

**City of Freeport
SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
July 7, 2020**

1. Meeting Called to Order

Mayor Barley called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm in Council Chambers of Freeport City Hall.

Council members present: Elizabeth Haffner, Mark Martin, Eddie Farris, Mayor Russ Barley, Elizabeth Brannon, and Amanda Green

Staff present: Project Manager Charlie Simmons, Planning Director Latilda Neel and Planning Clerk Marge Gay.

2. City Clerk Interviews

Director Neel noted that one candidate had withdrawn, so only two interviews were scheduled: Marcellena Lamb and Malani Robinson. Director Simmons noted that Lamb was scheduled first but had not arrived. The Council generally agreed to proceed with the interview of Malani Robinson.

Director Neel facilitated the interview questions:

ROBINSON INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	
1	<p>When you received your job application, you were given a copy of the position description. Are you physically able to perform all job related activities as listed on the description? This is a yes/no question.</p> <p><i>Robinson: Yes.</i></p>
2	<p>How would you describe yourself to someone that you do not know? How would your co-workers describe you?</p> <p><i>Robinson: Upbeat, efficient, organized, positive attitude.</i></p>
3	<p>Why do you want to work for the City of Freeport?</p> <p><i>Robinson: I grew up in Walton County; originally from DeFuniak Springs. I have a BS in Political Science from FAMU. I've worked as a legislative aide in Tallahassee. I'm interested in local government and passionate about my home community.</i></p>

4	<p>Do you currently hold a City Clerk Certification? Yes/No</p> <p><i>Robinson: No.</i></p>
5	<p>Please describe your Supervisory and Human Resource Experience.</p> <p><i>Robinson: I have supervisory experience but not HR. I managed four attorneys and their assistants: their schedules, their notices and their billing. Everywhere I've worked had an HR person.</i></p>
6	<p>Please describe your accounting experience</p> <p><i>Robinson: I have limited accounting, primarily with billing. I was able to resolve billing backlog at the legal firm where I worked.</i></p>
7	<p>Please give us an example of a time you had to resolve a complaint or problem, either with a customer or a fellow employee. What did you learn from that situation?</p> <p><i>Robinson: I worked for Apple remotely as tech support. The customers who called were usually upset because their devices were not working properly, usually upset and frustrated. I learned patience, compassion, understanding and empathy; to remain calm, from that experience.</i></p>
8	<p>This position will require response to emergency calls after hours, as well as securing and protecting all facilities during unusual or extreme conditions. Do you have a problem/concern with being called out in evenings, on holiday, etc? How will you make arrangements at home to fulfill this requirement?</p> <p><i>Robinson: I have family support.</i></p>
9	<p>Do you currently live within a 30-minute driving distance of City Hall? Yes/No answer. If not, are you willing to relocate to within 30 minutes of City Hall within 6 months as a condition of hiring? Yes/No answer.</p> <p><i>Robinson: I live within 30 minutes of City Hall currently.</i></p>
10	<p>We have several other candidates we are considering for this position. Why should we hire you?</p>

<p><i>Robinson: I am passionate about my county. My work as a legal aide and legal assistant. I understand confidentiality and the need for good record-keeping.</i></p>
--

COUNCIL DISCUSSION:

Councilwoman Haffner: Tell us more about the billing backlog at the attorney's office

Robinson: Clients were not getting billed and had not been for months. I was able to sort out the records, files and invoices and bring the billing current.

Councilwoman Green: Are you interested in obtaining city clerk certification?

Robinson: Yes.

Mayor Barley: Tell us about your computer skills

Robinson: I understand technology due to my time with Apple.

Councilman Martin: Do you prefer working on one thing at a time or can you multi-task?

Robinson: I like to learn new things; I want to excel at everything I do.

Mayor Barley: If hired, when are you available to start?

Robinson: Immediately.

The Council thanked Robinson for interviewing and she left the meeting.

