighboring city to Mexico Beach. Was very impressed with him. He put a lot of policies in place in Mexico Beach as they lacked on a lot of issues. Very intelligent, energetic, not a yes man. Conducts himself professionally, a hands on type of guy.

Comments from an owner of an engineering firm that does business with the City of Mexico Beach. Paul does an excellent job, well respected by elected officials. Cannot go wrong by hiring him.

Comments from the City Attorney for the City of Marietta GA. Good people skills, good clear thinker. Has no temper and gets along with everyone.

Comments from a President of a software company in Atlanta GA. (personal reference) Good family man, good dad. As a person professionally he would advise Paul to set goals and go after them. His work ethic is tremendous. Good facilitator, not a yes man.

Mr. Chambers told the Commission the previous night he had received an email from a staff member at the Florida League of Cities in regard to Mexico Beach. The email was in regard to a citizen-mandated audit that was being done in Mexico Beach by the State Auditor General Office and had heard there was an ethics complaint about Mr. Sabiston. Mr. Chambers called Commissioner Holmes in the morning so he could address the issue in his interview with Mr. Sabiston. Mr. Chambers received the audit by email. There are 38 findings and recommendations for correction. Most of the issues in the audit were prior to Mr. Sabiston's employment with Mexico Beach. When Mr. Sabiston started with Mexico Beach there were very little policies and procedures in place, which Mr. Sabiston has been working on establishing.

Commissioner Holmes told the Commission that during his interview with Mr. Sabiston he talked about the audit in progress. The audit started in March 2002. Mr. Sabiston has implemented polices that were lacking and that were addressed in the report. As far as the ethics violation, Mr. Sabiston was a little reluctant to discuss, as it is still under investigation. Mr. Sabiston did briefly discuss the issue. Mr. Sabiston and another official of Mexico Beach attended an auction to purchase vehicles for the city. While at the auction Mr. Sabiston selected two vehicles for himself and arranged to pay for the two vehicles from his own checking account. After leaving the auction, the auctioneer called to say it must be paid for by one check from the city. Mr. Sabiston talked to the Mayor, and Mr. Sabiston immediately wrote a check to the city for his vehicles. At this time the Ethics Commission has not finished their investigation.

Commissioner Reynolds queried as to why Mr. Sabiston did not bring this issue up when the question was asked if there was anything in his past that may be embarrassing to himself or the

Town, even if the answer was there might be a possibility. Mr. Chambers will check to see if he can get any other information on the issues.

**Dennis White**

Comments from a retired coworker of Mr. White. Very honest person, extremely ethical. When he makes a decision, he sticks with it. The only negative he can see, is Mr. White has moved around a lot in his career.

Comments from a retired Police Commander from the Miami/Dade Police Department. Very professional and forthright. Treated the Police Department very professionally.

Comments from the Village Clerk in the Village of Fireville. Extremely knowledgeable. Stickler for detail. Very articulate, dedicated. Staff enjoyed working for him. Appears to be hard nosed, arrogant, etc., but is not really that way.

Comments from the Public Works Director Village of Fireville. Mr. White was very instrumental in getting the staff on the right tract strategically. As an interim manager he has accomplished more than any manger in the last 10-years. Keeps everyone informed, not a yes man. Any negative press was project related.

Comments from the President Pro-tem of the Fireville Council. Very knowledgeable of municipal government. Exceptionally good at zoning issues. He challenges people, can get at odds with people who won't do things by policy, laws, etc. Can be very forceful to those who attack him. Straightforward guy, supports his employees. Advice would be to try to control his temper.

Mr. Chambers told the Commission that background information would be supplied to the Commission for the successful candidate, but there are not problems with any of the information. Commissioner Reynolds asked how many applications were received. Mr. Chambers told the Commission roughly 70 applications were received and 25-30 did qualify by the advertisement submitted. Commissioner Reynolds told the Commission some candidates indicated they would want more money than what the cap is at. Mr. Chambers told the Commission each applicant interviewed was asked if they accept the salary offered and if they indicated they did not, that they would want more, the interview did not go any further. Mr. Chambers asked each of the three candidates if they were ready to commit to the job if they were offered the position. Mr. Eckert and Mr. White both indicated they were, subject to contract negotiations. Mr. Sabiston indicated he had some reservations about housing and schools.

The Commission discussed the fact that they are not ready to select a candidate until further information can be obtained. Vice Mayor Lishamer asked if Mr. Chambers could re-advertise the position. Mayor Beyrouti suggested allowing Mr. Chambers to lead the way through the

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second step of this process. Mr. Chambers will go back through the resumes and fax them to Town Hall for the Commission to review, if by chance there are none the Commission would want to consider, then Mr. Chambers will re-advertise.

Mr. Chambers will check with Mr. Sabiston in regard to the auto purchases, taxes, status of ethic complaint, salary and question #30.

Commissioner Reynolds moved to postpone any decision until further information can be obtained in regard to candidate Paul Sabiston, seconded by Vice Mayor Lishamer. Roll call: all yes.

Mayor Beyrouiti thanked Mr. Chambers for his hard work and guidance.

Respectfully submitted

Mary F. Palmer, CMC  
Town Clerk