

TAHOE REGIONAL PLANNING AGENCY
AD HOC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SEARCH COMMITTEE

TRPA and Zoom

July 8, 2022

Meeting Minutes

Mr. Hester said this meeting will not be called to order because the agenda was physically posted at sites as required and listed on the website but the agenda and some of the meeting materials didn't get on the website more than three days ago. Mr. Marshall suggested that the meeting not be called to order but the group could go through the materials without taking any actions.

Introductions:

John Hester, TRPA Chief Operating Officer and Interim Executive Director
Katherine Huston, TRPA Paralegal
Chris Keillor, TRPA Finance Director
Sonja Prothman, Prothman Company
Shelly Aldean, TRPA Governing Board, Carson City Representative
Vince Hoenigman, TRPA Governing Board, Governor of California Appointee
Steve Worthington, Prothman Company
Shay Navarro, TRPA Stormwater Program Manager
Jim Lawrence, TRPA Governing Board, Nevada Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Representative
Cindy Gustafson, TRPA Governing Board, Placer County Representative
Angela Atchley, TRPA Human Resources and Organizational Development Director
Marsha Burch, TRPA Legal Department

Mr. Worthington, Prothman Company said he is a retired City Manager from the State of Washington and has been doing recruitment for about ten years now. Previous to that he was a Community Development Director overseeing, planning, and permitting functions for a couple of different Washington cities. He's also served in various roles with the Puget Sound Regional Council. When he retired as City Manager for the City of Fife, Washington, he was living in the City of University Place where he is in his third term on the City Council and is currently Mayor for the City of University Place.

Through this process, there will be some important opportunities for the committee to interact in several ways during the course of this. One of the things they work towards is building a position profile for the opening and that profile is designed to drive interested candidates to their website to complete the online application process. They review applications and decide if the applicant meets the minimum requirements and then Prothman will conduct interviews.

The position profiles is a key piece for them. In the materials they submitted in their Request for Proposal there are examples of what that position profile looks like. It's a little bit of a glossy piece with eye catching photos of this beautiful place. It also has other information about the community and the Agency. Then it talks about what the ideal candidate is, what some of the challenges are, and what's in front of this person. That

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information that's going to go in that brochure or position profile is information he is looking to glean from the group over the next several weeks. He appreciated how the Agency and Governing Board has thought about this and done quite a bit of outreach to the staff. There are some opportunities for the staff to participate virtually from what he can see by survey and other means. All of that works very well and he's glad to see that the Agency has an interest in integrating the staff comments into the process. That's not always the case, but he finds the most successful ones have engaged the people that work with the Executive.

They're targeting to complete the profile in the next two weeks and will post that and open up their outreach. These days it's all about electronic media, email, and they have an abundant and very good list of associations that are related to this work. They use that list as a mailing list and post in national and regional publications about the job opening which also drives folks to the website to start the application process. They'll be doing outreach for about five weeks, and then after that, when they reach their first review date, they don't really close the process, they'll keep taking applications in until the last moment if there's a good application that comes in.

When the first review date comes up, he'll start scheduling interviews which takes about a week to schedule someone these days, and then it takes about a week to get the interview done and write up the report. He'll then then present that report at a work session.

Today, they'll be talking in general about what those date horizons can look like. The committee will decide in that work session who they wish to have a final interview with. The final interview will take place with the Governing Board as he understands it and the suggestion has been to schedule these meetings around the regular routine meeting dates. Ms. Prothman has prepared a schedule that reflects that and it gives them a starting point.

In the stakeholder process, some of the things that the committee provides to him are going to go into the brochure/position profile but some information will be held by him for the screening. They'll look at those characteristics and other items that were identified to see how the candidate matches up. That will help him in scoring and trying to find the best match possible.

He would like to meet with each of the Governing Board members virtually, in person, or they can also submit information in writing. Interviews will take about 20 or 30 minutes for him to gather information on where you see the challenges in front of this person, the expectations they have, what experiences are a good match, and what are the inherent skills this person should have as well, and we put all that together. Earlier today, Ms. Prothman distributed an updated schedule to the group.

Ms. Prothman said it's going to be a five week open window for the recruitment with Labor Day falling in there. It might be better to try to work that process with Ms. Atchley then everyone trying to look at this right now.

Mr. Worthington said they would like to be able to conduct those stakeholder meetings starting as early as next week and concluding by July 25. With that, they could start the posting on August 1.

