COUNTY CONTROLLER SEARCH COMMITTEE  
February 11, 2020  
Minutes

Members Present: Crenshaw, Grebner, Koenig, Maiville, Morgan, Naeyaert, Schafer, Sebolt, Slaughter, Stivers, Trubac.

Members Absent: None.

Others Present: Treasurer Eric Schertzing, Clerk Barb Byrum, Becky Bennett, Michael Tanis, and others.

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Crenshaw at 6:45 p.m. in the Board of Commissioners Caucus Room of the Mason Courthouse, 341 S. Jefferson, Mason, Michigan.

Limited Public Comment

None.

1. Timeline for the Controller Search Committee

Becky Bennett, Board of Commissioners Office Director, stated that she had met with the Trillium Staffing Solutions the day prior, and was told that the County Controller job posting had been posted in various places, including the International County/City Managers Association. She further stated that Trillium Staffing Solutions had been talking to five individuals, and by the end of the week, the Search Committee could receive their resumes.

Chairperson Crenshaw stated that he wanted to get a sense of a timeline. He further asked if the County Controller job posting should be posted for a limited amount of time.

Commissioner Stivers stated that she thought the Search Committee should accept resumes on a rolling basis until a candidate was found.

Commissioner Naeyaert stated that she thought there should be a deadline.

Commissioner Morgan stated that he thought that the acceptance of resumes on a rolling basis could be subjective. He further stated that he supported a deadline and thought the deadline should be fairly soon.

Discussion.

Commissioner Sebolt asked if Trillium Staffing Solutions would be reading through the resumes of the applicants.
Ms. Bennett stated yes.

Chairperson Crenshaw asked if February 28, 2020 should be the closing date for applications. Commissioner Naeyaert stated that she agreed. She further stated that if Trillium Staffing Solutions decided that none of the applicants were qualified, the Search Committee could extend the deadline.

Commissioner Slaughter asked Ms. Bennett if she knew whether Trillium Staffing Solutions was making sure that the Search Committee would receive diverse applicants for the position.

Ms. Bennett stated that Ingham County Human Resources had also posted the County Controller job posting, so it would be posted wherever the County normally posted to.

Discussion.

Ms. Bennett stated that the job posting was posted on LinkedIn, Facebook, and other social media platforms. She asked if Commissioner Slaughter had a specific platform in mind.

Commissioner Slaughter stated that he did not know at this time.

Ms. Bennett stated that she would reach out to Trillium Staffing Solutions to ask if they had reached out to diverse applicants.

Discussion.

Commissioner Grebner stated that, in other Search Committees, the first applications were so bad that this Search Committee should consider reviewing all of the resumes received, and they might have to extend the deadline.

Chairperson Crenshaw stated that the next agenda item was meant for setting dates for applications and possible interviews.

Chairperson Crenshaw asked Ms. Bennett to tell Trillium Staffing Solutions that February 28, 2020 was their deadline, but that the deadline could be extended.

Commissioner Stivers clarified her earlier statement and stated that she had meant not to accept resumes on an indefinite rolling basis, but to leave the door open for multiple rounds.

Discussion.

Commissioner Stivers stated that she wondered if the Search Committee should reach out to the Equal Opportunity Committee for their advice.

Commissioner Koenig stated that she thought it could be a good idea.
Chairperson Crenshaw asked Ms. Bennett to send the County Controller job posting to the Chair of the Equal Opportunity Committee.

2. **Setting Dates for Applications to be Returned and Reviewed for Possible Interviews**

Chairperson Crenshaw asked if Trillium Staffing Solutions had five potential applicants.

Ms. Bennett stated yes, but was not sure how many of their resumes would be sent to the Search Committee by the end of the week.

Chairperson Crenshaw asked if there should be a Search Committee meeting after the Board of Commissioners meeting on February 25, 2020 to review applications.

Commissioner Morgan stated that he thought it could be unfair to the applications who applied after February 25, 2020, and believed the Search Committee should wait until after the deadline.

**Discussion.**

Commissioner Grebner stated that he thought Ms. Bennett should look at the applications to determine whether the deadline needed to be extended. He further asked if the applications were public record.

Ms. Bennett stated that the applications were not public record until the interview process.

**Discussion.**

Commissioner Stivers asked, if the Search Committee was not going to talk about the applicants until March 10, 2020, if the deadline should be moved to March 6, 2020.

**Discussion.**

Barb Byrum, County Clerk, stated that March 10, 2020 was the Michigan Presidential Primary. She further stated that, if it was possible, the county-wide elected officials had requested to review the resumes of the final two applicants, and to meet in a group with the two finalists for lunch to get to know the individuals.

Commissioner Morgan asked Clerk Byrum to clarify if she meant the county-wide elected officials on the Search Committee.

Clerk Byrum stated yes.

Commissioner Morgan stated that he was opposed to that idea.

Commissioner Naeyaert stated that she was opposed to that idea.
Chairperson Crenshaw stated that if the application deadline was March 6, 2020, it would not give the Search Committee enough time to vet the applicants.

Ms. Bennett stated that the applicants would be vetted before they would be sent to her.

