



CITY OF RAPID CITY

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November 16, 2016

Rapid City Common Council
300 6th Street
Rapid City, SD 57701

Re: Update on Department Director Vacancies

Dear Council Member:

I am writing to give you an update on current department director openings and the hiring process.

As you know, we have retained the services of Waters and Company, a recruiting firm to help us fill department director vacancies in the Planning Department and the Public Works Department.

At the onset of our recruiting/hiring efforts, we made a conscious decision not to search for the Public Works Director until after a Planning Director was hired. The strategy here, was to avoid sending a false message of turmoil or destabilization in Rapid City.

In mid-July, the consultant notified us that there were several Planning Director candidates who had been prescreened, and their application materials and resume were made available to us. We further screened the available applicants and chose three to be interviewed. Near the end of August 2016 we interviewed three candidates all of which were ultimately found to be unsuitable.

Following the interviews, we met with the consultant and agreed to make minor adjustments to our advertising package. We also agreed to ease into the Public Works Director search at this time.

In early November, three more planning candidates were prescreened and made available to us. Those three candidates are currently being considered, but after viewing the application materials I do not believe we will be interviewing all three of them.

Considering the slow progress identifying potential candidates, and the qualifications of the Planning candidates, I believe there may be a problem with our advertised salary range.

Currently, we are advertising up to \$115,000, and we are attracting mainly second-tier applicants who may have been a division manager or general planner in their previous place of employment. Most are currently making between \$80,000 and \$95,000 annually. We have yet to attract a top-tier Planning Director from a jurisdiction comparable in size to Rapid City.

I would not be comfortable increasing the starting pay range without getting prior Council approval to do so. I should consult with others on the selection team, but my sense is that we need to offer up to step 23 on the pay scale, or \$126,827. If and when the time comes, I will place an item on the Council agenda for your consideration. I will not do this until we have either hired one of the current candidates or disqualified the three. In the event I request the increase, I would only ask to be authorized to negotiate up that amount, based on experience etc.

As far as the workload of our Interim Public Works/Planning Director, Dale Tech: approximately 10% of his time is taken up with Planning Department duties. This is due to the fact that there are three division managers within the Planning Department who are carrying the bulk of the director duties. Work is status quo in the Planning Department. Public Works remains Mr. Tech's number one priority. In the last week or so, I met with Mr. Tech to discuss Planning Director openings and the current situation we are in. We discussed the options including lowering the hiring standard to get the Planning opening filled so that we can focus on Public Works. Mr. Tech urged at that time that we stay the course and not compromise the hiring process integrity. He believes, as do I, that the Planning Director is the number one hiring priority.

Mr. Tech is not operating in the ideal environment, but his situation in no way equates to a personal or professional crisis. Mr. Tech reports that he has a good work/home balance and is not stressing out with the current situation. It is logical that Mr. Tech's status as Interim Director of two departments has led to some back logging of work, as well as being a disincentive for accepting additional tasks over and above the scope of his current duties. I check in with him routinely to assess his situation and monitor his well-being.

Yesterday, I was informed that the first batch of Public Works candidates are working their way through the system and will be available to us any day. I will request a Council member be part of that interview panel.

I am convinced we are on the right track, and I would encourage the City Council to be patient with this process. It is in all of our best interests to get these two positions filled as soon as practical.

If you have further questions, or would like additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Steve Allender, Mayor
Rapid City, South Dakota