Mayor Barley recessed the meeting at 6:15.

Mayor Barley reconvened the meeting at 6:20.

Director Simmons stated that he had called Marcellena Lamb, and she was not answering.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION:

Barley: Our second applicant, Ms. Lamb is a no show. How does the Council wish to proceed? Discussion of applicant? I have one thing; when we asked about Human Resources, she did not say she had experience.

Director Neel: She did say she had supervisory experience but not human resource experience.

Mayor Barley: do we feel we need to look further?

Councilman Martin: Latilda, we just have a job description/no ordinance for it?

Director Neel: right. The only position with an ordinance is the City Manager.

Councilwoman Haffner: I liked her (Robinson) professionalism, her legal experience will help her deal with privacy issues, confidentiality. I like that she has a Bachelor of Science degree in Political Science, that she wants to learn more about local government. She was a legislative intern, even though it was for a short period. She seems like a go-getter, organized. I know that most legal offices tend to be pretty high-paced/busy. I personally would be willing to give her an opportunity here.

Councilman Martin: I would like to go back to the pond. I want to hire the right person for the right job for a good fit. We don't want a revolving door.

Councilwoman Green: The applicant who declined the invitation to interview (Cameron Sumler); are we going to give her an opportunity to interview?

Director Simmons: I could still set a meeting for Cameron if you want me to. She is not available for interview Monday - Thursday as she works in Donaldsonville, Georgia.

Councilwoman Green: would she be willing to do a Zoom Meeting?

Director Simmons: she might be. I think she would have been here. but her child's birthday was today.

Councilman Farris: I don't blame her.

Director Simmons: If you want to interview her, I could probably arrange something on a Friday. I would like to say something if I can. Some of you in business know this already. There are not a lot of experienced young people below us. The days of getting someone spot on and ready to go; the chances are slim to none. You may have to pick someone with the passion to learn the job. You are looking for someone with drive.

Councilman Martin: Is this a pay range position or negotiated salary?

Director Neel: we have an adopted pay scale. If you want to hire a certified clerk, we should probably post the job on the Florida Municipal Clerk's website.

Councilwoman Haffner: We had an HR company do a salary study a year ago.

Councilwoman Brannon: Probationary period 6 months? If we did hire the one we interviewed (Robinson) we would know right away if she was going to be able to handle it.

Mayor Barley: the two previous clerks; neither one had any experience. The City send them to city clerk classes and the City paid for it.

Councilman Farris: I don't have a problem with giving her (Robinson) a chance. She would be on probation. She showed up. She may not have all the experience of an experienced city clerk but to me she seemed like she is willing to learn, she's young. I believe if we gave her a chance and with some direction, her getting into the classes, she may make a great city clerk for Freeport.

Director Neel: She (Robinson) has a bachelor's degree in Political Science. She knows Walton County. That's a big advantage that she has some history in this area. She lives locally. We will re-advertise if that is what you want to do, but I felt in that conversation we had during her interview that she is very willing to learn anything that we are willing to teach her and do whatever is necessary. Law offices are tough. And the fact that she has that experience with Apple, one of the biggest technology companies in the world, for trouble-shooting, that's an ace in the hole.

Councilman Farris: we've advertised in the past and we still don't get a lot, that's certified. I say give her a chance.

The Council discussed the advertising process and job descriptions and the pay scale study approved by the Council the year before.

Haffner: our pay rate is competitive for the responsibilities of the position.

Simmons: I would be happy to call Sumler and reschedule if you like.

Martin: I will be happy with whatever ya'll want to do. I want the hire to be correct.

COUNCIL ACTION: Councilman Farris motioned to offer the position of City Clerk to Malani Robinson, pending a successful background check, drug test and paperwork completion, at the starting salary for City Clerk. Councilwoman Haffner seconded the motion. All ayes: motion carried.

3. Adjournment

Mayor: Batley adjourned the meeting at 6:43 pm.