

KARL N. FLAGG  
MAYOR-COMMISSIONER

MARY LAWSON BROWN  
VICE MAYOR - COMMISSIONER

GEORGE E. SANDERS  
COMMISSIONER

JAMES NORWOOD, JR.  
COMMISSIONER

ALLEGRA KITCHENS  
COMMISSIONER



*Regular meeting 2nd and 4th Thursdays each month at 6:00 p.m.*

ALLEN R. BUSH  
CITY MANAGER  
BETSY JORDAN DRIGGERS  
CITY CLERK  
RUBY M. WILLIAMS  
FINANCE DIRECTOR  
GARY S. GETCHELL  
CHIEF OF POLICE  
MICHAEL LAMBERT  
CHIEF FIRE DEPT.  
DONALD E. HOLMES  
CITY ATTORNEY

**MINUTES**  
**PALATKA CITY COMMISSION**  
November 13 & 14, 2007  
City Manager Semi-finalist Interviews

Proceedings of a called meeting of the City Commission of the City of Palatka, Florida, held on the 13<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2007, and continuing on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of November 2007:

PRESENT: Mayor Karl N. Flagg  
Commissioner Mary Lawson Brown  
Commissioner Allegra Kitchens  
Commissioner James Norwood, Jr.

ABSENT: Commissioner George E. Sanders

Also Present: City Manager Allen R. Bush, City Clerk Betsy Jordan Driggers, Police Chief Gary Getchell, Assistant Police Chief James Griffith, Fire Chief Mike Lambert, Interim Planner Debbie Banks, and ICMA Range Rider Eugene "Gene" Moody.

Also Present as members of the Citizens Interview Panel: Wayne McClain, Dr. Shann Purinton, Bill Townsend, Esquire, Audrey Mitchell, and The Reverend Charles Rabun

Call to Order – Mayor Flagg called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m., based upon the following special meeting call, dated November 6, 2007:

TO MESSRS: MARY LAWSON BROWN, ALLEGRA KITCHENS,  
JAMES NORWOOD AND GEORGE SANDERS:

You are hereby notified that a special called meeting of the City Commission is called to be held at the regular meeting place of the City Commission at City Hall, 201 N. 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, in the City of Palatka at 9:00 a.m. Tuesday, November 13, 2007 and, if necessary, Wednesday, November 14, 2007.

The purpose of the meeting is to participate in the interview process with the short list of candidates for the position of City Manager.

*Is/ Karl N. Flagg*  
Karl N. Flagg, MAYOR

The following commissioners acknowledged receipt of a copy of the foregoing notice of a special meeting on the 6th day of November, 2007

/s/ Mary Lawson Brown  
COMMISSIONER

/s/ Allegra Kitchens  
COMMISSIONER

/s/ James Norwood, Jr.  
COMMISSIONER

/s/ George Sanders  
COMMISSIONER

Introductions – Members of the Citizens Interview Panel were introduced.

INVOCATION: Rev. Charles Rabun, Assoc. Pastor, 1<sup>st</sup> Baptist Church of Palatka

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – As a group

ROLL CALL - The Clerk read a prepared statement from Commissioner Sanders regarding his absence for medical reasons (filed).

Mayor Flagg thanked the panel for taking these two days to devote to this process, and instructed the panel as to the interview procedure, saying they are ultimately charged with reducing the number of semi-finalists from twelve to five finalists. Mr. Bush went over the scoring sheets and scoring system, and asked them to ultimately rank each finalist in their order of preference, #1 being the most preferred and #12 being the least preferred. He said if they have follow-up questions to the prepared questions, they could ask them.

Mayor Flagg informed the panel that whatever they write on these sheets becomes a public record. The Clerk cautioned the panel that they are a panel appointed by the City Commission, and as such are subject to Florida Sunshine statutes. They are not to discuss these proceedings with each other outside of an open and advertised meeting.

Each semi-finalist candidate was asked a list of prepared questions as follows:

1. Please take a few minutes to tell us about yourself.
2. Why are you leaving your current position, and what attracts you to Palatka?
3. What do you feel are your greatest strengths? Weaknesses?
4. How would you describe your management style? Give some examples of how this relates to your dealings with the public, the staff, the Commission.
5. Describe a situation where an innovative approach was tried. Did it succeed? If not, what was learned?
6. Describe “leadership” and “motivation”. How would you handle a situation where an employee exhibited a “bad” attitude, and/or was disrespectful of the public, or of the Commission?
7. Describe a situation where the elected officials chose to not follow your recommendations, but decided to go in a different direction. How did you handle that situation?

