

Minutes for the Special Called Financial Management Committee Meeting
April 22, 2021
6 pm in Courtroom

Members present: Mayor Woodby, Supt Colbaugh, Supt McAbee, Brad Johnson, Travis Hill, Austin Jaynes, Ginger Holdren

Motion to approve the agenda was made by Brad Johnson, seconded by Mayor Woodby. All approved.

Motion to approve the regular March meeting minutes was made by Travis Hill, seconded by Austin Jaynes. All approved.

Roy Livingston from Hampton addressed the committee during public comments requesting an update on the Finance Director resignation. He asked Dr. McAbee if the school system was trying to get its own finance director. Director Burke explained that the schools were just hiring a manager of the ESSER funds which totals about \$20 million dollars. He said 1% of that money was to be set back for a manager of those funds.

New Business

Director Burke discussed his resignation, saying it was just too much work. He thanked the committee for the opportunity, and the committee thanked him.

The job description posted on Indeed was discussed--5 yrs government experience, 5 yrs supervisory experience, BS in accounting or similar, experience with budgets of \$20 million or more, proficient in Excel, and preferred work in organizations of 100 employees or more.

The committee discussed hiring a director on a temporary basis and holding back part of the salary until an evaluation is performed. These items are to be discussed with Attorney Hardin.

Mayor Woodby stated that we have had 4 finance directors in 10 years and she would like to know what is happening in the finance department. Director Burke said that he does not think the 81 Act works for a county this size. The school needs its own finance director. He said our current finance department is doomed from the beginning because some of the reporting and long-range planning that needs to be done is not getting done. Commissioner Johnson agreed that the 81 Act may no longer work for our size (we are 25th in the state, out of 95, based on population). Director Burke said the 57 Act or general state organization may work better for the county so that the school system can have its own finance director. Commissioner Jaynes stated that maybe we should have two assistant directors and one of them be in charge of the schools but the county remains under the 81 Act. Dr McAbee reminded the committee that he has 892 employees and Dr Nave herself has 6 federal budgets to manage. The school system has had to wait on things because our finance department can't get to it. Supt Colbaugh replied that the 81 Act works well for his department. Commissioner Jaynes responded that we may just need

more staff in the finance department or that the school system can hire their own financial staff but they still report to CC Finance Dept. Travis Hill stated that Elizabethton has 6 employees in its finance department and they do not manage the school system's finances, nor act as Human Resources dept. Chairwoman Holdren agreed that FMC needs to look at the structure of our finance department after we hire our new finance director and asked to table the discussion. Brad Johnson said that we need to ask Attorney Hardin about other options.

We have 12 applications for the finance director position so far. Austin Jaynes said that we may need to pay more for that position. Chairwoman Holdren said that we can't pay a higher salary to the finance director and hire a second assistant director. Michael Kennedy stated that it's not fair for the director and assistant director to attend meetings and not get paid for them. Brad Johnson reminded Mr. Kennedy that salary covers all responsibilities including meetings. Austin Jaynes asked us to consider a higher salary for our finance director. Chairwoman Holdren said the committee will cross that bridge when we get there. Director Burke told the committee to alert applicants that they may be coming into a situation that is changing. Holdren stated that we cannot address the unknown. Burke said we need to tell applicants what they are up against. Holdren countered that we need to balance honesty with optimism. At that point Mayor Woodby said there is a definite problem in the finance department and she would like to hire someone who will stay with us, even retire with us. Austin Jaynes talked about how everyone does things differently and the new finance director will restructure the department to suit him/herself. Holdren agreed that different leadership styles produce different results--stating that she is being optimistic that someone can find the solution with what is given or effectively communicate to the 24 commissioners that something must change. Director Burke disagreed with Chairwoman Holdren's opinion and declared that no one would give more time or be more dedicated to the position than he was. He reiterated that his many, many hours of work in the evenings and on weekends was required or there would be no budget agenda, for example. Brad Johnson stated that it will take at least 120 days for the new director to get indoctrinated for us to make a recommendation as to any changes that need to be made. Travis Hill asked how many commissioners have their pet projects and ask Brad for reports all of the time. Michael Kennedy replied that there are people who are very demanding.

Supt Colbaugh turned the meeting back onto the application process. If Chairwoman Holdren will look over the applications and narrow down the field, then the committee will not have to score all applicants on the rubric. He further suggested that we kick out any applications lacking the posted qualifications, that Michael can fill in till we find someone. Austin Jaynes replied that Michael is sitting here telling us that he can't do it. Michael remarked that he can't do it, that there are things Dir Burke has not taught him to do.

The committee came up with the following schedule to look at applicants/interview:

May 10 from 3-5 pm

May 18 from 3-5 pm

May 19 from 3-5 pm

May 24 beginning at 3 pm.



