

**CITY OF KALAMA
CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP
APRIL 12, 2011**

POLICE DEPARTMENT ASSESSMENT/CHIEF RECRUITMENT

Mayor Pete Poulsen opened the workshop of the Kalama City Council at 6:00 pm. Councilmembers present were Adam Smee, Dominic Ciancibelli, Chuck Hutchinson, Don Purvis, and Bud Gish. City staff present were Acting Sgt. Jeff Skeie, and Clerk/Treasurer Coni McMaster. Members of the public present were Jim Dickey, Mike Phillips, and Molly Ciancibelli.

Mr. Greg Prothman and Mr. Bob Cardin from Prothman, a consulting firm the City is considering hiring to do a complete assessment of the Police Department and conduct a hiring search for a new police Chief were present at the Council's request. The Council wanted to get a better understanding of what they would get if they choose to spend the money.

Mr. Prothman introduced himself, explaining that he has been a police officer and a City Manager during his career in Washington and has been in consulting since 1996. Prothman Company was established in 2001. He introduced Mr. Cardin who has been a Police Chief in both Washington and California and now works for Prothman. He would be the person on site doing the evaluation. He explained that the department would be evaluated during a thorough assessment and they will provide opinions on how the department is doing. He also explained that understanding that Kalama is a very small city, he has reduced the rates for the recruitment services considerably and is only including a one year guarantee. If the individual hired doesn't work out in that first year, they will repeat the process at no charge. Rather than go through the proposal that the Council has in hand, he asked the Council what they wanted to know.

Councilmember Dominic Ciancibelli asked what was the smallest city they have done recruitment for? Mr. Prothman responded that Kalama would be the smallest, but the size really doesn't matter, as the basic principles are the same. Councilmember Ciancibelli asked if they look for candidates within the community or close by or from outside the area, explaining that he feels it would be important for the person hired to be vested in the community and have knowledge of the west coast. Mr. Prothman explained that he agrees that the person should be from the west coast as policing is very different out here than in the eastern half of the country. He noted that as a small city, Kalama needs a working chief and is not able to pay high salaries. This means they will probably have to look outside the area to find an individual that has retired from service early but still has the desire to work another 10 years or so. This person would bring lots of experience and should work to improve the department and groom the staff for the future. Councilmember Bud Gish noted that we can't restrict where the applications come from and Mr. Prothman agreed. Councilmember Gish also noted that the lower wage base is part of the problem with keeping people for Kalama, as they tend to move on to better paying positions. Mayor Poulsen commented that he has suggested using the outside

firm due to his frustration with the history of Kalama's police chiefs. They are not leaving for better positions, but leaving under a dark cloud for various reasons. He wants to stop this cycle and find someone to fit the community. The person may not be perfect, but they should be a better fit. It was asked if this is fixable. Mr. Prothman stated he believes the cycle can be broken. First is to find a candidate that is not motivated strictly by money. It is also where his experience will help. They are good at judging people and evaluating the applicants. Out of 400 placements he thinks there have only been 8 times they have to honor their guarantee and refill a position. This has never been for a police chief. Most of the recruits stay 5 to 7 years and they stay in touch with him as colleagues. Their role will be to identify the candidates that will want to stay for the long term and not the ones that skip around. Councilmember Don Purvis asked how long the process will take. Mr. Prothman indicated it would be 3 months to get to the final candidate. Depending upon where he comes from it could be a little longer for him to actually start. Mr. Cardin commented that there are contenders and pretenders as candidates. The position as chief for Kalama is really tougher than one in a bigger city. It includes being involved in the community. This is what they will look for. It will not be for someone that just wants to sit back and collect their pay.

Mayor Poulsen asked how involved should the community be in the process as he is considering using a citizen's committee to help in part of the process. Mr. Prothman replied that they should be involved and use some for advice on what is needed for the community.

There was discussion regarding the roles of the mayor, council and the chief in the process. The Council sets the policy and the Mayor works to follow that policy. He has the authority for hiring and firing and works directly with the Chief, while the Council works with the Chief more at a distance. Neither the Mayor nor the Councilmembers have a good understanding of the work of the department. The assessment should help to provide them with that information. The assessment will look at the policies regarding operations of the department and evaluate them. Findings will be completed for things done right and things needing improvement. There will be recommendations as to what should be done to improve and how long it should take. It was asked if it was critical to do the review prior to the recruitment. Mr. Prothman stated yes, as it will provide a clear picture to the City of what they need to be doing and the expectations they will have for the new hire. It will also give the applicants a clear picture of what they are getting themselves into. The assessment will take about 3 to 4 weeks to complete. It was asked if this would be repetitive since the City is currently undergoing the biannual State audit. Mr. Prothman explained that the Auditors look at different things than what the assessment will review. The assessment will be deeper. The discussion turned to how the recommendations would be paid for. This would depend on what is needed and the value to the department. The assessment will not look at budget issues specifically, but will point out any large discrepancies it found. Mr. Cardin pointed out that the Chief should be working with the other department heads in working out a viable budget. It is a partnership. He was once told that a city has to have public safety, but it is not a public safety city only. So the City's budget can't be driven only by public safety concerns. It

was noted that the assessment would involve a couple of days on site to interview the officers and others as well as look at the policies, training records and other items.

Councilmember Ciancibelli explained that he had talked with several local friends in the legal field that indicated that they know of several area individuals that would make a good chief. Would they be able to be contacted and included in the recruitment process? Mr. Prothman answered yes, that once it is put out, everyone can recruit.

Councilmember Hutchinson noted the people in the audience and asked if they had any comments. Ms. Molly Ciancibelli asked if it wouldn't be better to have the new chief in place prior to doing the evaluation. Mr. Prothman said having it completed can be helpful for the new chief to know what is expected going in and giving him a place to begin. Mr. Cardin agreed. Mr. Mike Phillips who works in public safety noted that as valuable as the assessment may be in identifying the needs, the economic climate may make the fixes impossible to implement. Changes cost money and no entity has much at this time. It was noted that this is true. The Council will set the budget and priorities will have to be set. That's what the department heads should be doing. Mr. Jim Dickey commented that if the Council decides to spend the money he hoped that it would be money well spent.

Councilmember Ciancibelli noted that he was originally very skeptical of the proposal and spending the funds. He finds that he has to ask himself, what is the alternative? Will this help to end the some of the litigation issues we have seen in the past? Something needs to be done differently or better to avoid some of the past pitfalls. The Council thanked Mr. Prothman and Mr. Cardin for their trip and the clarifications of the information.

Mayor Poulsen adjourned the meeting at 7:35 pm. These minutes are not verbatim. A copy of the tape can be made available for listening.

Pete Poulsen - Mayor

Coni McMaster - Clerk/Treasurer