

MINUTES OF THE GLADES COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
SPECIAL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, JULY 30, 2018 AT 11:30 A.M. AT THE
GLADES COUNTY REGIONAL TRAINING CENTER, LOCATED AT 1030 INDUSTRIAL
DRIVE, MOORE HAVEN, FLORIDA

The Glades County Board of County Commissioners met on Monday, July 30, 2018 at 11:30 a.m. with the following Commissioners present:

John Ahern, Chairman
Tim Stanley, Vice Chairman
Weston Pryor
Donna Storter Long
Donald Strenth

Others present:

Julie Mann Braddock, Administrative Secretary
Richard Pringle, County Attorney
Susan Whidden, Administrative Assistant
Cindy Ricker, SHIP Coordinator
David Mercer, Building Inspector
Susan BuChans, Community Development Director
Tycee Prevatt, Ag Extension Agent
Bob Jones, Public Safety Director
Angie Snow-Colegrove, Emergency Management Director
David Hardin, Glades County Sheriff
Gabrielle Ibietatorremendia, Human Resources Director
Dale Milita, CAS Governmental Services
Connie Vanassche, CAS Governmental Services
Mary Booher, Director – Glades County Library
Chris Felker, Okeechobee News
4 citizens

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Ahern called the meeting to order at 11:30 a.m.

PRAYER

Commissioner Storter Long gave the invocation.

PLEDGE

Commissioner Strenth led the pledge of allegiance.

AGENDA AMENDMENTS

Attorney Pringle requested that an item be added to the agenda to confirm Chairman Ahern and Vice Chairman Stanley's authority to continue to act in the absence of a County Manager. He stated this would be added as Item #4.

ON MOTION of Commissioner Pryor seconded by Commissioner Strenth the Board moved to amend the agenda to include Item #4 – Authority of Chairman and Vice Chairman to act in the place of a County Manager.

Commissioner Storter Long asked at what point the Deputy County Manager would be considered next in line to act.

Attorney Pringle stated the Board would adding this item for discussion if approved.

Commissioner Storter Long stated she did not believe the item should be added to this agenda. She suggested it be added to the next regular meeting's agenda.

Motion failed by a 4 -1 vote.

Commissioner Storter Long voted against the motion on the floor.

PUBLIC INPUT ON BUSINESS AGENDA ITEMS

There was no public input.

BUSINESS AGENDA

- 1. Candidates for County Manager's Position Interviews**
 - a. Martin Murphy**
 - b. Angela Hill**
 - c. Bogdan Vitas**
 - d. Timothy Day**
 - e. Jennifer James-Mesloh**

The Board took heard Items #2 & #3 prior to beginning the interview process.

- 2. US Department of Justice Grant Certification Documents**

Attorney Pringle stated the US Department of Justice now required a certification by the Board Chairman and the County Attorney certifying that the County did not have any local laws or ordinances that were adverse, or inconsistent with, 8 US Code Section 13.73. He stated this code dealt with communications between Government Agencies and the Immigration & Naturalization Service. He stated he was not aware of any rules that protected information or prohibited the INS from getting information from County government.

ON MOTION of Commissioner Storter Long seconded by Commissioner Pryor the Board authorized the Chairman and Attorney Pringle to sign oath statements on behalf of the County stating that the County did not have any rules, regulations, or ordinances that were contrary to 8 US Code, Section 13.73.

Motion carried by 5 – 0 vote.

- 3. 2018-2019 Florida Job Growth Grant Fund – Public Infrastructure Grant Proposal**

Connie Vanassche, CAS Governmental Services, stated the County had applied for a Job Growth Grant for Public Infrastructure for the connecting road from the Training Center to the Love's Travel Center. She asked that the Board authorize the chairman to sign the update grant application.

ON MOTION of Vice Chairman Stanley seconded by Commissioner Strenth the Board approved the 2018-2019 Florida Job Growth Grant Fund – Public Infrastructure Grant Proposal (Application) and authorized the Chairman to sign on behalf of the Board.

Motion carried by 5 – 0 vote.

COUNTY MANAGER INTERVIEWS

The following individuals were candidates for the County Manager's Position:

- A. Martin Murphy
- B. Angela Hill
- C. Bogdan Vitas
- D. Timothy Day (not present)
- E. Jennifer James-Mesloh

Attorney Pringle gave a brief background of the competitive selection process that the Board had recently been going through to hire a County Manager. He stated 4 of the 5 candidates was present today for an interview. He stated each of the candidates had already done informal interviews, one-on-one, with each County Commissioners. He stated the next step would be the formal interviews. He stated he would ask the questions of the candidates. He stated Mr. Timothy Day had officially withdrawn his application and had been removed from the list of candidates. He stated the purpose of today's interviews was to find the person who was the best fit for the job of County Manager of Glades County. He stated once the candidates had answered their questions, the Chairman could receive input from the public on the process. He stated he had asked the candidates before the meeting started if they wished to voluntarily stay out of the room during the question and interview process and they had each agreed to do so.