8. Describe your first steps upon assuming responsibility for this position. What do you hope to accomplish in the first year?
9. How should the City Manager relate to the Palatka community as a whole, as well as to individual residents and groups?
10. Describe your experiences with economic development and growth management.
11. How would you assess your financial management capabilities?
12. What experience have you had working on an intergovernmental or interagency basis? Describe your experience working with the State and Federal government, County government, councils of government, and other units of local government.
13. What other questions did you expect, or hope, that we would ask, and what is your response?
14. (Closing) Do you have any questions of us?

Follow-up questions not on the list, but asked of the individual candidates, are listed by interview.

**Elwin “Woody” Boynton 11/13/07 9:00 a.m.**

Panelist follow-up questions:

- What direction should the City move in, or what direction is the City moving in as you see it?
- When referring to your discipline program of “three strikes,” was that an existing program or is that one that you initiated?
- Have you ever been in a situation when the proper disciplinary steps have not been applied across the board?
- How would you go about collaborating and aligning goals with community partners?
- How would you handle tax reform impact as it relates to growth management?
- What experience do you have working with an airport and golf course, and what do you see as the future of those two entities?

Commissioner Kitchens asked the following questions:

- Have you ever put pressure on anyone to resign in lieu of firing him or her?
- How do you feel you should treat staff or the commission on a personal basis?
- How do you interact with other department heads, including the Gas Authority and PHA, and do you have any problems working with any current department heads?

**Bruce Behrens 11/13/07 10:00 a.m.**

Panelist follow-up questions:

- Regarding current legislative tax reform, how do you see that affecting competitive salaries and the impact it will have on local government?

Commissioner Kitchens asked the following questions:

- You said you had an open door policy, but by appointment. Many times people just come in and want to speak with the City Manager. Would you talk to those folks?
- Are you prepared to relocate to Palatka within a year after being hired?
- When discussing things that didn't succeed, you talked about laying some pipe without an easement across property that was anticipated to be annexed, and problems arose. Did you check with legal counsel prior to ordering the pipe laid?
- When do you plan to retire as a City Manager?
- Do you not support the 5% yearly step-in-grade salary increase?

Commissioner Brown asked the following questions:

- Would you take time to look at and work with staff to make sure you don't let staff go?
- There are two females on this Commission. Do you have a problem working with females?

**Richard A. Clark 11/13/07 11:00**

Mr. Clark withdrew his application.

Mayor Flagg recessed the proceedings for lunch at 11:20 a.m.

Mayor Flagg reconvened the City Manager interviews at 2:00 p.m.

**Alphonse Dixon 11/13/07 2:00 p.m.**

Panelist follow-up questions:

- How long do you anticipate being a city manager, in view of your 'retirement' from the community you now serve?
- Are you familiar with the Florida Growth Management Act?

Commissioner Kitchens asked the following question:

- If you are hired for this position, are you prepared to move into the Palatka city limits?

**Robert T. Mearns 11/13/07 3:00 p.m.**

Panelist follow-up questions:

- Do you feel you accomplished everything you wanted to accomplish as city manager in Fernandina Beach?
- Have you ever come to a point where you felt an issue had been talked or committee'd to death, and the time had come for action, and how did you handle that?
- Would you expound on the "modernization of Fernandina Beach's Comp Plan" as noted in your resume?
- Who was your city attorney (in Fernandina Beach)?

Commissioner Kitchens asked the following questions:



Also Present: City Manager Allen R. Bush, City Clerk Betsy Jordan Driggers, Police Chief Gary Getchell, Gen. Services Dir. Ken Venables, Interim Planner Debbie Banks, and ICMA Range Rider Eugene “Gene” Moody

Also Present for Citizens Interview Panel: Wayne McClain, Dr. Shann Purinton, Bill Townsend, Esquire, Audrey Mitchell, and The Reverend Charles Rabun

Mayor Flagg expressed his gratitude to the citizens’ panel for taking their valuable time to participate in this interview process.

INVOCATION: Audrey Mitchell

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: As a group

City Manager Candidate interviews recommenced.

**James F. Coleman                    11/14/07                    9:00 a.m.**

Panelist follow-up questions:

- How many people did you supervise in Williston?
- Please talk about your experience with municipally owned airports, and do you have any experience with golf courses?
- What is the Comp Plan status in Williston and what part of that process have you been directly involved in?
- In your opinion, what do you think is an average tenure of a City Manger, and how long does it take a city manager to implement the vision the City Commission has handed him?

