

Sidney, Nebraska October 14, 2025 Special Meeting – City Manager Recruitment

A meeting of the Mayor and Council of the City of Sidney, Nebraska, was convened in an open and public session at 9:00 a.m. on October 14, 2025 in the Council Room. Present in person: Mayor Bondegard and Council Members: Kerkman, Kuhns, Radcliffe, Lee. Others present: City Clerk Borchert, Attorney Strommen. Notice of the meeting was given in advance there of by publication in *The Sidney-Sun Telegraph*, the designated method for giving notice, a copy of the proof of publication being attached to these minutes. Advance notice of the meeting was given to the members of the City Council and a copy of their acknowledgment of receipt of notice is attached to these minutes. Availability of the agenda was communicated in the advance notice and the notice to the City Council. All proceedings shown hereafter were taken while the convened meeting was open to the attendance of the public.

Mayor Bondegard informed the public of the location of the posted Open Meetings Act.

A special session was held on Tuesday morning, October 14. Council conducted two separate zoom interviews as part of its efforts to select a recruiting firm for the City Manager position. The firms interviewed were Mercer Group Associates and Vacanti Municipal Consulting Services. Estimated costs if Council chooses to proceed with the hiring of the Mercer Group would be approximately \$32,500 versus Vacanti Municipal Consulting at \$40,000 plus expenses.

David Deutsch and Jeff Hale were present for the zoom meeting representing the Mercer Group. Deutsch stated that they would be our partner and work with us throughout the process. They would begin by meeting with Council, staff and the City Attorney. They will provide a brochure describing the community, the government, the position, the traits and qualities that Council is looking for to fill the position. They will target advertising, hitting ICMA and the Nebraska Managers Group. The Mercer Group will eventually narrow it down to 3 or 4 applications with reference and background checks. The process could take up to 100 days. Kerkman asked, at what point the Mercer Group would feel that they have completed their contract. Deutsch stated that the project would be complete when Council has selected the applicant and facilitated the contract. Hale stated that it is challenging to find City Managers due to the generational gap and locations, but they work extremely hard and target all types of advertising to find a City Manager suited for the City of Sidney. Lee asked if all fees were included in the proposal. Deutsch stated that it is broken out into two elements. Professional fees, which are fixed. Costs are estimated for expenses, advertising, background checks, but would only go over with Council permission. Strommen asked, after gathering resumes, if they do reference phone calls before bringing the candidate forward to Council. Hale stated that they do their due diligence before presenting the applications to Council. Strommen asked if they take into consideration our demographics. Deutsch stated this is an important element, which they would include in the brochure. Deutsch stated that Mercer also provides a one-year guarantee, that if the City Manager left within a year, they would provide the services again, at no cost.

Al Vacanti was present for the zoom meeting representing Vacanti Municipal Consulting Services. Vacanti proposed that he come out to set before a group, to review the history of the prior City Managers, to review what they have done and what the City Manager position is going forward. Vacanti would gather information and draft a catalog as a recruitment tool for the potential candidate. He would also target ICMA and the Nebraska Managers Group. Advertising would be a cost to the City. Vacanti recommended the applicant be a City Manager that has performed the duties of a City Manager. He also would make the applicant aware of the demographics, how many employees the City has, the budget, on going projects and highlight the City. His goal is to have the story matrix in three to four weeks. He anticipates that this process will be in place by mid-January, mid-March for the interviews and a qualified hired person end of March. Lee asked if his proposal included base pay of \$30,000 plus and additional \$10,000 if he was hired. Vacanti stated that that was correct. Kerkman asked how long Vacanti has been in business. Vacanti stated, since 2019. Strommen said that Vacanti is familiar with Sidney and with several of our City Managers as well as Nebraska.

Bondegard asked for a motion to go into closed session. Radcliffe moved, "That Council moves to closed session." Lee seconded. Roll call: Yeas: Kerkman, Kuhns, Bondegard, Radcliffe, Lee. Nays: None. Motion approved. Closed session begins at 10:13 am. Kerkman moved, "That Council comes out of closed session." Kuhns seconded. Roll call: Yeas: Kuhns, Bondegard, Radcliffe, Lee, Kerkman. Nays: None. Motion approved. Closed session ends at 10:41 am. No action taken.

Lee moved to adjourn the meeting. Radcliffe seconded. Roll call: Yeas: Bondegard, Radcliffe, Lee, Kerkman, Kuhns. Nays: None. Motion approved.

Meeting adjourned at 10:42 am.

ATTEST: /s/ Brandon Bondegard, Mayor

ATTEST: /s/ Lori Borchert/City Clerk