Chairman Ahern asked if there were any questions at this time regarding the process. There were none.

Candidate Name: Martin Murphy

1. Will you please describe your interest in becoming County Manager?

Mr. Murphy stated he had about 25 years of local government experience, a Bachelor's Degree in Business, and a Master's in Public Administration. He stated he had learned the basis for good government while he served as Director of Planning & Development for the City of Ogdensburg. He stated he had refined his management skills while serving as Chief Executive Officer for the Village of Saranac Lake and most recently, as Assistant City Manager of New Port Richey. He stated he was looking for an

opportunity to continue his career in a smaller community that offered a high quality of life. He stated he would like to be able to use his experience as a part of a team and contribute to the community's continued growth and expansion.

2. Tell us about your current position or most recent position and how you helped the organization accomplish its goals and mission.

He stated his most recent position was Assistant City Manager of New Port Richey and had had been there for approximately 11 months before the position had been eliminated from the budget. He stated while there he had worked on an Active Growth Plan that had included the annexation of surrounding areas that were unincorporated in Pasco County. He stated this plan also included utility expansion and other services. He stated he had also drafted several ordinances that were presented to the City Council for consideration and had overseen the offices of Information Technology and Human Resources.

3. What did you do for your current or most recent employer that made a difference, for which you believe you will be remembered?

Mr. Murphy stated the work he had done with the annexation program was a multi-year plan that in time would incorporate different areas into the City boundaries. He stated at different phases of that plan the City would be taking on new staff in Emergency Services and Public Utilities.

4. Tell us about your experience in leading and managing an organization similar to ours.

Mr. Murphy stated he had served as Chief Executive Officer for the Village of Saranac Lake. He stated his experience at Cortland County was similar to that of Glades. He stated the county consisted of approximately 50,000 people and he had been over 30 departments and approximately 650 employees. He stated the annual operating budget was approximately \$125 million.

5. What is your personal philosophy of management?

Mr. Murphy explained that his personal philosophy of management was essentially that management was how resources were assigned and allocated. He stated the position of County Manager required leadership abilities. He stated he had studied various aspects of leadership as well as how to lead an organization. He stated leadership boiled down to creating an environment where people are motivated to do their best and go beyond their normal work duties. He stated leadership required people to be willing to voluntarily follow their leader and his cause. He stated everyone in an organization had a certain leadership role.

6. Tell us about your fiscal management experience: budgeting, reporting, cutting costs, building and maintaining reserves.

Mr. Murphy stated he had developed and implemented budgets ranking from \$5 million to over \$125 million. He stated while in New York State, the State had implemented a 2% tax. He stated municipalities could not raise their millage more than 2% or the annual rate of replacement in a year. He stated at the same time he was able to

maintain the reserves. He stated expenses had been cut in several areas. He stated he had looked at services that could be provided through private companies. He stated a Certificate of Need had been sold to the private company and had thereby cut \$100,000.00 out of the annual operating deficit in that one department.

7. Have you ever had to champion an unpopular change? How did you handle it?

Mr. Murphy stated one of the communities he had worked for was going from a strong Mayor/Council form of government to a Council/Manager form of government. He stated the community had rewritten its charter. He stated he had been hired to implement the new charter and bring about all of the necessary changes. He stated the challenge was to change the way the City was doing business. He stated there were a lot of best practices and the mentality of doing things the way they had always been done. He stated he had started with the smaller departments and worked his way up.

8. Have you ever faced a significant ethical problem at work? How did you handle it?

Mr. Murphy stated he had faced a significant ethical problem at work. He stated one of the issues that had arose with implementing the new charter was with the best practice of Department Heads, collectively, selecting one of their own to negotiate with the City Council on their respective pay raises for the year. He stated the new charter specified that the City Manager would develop performance evaluations and raises would be based on merit. He stated there had been some push back from some of the Department Heads and Council members that preferred to continue operating under the old practices. He stated this push back was undermining what he had been told to implement; it was a violation of the Taylor Law; and the practice undermined the whole premise of a Council/Manager form of government. He stated he had never fully resolved the situation and had ended up resigning from that position.