Commissioner Kitchens asked:

- If you are selected as City Manger, will you be able to move into the city limits of Palatka within a year?
- How long do you plan on staying in the position?
- You stated you become somewhat frustrated with discussion not related to the topic at hand, but almost always the discussion is not related to the topic. How will you deal with that?

Commissioner Brown asked:

- Do you have any ideas on recruiting international trade at the airport?

City Manager Bush asked the following questions:

- Given the upcoming referendum on ad valorem taxes, have you come up with a plan to address cuts in Williston?

**Fred Hays                            11/14/07                            10:00 a.m.**

Panelist follow-up questions:

- Could you give us the dates of your Florida city manager service?
- All of your tenures have been short-term. What was your strategy on that?

- When describing a situation where the Commission didn't go with your recommendation, you mentioned a developer you'd brought back a second time after being turned down by the Commission. What was that development?
- What experience do you have with municipally owned airports and golf courses?
- Do you have any experience in FDOT planning concerning airports?
- What was your direct involvement in airport expansion, and was that in both cities you managed with airports?
- Please expand on what you said about moving on to other cities because a better opportunity arose. Are you looking at this position as another stepping-stone?
- Have you had experience with downtown redevelopment?
- What has been your experience in developing affordable housing?
- How would you balance growth with sustaining the community's way of life?

City Manager Bush asked:

- Were there Community Redevelopment Agencies in place in any of the cities you've managed?
- What community redevelopment strategies did you use?

Commissioner Kitchens asked:

- Citizens want balanced growth while keeping the historic appearance and quality of life. How do you feel about preserving history and environment while seeking quality growth?

Commissioner Brown asked:

- Palatka is looking at nature-based tourism. Have you had any experience with that?
- What is your experience with airport-based international trade?

**John R. Schneiger 11/14/07 11:00 a.m.**

Panelist follow-up questions:

- In Palm Coast, how much were you involved with the CRA and those financial management issues?
- What were the circumstances of your leaving Palm Coast?

Commissioner Kitchens asked:

- Are you prepared to move into the city limits of Palatka within a year of taking this position?
- Are you open to speaking to people or staff on a walk-in basis?
- If you are hired, how long do you see yourself staying in Palatka?

Commissioner Brown asked:

- Do you have experience with attracting international trade?

Mayor Flagg recessed the proceedings for lunch at 12:05 p.m.

Mayor Flagg reconvened the City Manager interviews at 2:00 p.m.

**Chad M. Shryock 11/14/07 2:00 p.m.**

Panelist follow-up questions:

- Who is the Hawthorne City Attorney?
- What is the size of the staff in Hawthorne? In the largest community you've managed?
- What is the status in Hawthorne with growth management and level of the comprehensive plan?
- What experience have you had with downtown redevelopment?
- Regarding the political climate you described as your reason for leaving Wabasha, how do you see yourself managing that type of climate now?

Commissioner Kitchens asked:

- Do you have an open door policy for staff and citizens?
- Should you get this position, is this a long-term position for you, or a stepping-stone to get to another position?

**Gary L. Word**

**11/14/07**

**3:00 p.m.**

Panelist follow-up questions:

- Can you expound upon the statement you made when you referred to your two years in Islamorada as being tumultuous?
- What is your experience with municipally owned golf courses and/or airports?
- Have you had experience working with Florida comprehensive plans, growth management and DCA?
- Why did you choose a career in government when you decided to leave the teaching profession?
- Do you maintain your private pilot's license?

City Manager Bush asked:

- Have there been CRAs in any of the towns you've managed?
- What are some of the things you did in Northfield to enhance your downtown?

Commissioner Kitchens asked:

- If you are hired for this position, will you make plans within the first year to move into the city limits of Palatka?
- If you are selected, are you in this for the long haul or will you only stay for a few years?

**Richard A. Reade**

**11/14/07**

**4:00 p.m.**

Panelist follow-up questions:

- Would you consider your company financially successful?
- What would be your plans for this company if you are hired?
- How did you come to name your company "Entitlements LLC?"
- Do you foresee any potential conflict of interest between the role of Palatka's city manager and your company's interests?
- Are you up-to-date with the latest legislative tax relief referendum going on the ballot in January?