Clerk Byrum asked if someone applied to the job posting on the Ingham County website if an individual was applying through the County or Trillium Staffing Solutions.

Ms. Bennett stated that everyone would be applying through Trillium Staffing Solutions.

Commissioner Morgan stated that thought it would be fine to have the applicants wait a few days to hear back, as one would expect from a high-level job position.

Discussion.

Eric Schertzing, County Treasurer, stated that he thought the last two candidates for the County Controller position had met with all of the Department Heads and county-wide elected officials.

Commissioner Morgan stated that he thought if the Search Committee was restricting access to the applications under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), the Search Committee should not be picking and choosing the people on the committee who had that information.

Commissioner Grebner stated that, as the Search Committee narrowed down the applicants, he thought there was a number that triggered an Open Meetings Act.

Ms. Bennett stated that the meeting itself would be open to the public.

Commissioner Grebner stated that he thought the Search Committee would narrow down the applicants, and, at that point, a meet-and-greet that would expose the applicants to questions and conversations with the Department Heads and county-wide elected officials.

Ms. Bennett stated that the meet-and-greet would be after the interview.

Discussion.

Chairperson Crenshaw stated that the Search Committee would meet March 6, 2020 at 3:00 p.m. at the Human Services Building in the Human Resources Conference Room, if available. He further asked Ms. Bennett to schedule the Search Committee meeting for that date and time.

Chairperson Crenshaw stated that, after the Search Committee saw the applications and narrowed down the list of potential candidates, the committee could talk about interviews. He further asked if Trillium Staffing Solutions would be conducting the background checks.

Ms. Bennett stated yes.
Chairperson Crenshaw stated that the Search Committee for the Public Defender sent out questions in advance. He further asked if this committee needed to do so.

Ms. Bennett stated that she had the previous questions for the Public Defender, and would send those out to the committee.

Commissioner Naeyaert stated that she would be fine if the county-wide elected officials created questions for the potential candidates. She further asked Clerk Byrum when the next meeting was for county-wide elected officials.

Chairperson Crenshaw stated the next county-wide elected official meeting was in April.

Clerk Byrum stated that the officials could meet anytime.

Discussion.

Chairperson Crenshaw asked Ms. Bennett to send the Search Committee the questions from the Public Defender Search Committee, and to collect the newly-created questions from Clerk Byrum and Treasurer Schertzing.

Ms. Bennett asked if those questions would be given out in advance.

Chairperson Crenshaw stated yes. He further stated that the committee would have the questions before them as they interviewed the candidates.

Chairperson Crenshaw stated that the committee should expect an email from Ms. Bennett with the questions and to inform her of any suggestions. He further stated that the questions would be finalized at the March 6, 2020 Search Committee meeting.

Chairperson Crenshaw stated that the questions would be sent out the potential candidates. He further asked Ms. Bennett to coordinate the interview schedule.

Ms. Bennett stated that there were also standard interview questions.

Chairperson Crenshaw asked Ms. Bennett to send the Search Committee both sets of questions to the committee members.

Discussion.

Treasurer Schertzing asked if the job description for County Controller had changed.

Ms. Bennett stated that the job description had not changed since 2013.

Commissioner Naeyaert stated that it was important to discuss the job description because the Board of Commissioners had previously discussed if the salary needed to be changed.
Commissioner Sebolt stated that his document said it was updated in 2010. He further stated that the document stated that the salary amount ranged between $127,900 and $153,600.

Chairperson Crenshaw stated that the salary was correct but the duties had changed.

Discussion.

Commissioner Stivers asked if Search Committee should send the job description to the Human Resources Department to conduct a salary comparison.

Chairperson Crenshaw stated he thought it was possible if the committee thought the job warranted an increased salary.

Discussion.

Chairperson Crenshaw asked Ms. Bennett to work with Beth Bliesener, Human Resource Specialist, to upload the correct job posting onto the Ingham County website.

Commissioner Grebner stated that the details of the job were set by Resolution by the Board of Commissioners. He further stated although that the Search Committee could not alter the job description without going through the Board of Commissioners’ rules, the Board of Commissioners were not bound by their own Resolutions.

Commissioner Koenig stated that the Search Committee could ask the Human Resources Department to find comparable salaries from other counties.

Discussion.

Commissioner Morgan stated that the Search Committee should not rely on the Human Resources Department to do much these days. He further stated that if the Search Committee wanted to conduct a salary comparison, the committee could look at the Michigan Association of Counties for that information.

Commissioner Naeyaert asked if the committee would be reaching out to the Human Resources Department to update the website.

Chairperson Crenshaw stated that he had asked Ms. Bennett to work with Ms. Bliesener to update the website.

Clerk Byrum stated that the Search Committee could reach out to the largest counties in Michigan to ask about their Controllers’ salaries.

Chairperson Crenshaw stated that only four counties in Michigan had the Controller designation.

Ms. Bennett stated that the Livingston County Controller was paid more than the Ingham County Controller, as their pay tapped out at $160,000.
Discussion.

Public Comment

None.

Commissioner Announcements

None.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

BARB BYRUM, CLERK OF THE BOARD