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They've reviewed their proposal with the outline and they match up pretty well. There are a few small points that they'll get some refinements on from staff. Basically the process that was outlined in staff's internal document is very close to the process that they're proposing as well.

Mr. Hester asked if they could talk about the process for doing mixed panels for interviews.

Mr. Worthington said involving various interests out there for final interviews is a very good idea and is usually done in a panel format. One of the things they've discovered over time is when you put those panels together, they perform better if you integrate the panel. You take an employee and you put them next to a citizen member or a special interest member, for example. It kind of breaks the mold a little bit, and it helps people open up their thought processes instead of being rather narrow at times.

Ms. Prothman said the hiring authority is always in a panel together. They don't mix them, but they found that the staff is looking for completely different things from who their new boss is going to be. So, when they go into the debrief after each interview that the conversation for example could be this guy wants us to be at work at 8:00 instead of 8:30.

They had an instance where in a police chief recruitment, there was a school board person, and a high school principal were looking for the police candidates to say of course we'll put extra police at your high school. So, when they didn't answer their specific question, then it becomes candidate assassination. When they would get into the debrief with the panel and the hiring authority, the hiring authority had their number one, staff panel had their number one, and then the other panel has their number one based on their special interests. They don't ask them to rank, because they don't want to put the hiring authority in a corner. They do strengths, weaknesses, or strengths and challenges and is how they report them back in the debrief after the panels of interviews. They found that it makes it much more positive, and that helps the panel that's making the decision. It's a good process and they also like to have a public reception the evening before with stakeholders. They put a box with comment cards at the reception, so everybody can feel like they can have a voice and give comments in a social setting talking to the candidates. For the final interview, they'll collaborate with the team to design it, they are not a cookie cutter organization. They want to work together to meet all your needs, meet all your stakeholders needs and organizations that you're all involved with. Anybody that you believe needs to be involved will be involved in some way.

Mr. Worthington said he'll assist or be doing the facilitation with the Board. If there's panels, they can use other facilitators in there as well in order to smooth out the final interview, and make sure everybody has the same expectations.

Going into that final interview, there'll be background reports on each of the finalists.

Committee Comments & Questions

Ms. Aldean said she's been on the TRPA Governing Board for nearly 20 years and participated in this process back in 2003 to hire a new Executive Director. Depending on scheduling, one of the things that she found effective in the past was that they dedicated a full day to the process. In the morning, there was an interview panel and she likes their idea of integrating the participants in those panels because people gain a better understanding

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that although that may be the criteria they're using is a little myopic. If they're going to hire somebody who can interact effectively with a wide variety of people with different interests, they need somebody who's sensitive to a variety of issues and not specifically honing in on one particular issue, whether it be staff related or related to the community in general.

They had a panel with stakeholders, however that's defined by the process in the morning then they broke for lunch. The Governing Board was encouraged to attend in and sit in the audience during this panel discussion with stakeholders. When they broke for lunch, the Governing Board conveyed and conducted their interviews and made a decision. She noticed that in the calendar of events here, it appears that there's a full month separating the interview of a candidate and then a selection of a preferred candidate. She feels that's too long, you need to strike when the iron is hot. People will have just interviewed and feels that the Board should move to deliberate and make their selection immediately after their interviews.

Mr. Worthington said having a full month between interview and decision point is long and does have the potential of jeopardizing the selection process, in that the person may find another opportunity. They've written the schedule to accommodate what they understand the Governing Board schedule is, and that's been sort of the initial driver. However, depending upon how the Governing Board chooses to do its work, if they were to delegate some authority to this committee or some other process to negotiate a contract, so that the final action and not really the decision point taking place, but approving a final contract, 30 days from the interview would be a bit more productive all the way around.

Ms. Aldean said they do have a bit of flexibility. When the meetings for the calendar year are sent to the Board, they're asked to set aside not only the fourth Wednesday, but the fourth Thursday of the month. They could conceivably have the Governing Board meeting on Wednesday and the interviews the following day. That accommodates people who are on the Governing Board who have to travel any distance.

Mr. Hester said staff put together a schedule and gave it to the Operations and Governance Committee who said it looked fine. Staff's anticipation was during this process this committee could tweak that schedule. If the idea of doing the interviews the same day or a week apart, or whatever is the preference of the committee, there's no reason they can't tweak that at the direction of the committee.