- Why was your tenure at City of Davenport so short?
- If one were a major developer dealing with your company, or if your company is the major developer, would you “take over” supervising all the contracts and dealings? Please describe your role in the ‘private’ side versus the public side.
- Regarding your company’s growth management business, would you be the ‘go between’ on something like a comp plan amendment, or would the planner or contractor handle that?

Commissioner Kitchens asked:

- If you are hired for this position, are you prepared to move into the city limits of Palatka within the first year?
- If you take this position, would you consider this a long-term position or would this just be a stepping-stone for you?

Commissioner Norwood asked:

- In your Brownfield situation, what agencies did you work with?

This concluded the candidate interviews. The Mayor called a recess at 4:40 p.m.

Mayor Flagg reconvened the meeting at 4:50 p.m. and circulated a memorandum (filed) to the Commission and panel, noting they should read prior to discussion. He asked Mr. Moody to comment on the proceedings and offer any insight he believed relevant. Mr. Moody said he agreed with many of the candidates when they said this is a community in which they’d he’d be pleased to live, as he would be. He’s been interviewed for the position of city manager in five different states, and believes the process established for these interviews has been outstanding. He was not involved with this process until last Thursday, as the prior range rider had to leave the process for an overseas assignment in Jordan. He was a little surprised that much of the conversation surrounded planning, development and redevelopment. Very little time was spent talking about police, fire or public works departments. This reflects today’s concerns. They are looking for someone who can provide good, professional municipal management. This is their goal. As he read through the semi-finalists’ applications, he was concerned with some of the short tenures with prior cities, which this panel was also obviously concerned with, judging from the follow-up questions that were asked. He feels that they should assign this an appropriate amount of concern. Also, sometimes people from northern states apply for Florida jobs do so with the thought of moving to Florida to semi-retire.

Mr. Moody said he hopes the public is as impressed with Allen Bush’s 28-year City Manager career with the City of Palatka as he is; this is some kind of record. He’s also been impressed with the Commission and the citizen panel.

Mayor Flagg noted Mr. Townsend has been selected as the Chairman of this panel. He noted a time-line should be established. He referenced the memorandum he’d distributed asked if there were any questions.

Mr. Townsend said the Mayor’s memorandum indicates that the panel will be participating further into the process. Each panelist will meet with the commissioner that appointed them to this panel to discuss and concur on their choices, and then will be meeting with their Commissioner again during the one-on-one, or now two-on-one, interviews. It was the

consensus of the panelists that they would make themselves available for that. Commissioner Kitchens asked if it is a Sunshine Violation to speak with their respective panelist outside of this meeting. Mayor Flagg said it is not. Mr. Townsend concurred.

Henry Frederick, the Palatka Daily News reporter, asked if this precludes him from sitting in on the discussions between commissioner and appointee. Mayor Flagg said as far as Sunshine Law is concerned, they are not required to include the public or press in these one-on-one conferences; if only one commissioner is present, it is not subject to Sunshine. Mr. Frederick asked him to cite the specific statute that supports this. Mr. Bush said because only one commissioner is present, Sunshine Law does not apply. Mayor Flagg said while they haven't told him he can't be present at these individual conferences, the decision on the five finalists will be made in a public meeting. Mr. Frederick said he was only interested in the outcome.

Mr. McClain said he plans to meet with Commissioner Sanders at the Hospital to go over the proceedings and results. After discussion on the time-line, Mr. Townsend said it was the consensus of the panelists that they would rather have those one-on-one discussions tonight so they can conclude their charge on this phase and name the five finalists tonight. In this way, they can immediately address any tie that may result.

Each panelist was given a ballot with all eleven interviewed semi-finalists listed on it. Mayor Flagg directed each panelist to circle their top five choices after conferring with their appointing commissioner.

Mayor Flagg recessed the proceedings at 5:15 p.m. in order to allow one-on-one conferences between members of the Commission and their respective citizen panelist.

Mayor Flagg called the meeting back to order at 5:40 and directed the panel to canvass the votes. Each panelist passed their ballots, with their respective top five choices circled, to Mr. Townsend, who then twice checked and recorded the results on the master tally sheet.

After the votes were tallied, Mayor Flagg read off the five candidates receiving the highest number of votes. The results of the tally are listed as follows, with candidates listed in alphabetical order:

Woody Boynton	4 of 5 votes
James Coleman	5 of 5 votes
Robert Mearns	4 of 5 votes
Richard Reade	3 of 5 votes
John Schneiger	4 of 5 votes

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 5:50 p.m. upon a motion by Commissioner Brown.

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CITY CLERK

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MAYOR