9. Tell us about your experience working with a board of commissioners/directors. What approach and philosophy do you follow in working with boards?

Mr. Murphy stated he had worked with boards of this size (5) up to a board with 19 legislators. He stated it was a challenge to keep all 19 members informed of what was going on. He stated he provided weekly updates which highlighted important things that had come up during the week and often invited them to meet with them individually at their place of work. He stated he would also sometimes meet with them prior to the board meetings. He stated he had encourage meeting with them one on one because he preferred this type of dialogue.

10. What do you think is the role of the County Manager in strategic planning for Glades County?

Mr. Murphy the role of the County Manager in strategic planning would be to facilitate those discussions and bring about a realistic set of goals and objections that could be taken to the Department Heads for input. He stated the County Manager played the role of primary liaison between the Board and the Department Heads.

11. Give us some examples of how and when you were the spokesperson for your current or most recent employer.

Mr. Murphy stated that while in his role as County Manager he had helped with a sales tax distribution agreement with all of the local municipalities. He stated when the agreement was due to expire, he had been asked by the Legislature to negotiate a new agreement with the local municipalities and carve out more money for the County. He stated he had met with each municipality and shared with them a formula he had developed that would effectively, over time, increase the County's share of revenue from sales tax and at the same time decrease the municipalities' percentages. He stated this was not very well received initially. He stated he was able to illustrate to them that even though the percentage rate would be decreasing, the increase in the sales tax would offset it and effectively, they would not see any loss of dollars. He stated he did end up getting unanimous approval to have the sales tax agreement in the end.

12. Tell us about your experiences with Staff development. How do you think your current or most recent staff would describe you?

Mr. Murphy stated he believed he had gained the trust and loyalty of his staff by working closely with them. He stated he had a lot of respect for the jobs they did; and more importantly, an understanding of the jobs they did. He stated he had a very productive working relationship with his staff.

13. How do you stay informed of current ideas on management in the government agency field?

Mr. Murphy stated he was an International City/County Manager Association (ICMA) credentialed manager. He stated he received weekly bulletins and monthly newsletters from that organization. He stated he was also a member of the American Institute of Certified Planners and received regular updates from them as well. He stated if he were to get the position in Glades County he would establish a good communication line with the State and Federal agencies as well.

14. In your opinion, how does Florida's "Government in the Sunshine Law" affect how you will manage? How will this law have an effect on your dealings with the Commissioners? The media? Explain.

Mr. Murphy stated the Florida Sunshine Law required managers to spend more time communicating with individual Commission members as opposed to providing information on a blanket basis. He stated he believed this would help in building a solid relationship based on trust. He stated he would take extra time to ensure that each Commissioner had the same information at the same time.

15. In this position, you will be met with many demands, internally and externally. Realizing that you cannot respond to everything, how will you determine what you can delegate, and how will you manage this delegation process?

Mr. Murphy stated without specifics it would be somewhat difficult to answer this question. He stated delegation would be largely dependent on the priorities of the Commissioners themselves. He stated depending on the development level of the Department Heads he would determine if the task was something that could be delegated or handled by him.

16. Under the leadership, what will be the organizational philosophy of Glades County? How will this be beneficial to the employees and community?

Mr. Murphy stated the organizational philosophy from his perspective would be that he and staff worked for the citizens and the residents of Glades County. He stated it would be his job to help them accomplish their individual goals whenever he could.

17. Describe a situation you have experienced when an immediate decision had to be made, even if most of the relevant data was not available.

Mr. Murphy described a motor vehicle accident that had included a tractor trailer that was hauling combustible materials. He stated at the time he was not certain whether or not there was any exposure to the community. He stated there was an Elementary School nearby and the Police Department called his office, explained the situation to him and wanted to know if there was anything else that needed to be done. He stated he had notified the Emergency Responders and then called the Elementary School Principal and asked that he hold the release of the students so that it could be verified and confirmed that there was no exposure that would put the children or others at risk.

18. Based upon what you have read and heard, what ideas do you have about continuing and increasing the success of Glades County?

Mr. Murphy stated in the short term he believed Glades County needed to fully leverage any and all State funding that would help the County achieve its goals, particularly as it related to the installation of infrastructure. He stated the infrastructure, when well planned and placed, could attract development. He stated depending on where the infrastructure was placed, it could actually guide the development.

19. Are there any programs, policies, or actions of Glades County that you have heard of with which you have concerns or differences?

Mr. Murphy stated there were none that he could point to and asked to reserve his right to comment at a later date.