Ms. Aldean said Prothman will screen the applications and narrow those down to 6 to 12 candidates. Would that include or exclude internal candidates?

Mr. Worthington said it would include internal candidates.

Ms. Aldean asked if Prothman would be screening those internal candidates, and possibly eliminating them as a prospect.

Mr. Worthington said possibly so. If the internal candidate did not meet the minimum qualifications, he would essentially exclude the candidate. The fact is that if it's an internal candidate, frankly, he gives a little more latitude, because the Agency knows the individual, and so it's his recommendation in that setting is a little different. You as an agency have some perspective from working with that person. He has the perspective of interviewing

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hundreds of people. It's not a hard and fast exclusion on minimums with an internal, but it may well be his recommendation to exclude.

Ms. Aldean said the Agency put together a very comprehensive job description. Joking with the current Executive Director, you'd have to be a paragon of virtue in order to qualify for this position. On the other hand, they want to be very selective. Mr. Prothman indicated that for purposes of making the brochure more digestible that they were not going to use all of these desired qualifications but would use them as part of the screening criteria. Isn't that going to invite candidates who are not qualified based on the attributes that they're looking for.

Mr. Worthington said some of those attributes are very subjective. For example, when they talk about someone's collaboration, that's a pretty subjective distinction to make and there'll be degrees of that he'll see in an individual as they tell him about their work history and their achievements. There's some other things such as the minimum years of experience with five years of executive management of an organization of a similar size. This is just an example as he hasn't read that description yet. That's a pretty bright line and when there's a bright line, he's going to determine if people have crossed that line or not. Those bright line issues are going to be in the brochure. The more subjective things may not be and so that's another way to make a distinction.

Mr. Worthington said as they go forward with this, they'll work with the staff to coordinate scheduling 20 to 30 minute interviews for stakeholder comments. Another item that inevitably comes up is the issue of salary. There's a range that is associated with position now and as they get near a decision, they may need to make a decision about someone that's towards the top end of the range, even though they're anticipating being more mid-range in the 25th percentile. There are a few other dollar and sense items that pop up such as relocation allowance. Next to the starting salary, vacation is probably the next thing that a candidate wants to negotiate.

Mr. Hester said one other thing that Ms. Prothman mentioned previously is the trends for the size of the applicant pool.

Ms. Prothman said the baby boomers are not completely retiring yet but they are not looking for their next job. A lot of their executive director levels have gone from 45 to 50 applications down to 14 and in some cases 12 even in some of the really high-paid areas. For example, the City of Tacoma, Deputy City Manager there were eight and the salary range went up to around \$205,000. They're hearing because of Covid and housing, that maybe for the two years that people haven't been applying for jobs, that now they're all getting a little more unhappy with their positions or they're getting ready to start looking. They are hoping to see the application pools go up. They are very targeted in their advertising and outreach. They don't go to the little nickel or local newspapers because they don't have an executive director in each in those local areas. They get a few here and there that put in applications that aren't qualified. Also they're finding that most of the executive level all put their applications in in the last week. They have all kinds of privacies with the application process. They assure people that their names are not going to get released, but still people are nervous because they have had people get fired when their Board, or a council member found out that they've done an application. They work to gain the Agency's trust along with

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the trust of the candidates. They won't release the names until they've been chosen as a finalist and they've had a chance to tell their Board.

Housing and relocation cost is going to be an issue so they may want to think about incentives. It would be great if they could find somebody within the area that is qualified and wants this job and is a good fit.

Ms. Aldean said there's a myriad of reasons why somebody would wait to submit an application based on their current situation and assumes that doesn't mean there are procrastinators by nature.

Ms. Prothman said no, it's very common. Across the board in Public Works Directors to Executive Directors, and City managers probably get 80 percent of the applications in the final week.

Mr. Hester said this committee will be added to the Governing Board agenda under reports so the committee chair can report out on the progress. He doesn't anticipate they'll want to know the count every week but whatever information needs to be disseminated to the Board can be done so by Prothman.

Mr. Worthington said once they get to the first review date, within about 48 hours of that, they'll provide a summary of whoever's appropriate. It won't have names but will but will have some of the basic characteristics of the applicants such as what state they're from, their education, and previous executive director experience. It will be in summary and will provide a sense of the flavor of the pool, but it doesn't disclose anyone.

