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County tourism director job to be re-advertised



Levy County Visitors Bureau Executive Director Carol McQueen and Levy County Sheriff Bobby McCallum sit in the back of the County Commission meeting room on Tuesday. McQueen spoke to the County Commission about the need to seek applicants who have a marketing background. McCallum's office succeeded in having the county accept a grant for \$177,030 to improve the GIS mapping for 9-1-1 services in Levy County.

Story and Photos By Jeff M. Hardison © Nov. 22, 2017 at 4:57 p.m.

BRONSON -- Three out of 11 applicants for the job currently held by Levy County Visitors Bureau Executive Director Carol McQueen made one cut by the county, but with input from Executive Director McQueen and Helen Ciallella, the vice chair of the Levy County Tourist Development Council, it became clear that the county needs to revise the job description and re-advertise.

These are the facts coming from discussion Tuesday (Nov. 21) at the County Commission meeting.

If any of the 11 who first applied wants to re-apply, they may do so however the first round of applications are not being considered in and of themselves in the next phase of selecting a replacement.

County Commissioner Mike Joyner expressed an opinion that must be held across the board. Replacing McQueen with anyone is not going to be easy. The phrase that may be heard in the future might be "She (or he) is no Carol McQueen."

County Coordinator Wilbur Dean said that after speaking with McQueen, the best method moving forward is to advertise for a new set of applicants while using a new set of required qualifications and a better job description.

One effect of this new seeking of applicants, Dean said, is going to put the hiring of that department leader past the planned retirement of McQueen. The potential for McQueen to delay

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her retirement, she said, is not possible because the wheels are in motion in regard to the State Retirement System and the like.

The county may use her service as a consultant for a fee, but even that may present hurdles, according to what was said in the meeting room on Tuesday.

McQueen told the County Commission that of the 11 applicants, there were no individuals with a degree in marketing.

“There were no marketing skills in any of the applicants,” McQueen said. “We also found that there was limited budget experience.”

Likewise, there were limited or no public relations experience from the first set of applicants, McQueen said.

Many of them had “poor work history. They couldn’t hold a job,” McQueen said, “or they had little or no supervisory skills.”

After seeing this set of applicants, McQueen urged the County Commission to revise the job description to put more of an emphasis on marketing and public relations.

McQueen told the County Commission on Sept. 15 that she was going to retire after Dec. 31. This gave the county more than three months to advertise and find a replacement.

She noted there is competition now for a director in tourism for counties, with both Alachua County and Citrus County seeking a similar person.

The salaries for these people in these three counties is approximately Alachua County – between \$68,000 and \$102,000; Citrus County – between \$53,000 and \$80,000; and in Levy County – between \$35,000 and \$52,000.

The other two counties are much larger, have bigger budgets and more staff members.

On a motion by County Commissioner Matt Brooks, seconded by County Commissioner Rock Meeks, the County Commission voted 5-0 to follow McQueen’s and Ciallella’s recommendation for what to note in the new advertisement for the replacement for McQueen.