20. If you hired for this position and are still with Glades County two years from now, how do you think the organization will be different?

Mr. Murphy stated he believed Glades County would have a well thought out Comprehensive Strategic Plan with measurable objectives that had been met and expanded upon. He stated he believed the County will have achieved those short range goals and objectives and would be working on developing new short range goals.

Chairman Ahern asked if the Board had any further questions for Mr. Murphy.

Vice Chairman Stanley asked if Mr. Murphy's resignation was due to the ethical violation in the workplace.

Mr. Murphy stated it had been a contributing factor.

Candidate Name: Angela Hill

1. Will you please describe your interest in becoming County Manager?

Mrs. Hill stated she had lived in this area her whole life and had worked with local governments for the past 30 years. She stated this position would give her the opportunity to use her skill set in a way that would help Glades County move forward in a productive and economically, feasible way.

2. Tell us about your current position or most recent position and how you helped the organization accomplish its goals and mission.

Mrs. Hill stated her most recent position was representing the City of LaBelle in 3 different Water Control Districts and various Homeowners' Associations in Southwest Florida. She stated she had been the City Attorney for LaBelle for almost 10 years. She stated the way she helped the organization the best was to by getting to know the Board members individually and the Board as a whole. She stated by knowing their interests and goals she was able to help the Board move forward with its goals. She stated she was able to help with capital improvement projects, budgeting issues, employment issues, and the funding of projects.

3. What did you do for your current or most recent employer that made a difference, for which you believe you will be remembered?

Mrs. Hill stated she had helped solve a regional flooding problem in the Lehigh Acres, Fort Myers, Hendry County area. She stated the project had come together rather quickly and had been very rewarding.

4. Tell us about your experience in leading and managing an organization similar to ours.

Mrs. Hill stated her clients had been mostly cities, counties and water control districts, and had all involved representing an elected board. She stated the individual Department Heads were all very involved with her decision making and problem solving. She stated she had to work with the Department Heads closely so that they could carry out the wishes of the board in a way that was legal and fit within the budget.

5. What is your personal philosophy of management?

Mrs. Hill stated she was not a micro-manager and felt the Department Heads were fully capable of handling the issues under their control and authority. She stated she liked to know the Department Heads and their employees and any special challenges that they may face. She stated morale needed to be high. She commented on poor morale leading to other issues. She stated she liked to see Department Heads do their jobs effectively because that was what they were hired to do.

6. Tell us about your fiscal management experience: budgeting, reporting, cutting costs, building and maintaining reserves.

Mrs. Hill stated part of her job over the past 30 years had been working with the different entities that she represented on budgeting. She stated every year each entity had to go through the budget hearing process. She stated she had to be privy to all different Department Heads and all of the different ways that they had to be creative in cutting costs. She stated it was very hard for a small community to make its budget work. She stated most of her clients had been in economically challenged areas and it could be very difficult.

7. Have you ever had to champion an unpopular change? How did you handle it?

Mrs. Hill stated the biggest challenge she had to handle was special assessment hearings. She stated local governments were mandated to provide services and the constituents were not happy when they were taxed. She stated everyone was very angry and emotional and she had to help the Board navigate through these hearings.

8. Have you ever faced a significant ethical problem at work? How did you handle it?

Mrs. Hill stated the biggest ethical problems she had to face at work were violations of the Sunshine Law. She stated it was really hard to do public business in the sunshine. She stated the Sunshine Law covered so many different things now. She stated it was extremely difficult to operate under the Sunshine Law; however, the County had to do it because it was a public entity.

9. Tell us about your experience working with a board of commissioner/directors. What approach and philosophy do you follow in working with boards?

Mrs. Hill stated her approach in working with boards was different for different boards. She stated some boards liked her to be more proactive and more involved in the dialogue at meetings while others preferred for her to be seen and not heard. She stated she liked to talk with the Chairman to see how she should interface with the board. She stated she would want to talk with each Commissioner prior to the meetings. She stated this way everyone would be as prepared as they could be. She stated she did not like to see her board surprised with issues that she should have known about. She stated she liked to keep the board informed. She stated she liked to solve problems outside of public meetings.

10. What do you think is the role of the County Manager in strategic planning for Glades County?

Mrs. Murphy stated she believed the role of the County Manager was critical because that position was responsible for gathering all of the information and exploring all options to make Glades County a better place. She stated the Commissioners were all elected officials with their own jobs and lives and did not have the time to do these things. She stated the County Manager would research grants that were available and

opportunities for the County to grow. She stated the County Manager was basically the board's eyes and ears.