Public Comments & Questions

Jan Brisco, Tahoe Lakefront Owners Association said she's excited about the search and glad to see your very well organized and represented on this committee. But she didn't see any stakeholder representatives such as a land owner, any real estate, or residential property interest representatives and that's very difficult and disconcerting to them, especially over these years where that's been a very major stakeholder in the basin. There are three people on this committee that represent business tourism Chamber of Commerce, there's all the nonprofits represented, but doesn't quite understand a couple of these. There needs to be a citizen, a layperson, a real estate, a residential property owner as an executive director for a property owners association. Many of you know her and they are very key to making sure that whatever comes out of the Agency gets out to the owners, residents, and property owners and other interests. They're pivotal in the process of and certainly receiving information from the Agency, and the leadership of the Agency. She's wondering why those interests have been ignored on this stakeholder representative list.

Mr. Hester said thank you, they will bring that up to the committee.

Committee Comments & Questions

Ms. Gustafson said she appreciated Ms. Brisco's comments. They were looking and adding to the list and there probably a few more and they need to ensure they've captured groups such as the Board of Realtors and the Lakefront Property Owners. They're certainly very

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instrumental in so many of their committees and activities and are stakeholders in the basin. She appreciated hearing about having the diversity of panel. That is one that she hasn't previously heard of doing in that manner, and it makes a tremendous amount of sense. She's very pleased with Prothman's approach and the timeliness as well.

Mr. Lawrence said thank you for this meeting, and particularly to the consultants who have been selected. He appreciated the introduction and overview of the process. He's excited about where they're going to end up. He emphasized what Ms. Aldean said about maybe finding some places to tighten the schedule up with those one month gaps. It's going to be a little iterative as they get going but keep an eye towards that. They have set the goal to get somebody in place by January 2023 for a variety of reasons. One of the reasons is that the Nevada Legislature will start their budget meetings and first introductory meetings to different agencies at the end of January or early February. Because the Legislature only meets every two years, it would be critical to get this person on board at those first meetings because you only have that small window to make those relationships.

Regarding the representative stakeholders, he agreed with Ms. Brisco and Ms. Gustafson that it's important to get that private property perspective. He doesn't know who the person is but is something that needs to be added. He sees that the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board is on the list for the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) and suggested that the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection be added as well because they have TMDL responsibilities on the Nevada side. There may be crossover because Jennifer Carr would get picked up as part of the Advisory Planning Commission. It's important to know that you're talking to both States regarding water quality issues. There's some overlap with the different hats people where but he doesn't see anything from the Multi-Agency Coordination Group (MAC) or the Tahoe Fire and Fuels Team (TFFT). Knowing how important forest health and fuels projects are, he's wondering if there should be somebody from the local fire protection districts.

Mr. Hoenigman said he's excited that the Prothman Company is on board and this thing is moving. He also suggested that the one month waits are painfully long. They should plan to schedule some meetings in advance because of noticing requirements because these always get drawn out and take a lot of calendar time under the best of circumstances and public agencies, are not the best of circumstances. From his experience, boards want a 100 percent certainty that they're going to get this perfect candidate so they put on a billion requirements. From his experience, that typically leads to a worse result, because a person who's already done this job is not as excited and passionate and has a lot less to prove doing it going forward. He would caution everyone to be less prescriptive, and look for someone with a lot of intelligence, energy, excitement, the right personality, and some relevant experience, but not set a lot of hard and fast requirements on having been an Executive Director (ED) of a similar organization for 5 or 10 years. To him, that's completely irrelevant, and someone having been an ED for a similar organization would be a negative. He wants to ensure that they don't overburden the potential candidates with a lot of criteria that is counterproductive.

Ms. Aldean said she thinks there's probably already a representative under the tourism category and asked if the South Tahoe Gaming Alliance is still in existence.

Mr. Hester said he's familiar with the South Tahoe Association of Resorts.

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Ms. Aldean said it was known as the Gaming Alliance and Steve Teshara was the Executive Director. Regardless, having some representation for the casino interests would probably be appropriate.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Marja Ambler".

Marja Ambler
Clerk to the Board

The above meeting was recorded in its entirety. Anyone wishing to listen to the recording may find it at <https://www.trpa.gov/meeting-materials/>. In addition, written documents submitted at the meeting are available for review. If you require assistance locating this information, please contact the TRPA at (775) 588-4547 or virtualmeetinghelp@trpa.gov