

## COMMISSION WORKSHOP

□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

Mayor Danny Nugent called the workshop to order to interview the candidates for the City Attorney Position. Present were Commissioner Wilbur Waters, Commissioner Travis Woods, Commissioner Tommy Chastain, Commissioner Carolyn B. Spooner, Deputy City Clerk Brenda Wiggins.

The three candidates are Voes Law Firm, Curtis Sanders, and Dan Sikes.

Each interview lasted approximately 20 minutes and the candidates were to give a summary of their firm and the commissioners ask questions.

The following were the questions asked.

When you read the ad; personally what made you want to apply for the position and work for Starke?

Do others in the firm have experience with Code Enforcement, Zoning and does the city has access to these other attorneys.

How can the City work on getting some properties cleaned up with code enforcement.

Are any issues with attending our meetings; meet the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month but on occasion need to switch the days or call special meeting or workshop?

If there was any experience with pensions?

Mr. Wade C. Vose, managing partner of Vose Law Firm, 324 W. Morse Boulevard, Winter Park, Florida 32789; Attorney Becky Vose founder of the firm and Attorney Jim Wilson, Saint Augustine.

He proceeded with explaining about the firm and background in local government and the different department within the firm and how they benefit municipal government. Experience provided legal counsel to over thirty local government agencies, holding the position of City Attorney for fourteen different Florida cities through their joint careers.

Mr. Vose is currently the City Attorney for the City of Bunnell, Town of Pearson, Chief Assistant City Attorney of the City of Deltona, and Joint City Attorney for City of Anna-Maria. He is General Counsel for three charter review commissions.

He explained Becky Vose is the city attorney for Deltona, City of Anna-Maria and Land Use counsel for Town of Oakland and does work for Orange County, City of

Winter Garden, Windermere, Edgewood, Longwood, St. Cloud, Eagle Lake, and currently Deltona and Anna Maria.

Mr. Wilson added he has been involved with local government law, since the 1983 in private practice or full time staff member of Indian River County, City of Vero Beach, Town of Orchid, City of St. Augustine, and City of West Melbourne.

Mr. Wade mentioned he submitted last year for the attorney position and one of the concerns was the distance of our office. Their main office is 2 hours and 20 minutes, but within this last year we have become acquainted with Mr. Wilson and he lives in St. Augustine. We propose that Mr. Wilson and Mr. Wade would take the dual lead attorneys for the City of Starke. Mr. Wilson would be the primarily responsible for attending meetings and advising here in the city commission.

Commissioner Waters stated last year you didn't have the St. Augustine office; how long have you had this office opened?

Mr. Wilson has been with the firm since August and his office is downtown St. Augustine in the old Peoples Bank building.

Commissioner Waters asked if the firm has someone with zoning.

Mr. Vose responded with legal work relating to zoning all three of us here have extensive experience. Ms. Vose has just completed an entire rewrite of Indian River Shores Land Development Code. Mr. Wilson has handled land and zoning issues for all the cities he has served.

Mr. Wilson added when he went to West Melbourne they were spending \$100,000 on outside counsel fees. When he went full time he eliminated the outside counsel and dropped the budget from \$300,000 to about \$15,000 most of which he doesn't use and he was the only one doing the work.

Mr. Vose has worked with Becky jointly handling all the zoning legal issues for the cities they jointly represent.

Commissioner Woods asked if there are any issues with attending our meetings; we meet the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month but on occasion need to switch the days or call special meeting or workshop?

Mr. Wilson ask if all of the scheduled meetings are night meetings there would be no issue.

Mr. Vose added if there would ever be a schedule problem he and Becky would be available.

Commissioner Woods ask their experience in Code Enforcement with putting more teeth into getting properties cleaned up.

Ms. Vose responded since 1992 the firm has represented Orange County Code Enforcement Department so this is an area of experience.

Commissioner Chastain commented North Florida Regional Planning Council handles all of the Comp Planning and Land Use changes. Would these items come under your umbrella?

Ms. Vose responded distinction between attorney and planner; we do not have any planners on staff.

Commissioner Spooner asked what interested them in Starke.

Mr. Vose responded he had worked in 8<sup>th</sup> Circuit State Attorney's Office in Starke at the beginning of his career.

