

## COMMISSION WORKSHOP

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Mayor Woods called the workshop to order to interview the candidates for the City Attorney Position. Present were Commissioner Wilbur Waters, Commissioner Carolyn Spooner, Commissioner Tommy Chastain, Commissioner Danny Nugent, City Clerk Ricky Thompson, and Mark Crawford, Bradford County Telegraph.

The three candidates are Voes Law Firm, Brittany Loper, Dan Sikes, and Paul Sanders.

Each interview lasted approximately 30 minutes and the candidates were asked questions by the commission.

Mayor Woods read this statement after each of the interviews. A special meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 18 after the regular commission meeting when we are going to select an attorney for the position. It is a public meeting and anyone is legally allowed to attend, however we prefer that none of the candidates attend the meeting.

Two firms will be selected for negotiations. The City Clerk and Finance Director will sit down and discuss the position. If a contract cannot be reached with the first selected attorney the City Clerk and Finance Director will proceed with the second choice.

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?

He was asked if he would have plans to open an office in Starke?

Does others in the firm have experience with Code Enforcement, Zoning and Planning as well as annexations.

Mr. Wade C. Vose, partner of Vose Law Firm, 324 W. Morse Boulevard , Winter Park, Florida 32789.

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 nine different Florida cities.

He continued with the members of the firm and their backgrounds as well as the philosophy of the firm.

He explained their office is 2 hours and 20 minutes from city hall but they have had other cities which are a distance away and have had no problems with those cities. They would travel to all meetings and do not charge for travel time.

He may not have responded to any other city with this distance but he had worked in Starke at the beginning of his career.

He has no plans to open an office at this time.

Yes, and he elaborated on some issues the firm dealt with for code enforcement and explained they have substantial experience in zoning. We are land use attorneys for the Town of Oakland and are working to redo the entire Land Development Code.

We have experience in annexations volunteer or other.

Commissioner Chastain asked if it would be unfair to ask that you be present on commission meeting day around 3 PM to go over any items the Clerk would need.

Mr. Voes explained currently for the City of Bunnell he drives up early for the meetings and they hold a staff meeting to go over any issues that need addressed. He has no objections to coming early on commission meeting days to go over whatever needs to be discussed.

He was asked what experience the firm has relating to utilities and human resource such as pensions.

Mr. Voes responded the city would have access to the entire firm and the specialties our attorney's have.

Mr. Dan Sikes, gave a short statement; he was informed the workshop the other day was a closed session and no one had informed him ahead of time. He was told that anytime you are on the agenda you should be present. He had no idea to interfere with the discussions that took place that evening.

He has kept himself away from city business for the past six months because he has intended on applying and if I made a comment on an issue then was hired and I said the wrong thing before it would come back to haunt me.

If he is hired he wants to walk into the position with a clean slate and talk to each one and see where I can help.

Over the past fourteen years he has been the attorney for the City of Lawtey and when he first arrived it was not a easy place to be. Over they years we have worked out a lot of things and it is such a better place to work.

While he was deployed he did communicate via email and give suggestions to their council.

Mr. Sikes responded the only reason he didn't apply when Mr. Brown retired was he was deployed to Afghanistan and could not apply at that time. He lives and is involved in the community and would like to help the City of Starke.

He has worked and changed the charter for the City of Lawtey as well as written ordinances and resolutions.

He felt with his law work in Afghanistan working with different governments and personnel would assist with working with the county and other municipalities to facilitate communications in the governmental process.

His working relationship with the current county attorney is very good. There is a time to fight and there is a time to work things out.

His work experience with utilities is not large but he isn't afraid to contact an associate who works for the Public Service Commission in Tallahassee and ask and she would point me in the right direction. He will not guess on the answer to put his client in a bad position.

He explained is still is a member of JAG and from time to time he will need to travel and be away sometime for training. If at any of these times and an attorney would be needed he would find one to fill in but he will generally be in attendance at all council meetings.

He has not dealt with intimate domain but has the basic knowledge.

He will provide his cell phone and be available. The only time he could answer his cell phone is if the Army takes it. He suggested best contact form with him is email. He does not bill unless he is writing he doesn't bill to talk.

Ms. Brittany Loper, PA, 704 N Lake Street; Municipal law is high on her list of desires compared to family law.

She spent a lot of time in law school on Municipal law and Florida con law; it is very interesting and you can do a lot of good in the world.

Experience on Ordinance and Resolution; she responded in school you spend a significant amount of time writing these and they are not easy. You have to make sure you are up to date on laws, even if it just came out the day before.

While working with my father she was able to work with the City of Hampton in their land annexation and contracted some lands which she was involved in drafting the ordinances and resolutions to get Hampton back on track.

If she needed assistance she has a network of attorneys she can turn to that are outside the city and she does have her father.

They have worked with code enforcement through the realtor that is located in the office.

She has experience with drafting contracts, and she realizes the city is going to have some intimate domain items coming up. She would not reuse a contract; each situation would get attention and she is particular.

Working with the county the first thing would be to get to an amicable solution. Everyone benefits when everyone gets along. Sometimes it is inevitable that we can't. As city attorney the city would be her first priority and she has a strong relationship with the county attorney and we would be working together and hopefully getting solutions together.

She has a friend who is an attorney that she would send if there was at any point she could not attend a meeting. She would not send her father for the fact he is too involved with other agencies.

She asked to clarify some things; her law firm is separate from her fathers firm. We are not looking to go at odds with any government agencies that are local and we don't want to see conflicts. She wants to ease any of the commissioners concerns relating to my father and mine offices. He is not permitted to see my files and I am not permitted to see his. We are color coded differently and we are very careful about that in our office. She wants to ease any concerns you commissioners would have that could be an issue.

Paul Sanders reminded the commission he has been practicing law since 2002 and privately the last five years. Before that he would as a state prosecutor.

Relating to code enforcement; when you have policies you have to enforce them. You can write a code as long as it is legal, but it would have to be in balance with the property owners rights.

He did have surgery a few weeks back and missed one meeting. He could have someone cover if needed; he had Lex Sanders cover for him that night. Attorneys cover for each other all the time and he really doesn't see that being an issue for him.

He feels he is the best candidate for the position. He can promote what the city is doing and can be the eyes and ears for the city with the citizens.

He has contacted the Florida League of Cities attorneys at least four times this past year as well as other Florida city's attorneys.

With no additional discussion the workshop was closed.

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Travis V. Woods, Mayor  
Commissioner Tommy Chastain  
Commissioner Daniel Nugent  
Commissioner Carolyn Spooner  
Commissioner Wilbur Waters

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