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Bronson Town Council to interview five of 12 applicants for town clerk position

Story and Photos

By Jeff M. Hardison © July 17, 2018 at 4:38 p.m.

BRONSON -- During a special meeting Monday night (July 16), held before the regular twice-a-month meeting of the Bronson Town Council, four of the city's leaders selected the five candidates to interview for the vacant town clerk post.

Town Councilwoman Katie Parks was not present for the meeting. She was selected, by a vote of one, to be among the five people interviewed. Since Councilwoman Parks put her application in the mix, she has not discussed with the other town leaders anything about the selection process.



Bronson Deputy Town Clerk Melissa Thompson (at left) started working for the town on June 25 and she will be serving with the person chosen as the town clerk by the four Bronson Town Council members. Town Councilwoman Katie Parks is among the five to be interviewed, and therefore she is not participating in the interview process or vote -- except as an applicant for the position.

Public Works Director Erik Wise as the acting town clerk is tasked with arranging five interviews to be held starting at 5 p.m. on July 24. The meeting in the Dogan Cobb Municipal Building is open to the public to watch.

The two applicants selected by Mayor Bruce Greenlee, Vice Mayor Beatrice Roberts, Councilman Jason Hunt and Councilman Robert Partin are Siadus Rish and Shirley Miller.

The three other applicants are Councilwoman Parks, selected by Mayor Greenlee; Joannie Morse, selected by Councilman Hunt; and Heather Linde-Kaminski, selected by Councilman Partin.

Miller, who is currently working at the Levy County Department of Public Works, is said to have accounting experience in a government job.

One applicant withdrew his name from consideration just before the start of the special meeting Monday night.

The other seven applicants are Melinda Jelks, Kelly King, Sarah Martinez, Amber Schuler, Judith Dameron, Sherrie Mozdizer and Stephanie Bender.

During this aspect of the selection process, during the special meeting for that purpose, the mayor and Council spoke about seeking to pay people to serve at town functions such as the Halloween Festival, Blueberry Festival, Fourth of July, and games of the various teams of the Bronson Parks and Recreation leagues.

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This discussion relates to the town being critiqued for having so much overtime, as noted in the most recent annual audit by Purvis Gray & Co.

A three-page May 16 letter from the auditor, included in the 38-page annual report for the year ending Sept. 30, 2017, was critical of some aspects of the town's records.

Mayor Greenlee and former Town Clerk Pamela Whitehead responded to all of the criticism in a three-page response.

One ongoing problem is segregation of accounting and administrative duties. That is not likely to ever go away.

"Due to the small number of staff (members) it is very difficult to separate all accounting and administrative duties completely," Greenlee and Whitehead noted in the town's response, "but we feel these processes address the concern of the auditors. Any mistakes are caught and dealt with in a timely manner."

In regard to a 2015 notation from the auditor, the town noted that the town clerk would be seeking training to gain an understanding of all necessary adjustments, as well as to post journal entries in a timely manner.

The town also responded with positive methods to overcome issues with payroll procedures, payroll taxes, bank reconciliation, accounting records, and budget amendments.

Water and sewer rate increases will continue as the town seeks to bring revenue up to meet expenses – such as payment on the grant-loan to upgrade and expand its sewer collection system from some years ago. In another similar matter, it was noted that the town intends to establish a separate reserve fund account for its USDA Rural Development loan so that it meets all of those requirements.

In response to the town's alleged violation of the *Florida Constitution*, as noted in the audit, by extending \$5,004 worth of credit as a public agency to a person -- former Town Councilman Aaron Edmondson -- for health insurance payments, Edmondson is to be told to pay all of the outstanding balance owed, and the town clerk will inform him when the amount is paid in full, according to the response by Greenlee and Whitehead.