Mayor Nugent asked if there would be an emergency meeting how available would someone be to respond?

Mr. Wilson responded with any type of reasonable notice there would be no issue of him attending. For Mr. Vose and Ms. Vose it would take a little more time. He felt 2 hours' notice and the commissioners would have his cell number to contact him at any time.

Mayor Nugent asked if Mr. Wilson wasn't available would the other attorney be able to answer the questions, would he or she be up dated on the issue to answer questions?

Mr. Vose responded the firms approach is that at least two attorneys are up to date at all times on issues happening.

Commissioner Spooner asked if they had any dealings with pension issues?

Ms. Vose responded she has done extensive work for the City of Deltona Firefighters. She is working on the revisions for Florida Statues 175.

Mayor Nugent asked if the City would have access to all the firms experience or just one or two attorneys?

Mr. Vose responded the entire firm would be at the City's disposal.

Mr. Curtis Lex Sanders; has had a general practice for twelve years with two support staff. Deals with variety aspects, his primary aspects are litigation including to environmental law, real estate, zoning issues; he has done divorces to federal litigation. He feels anything the city would have he would be able to cover.

Commissioner Waters asked Mr. Sanders if he has intention of entering the race for the judgeship?

Mr. Sanders responded he has yet to make up his mind and has not put in an application.

Commissioner Woods asked if there would be any issues with the meeting being held on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of each month as well as special called meetings?  
Mr. Sanders responded not at all.

Commissioner Woods asked if he has any affiliation with the County, City or School Board?  
Mr. Sanders stated no municipalities or government organization but with some corporations.

Commissioner Chastain asked his idea on Code Enforcement.  
Mr. Sanders felt by establishing an agenda on how they could clean up the bad properties. Many of the property owners don't have the money to clean the property up. He suggested having the persons in the prison system cleaning up the properties so it would not be a burden to the tax payers.

Commissioner Spooner asked if he has dealt with any types of pension issues?  
Mr. Sanders responded the only issues regarding pension is with companies that went through bankruptcies. He understands how pensions work and how they go through bankruptcies he has not worked with a pension per say.  
She ask how he could benefit the city as the attorney?  
He responded by living and working in the city with everything goes on within the city affects him personally. He has a great deal of interest of what goes on in the city and has the perspective of wanting what best for the city because it will be what is best for him.

Mr. Dan Sikes, current city attorney gave a short statement. He has tried over the past year to respond to all the text messages, phone calls, etc. in a timely manner. He believes he has managed it well due to not needing to bill over the retainer. He believes he has done a good job herding cats, but the final decision is the commissions.

Commissioner Waters asked on a scale from 1 to 10 how do you feel you have done for the city?  
Mr. Sikes responded 8+. He isn't perfect but has tried to be timely responsive.

Commissioner Woods; he would like to see the city follow coldly to the policy and procedures. How can you as the city attorney fit in to help us.

Mr. Sikes responded that he has been brought into a couple of situations when there were disputes between departments and help resolve a situation. He cannot

tell what anyone should or should not do; he can review the policy information and give his legal opinion.

Commissioner Chastain asked how the city can get the properties within the city cleaned up through code enforcement.

Mr. Sikes responded he has worked on an Ordinance and worked with County Attorney Will Sexton to come up with a comprehensive plan to do an intergovernmental agency to share the resources and take care of some of these issues.

Commissioner Spooner ask how would he improve Starke function as the legal counsel and how can you help the city improve our pension issues?

Mr. Sikes responded on pension issues he has not been ask a lot of advice and he would need to do a lot of research. He hasn't dealt with pension for over fifteen years.

As far as improving the legal services to the community; he can just keep doing his best.

Mayor Nugent ask if there is an emergency what kind of response time would there be?

Mr. Sikes responded the only time there would be a problem is if he is in court or in an open meeting. Even then he checks emails and text messages and can respond when he is in a break from court or the meeting.

Mr. Sikes thanked the board for this past year to serve as the city attorney.

With no additional discussion the workshop was closed.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Daniel W. Nugent, Mayor  
Commissioner Tommy Chastain  
Commissioner Daniel Nugent  
Commissioner Carolyn Spooner  
Commissioner Wilbur Waters

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Ricky Thompson, City Clerk