11. Give us some examples of how and when you were the spokesperson for your current or most recent employer.

Mrs. Hill stated she had been a part of the local delegation for Hendry County and had been asked to assist in getting an appropriation from the State for a particular project. She stated she would be responsible for attending the local delegation meetings and explaining the project and the needs. She stated maybe even lobbying in Tallahassee with Committee members that would be voting on the appropriations.

12. Tell us about your experiences with Staff development. How do you think your current or most recent staff would describe you?

Mrs. Hill stated she owned her own business and was not considered an employee of the government's that she represented. She stated she did involve herself with staff on a regular basis. She stated the development she was concerned with was whether there were legal issues that needed to be dealt with. She stated a big part of her involvement was making sure policies and procedures were up to date.

13. How do you stay informed of current ideas on management in the government agency field?

Mrs. Hill stated she used the Association of Counties as a resource. She stated she received lots of publications and tried to keep up as much as she could. She stated things were changing rapidly.

14. In your opinion, how does Florida's "Government in the Sunshine Law" affect how you will manage? How will this law have an effect on your dealings with the Commissioners? The media? Explain.

Mrs. Hill stated the Sunshine Law applied to elected officials and did not allow any 2 of the Commissioners to converse about something they were going to vote on outside of a public meeting. She stated her job would be to meet with each Board member individually so that she understood their concerns. She stated she had to be very careful about taking information from one Commissioner to another. She stated she would make sure that each Commissioner was up to date on seminars regarding the Sunshine Law. She stated she would do her best to take care of the Board members. She stated the Sunshine Law was very challenging now with texting and computers.

15. In this position, you will be met with many demands, internally and externally. Realizing that you cannot respond to everything, how will you determine what you can delegate, and how will you manage this delegation process?

Mrs. Hill stated she believed it was important not to micro-manage. She stated if an issue came to her and she knew it probably could be handled by a Department Head she would send them an email and allow them to handle it. She stated she would ask them to let her know their plan of action and how she could help them accomplish it.

16. Under the leadership, what will be the organizational philosophy of Glades County? How will this be beneficial to the employees and community?

Mrs. Hill stated the organizational chart was set the way it was because of the law. She stated she would not change the flow chart. She stated she was not sure if she would change anything or not.

17. Describe a situation you have experienced when an immediate had to be made, even if most of the relevant data was not available.

Mrs. Hill stated when there was a weather event when decisions had to be made to close roads, dispatch emergency services, etc. She stated sometimes a public meeting could not be called in time to respond effectively. She stated she there were times when you just had to do what you had to do.

18. Based upon what you have read and heard, what ideas do you have about continuing and increasing the success of Glades County?

Mrs. Hill stated she had only been able to attend a couple Board meetings. She stated she had heard of some issues that she would like to try to help with. She stated one of these was attracting the workers that Glades County needed and being able to pay them more. She stated this was a common challenge and definitely needed to be addressed.

19. Are there any programs, policies, or actions of Glades County that you have heard of with which you have concerns or differences?

Mrs. Hill stated she could not say that she had heard of any.

20. If you hired for this position and are still with Glades County two years from now, how do you think the organization will be different?

Mrs. Hill stated she did not believe the organizational makeup would be any different; but she hoped that Glades County would be in a better place. She stated she would like to solve the problems of funding the budget and setting worker's salaries to get the people that were needed. She stated she would love to see some economic goals to be met to increase the tax base. She stated she would like to see some patterned growth. She stated she would like to see a great morale and comradery among the Board and the Department Heads.

Chairman Ahern asked if the Board had any follow up questions for Mrs. Hill.

Commissioner Storter Long asked if the applicants would be waiting until the interviews were over.

Gabrielle Ibietatorremendia, Human Resources Director, asked if Mr. Murphy should be dismissed.

Vice Chairman Stanley stated he did not believe he would have any further questions of the applicants and left it up to the applicant as to whether or not they wished to stay.

Attorney Pringle suggested that the applicants remain here at least until the Board was done with the interview process. He stated the applicants could be released when the public input portion of the meeting started.

Candidate Name: Bogdan Vitas

1. Will you please describe your interest in becoming County Manager?

Mr. Vitas stated he would not have applied had he not had an interest. He stated County government was one level of government that he had not worked in yet. He stated Glades County was a smaller county and not far from his home. He stated the County had some unique challenges and he had some unique experiences that he could share.

2. Tell us about your current position or most recent position and how you helped the organization accomplish its goals and mission.

Mr. Vitas stated his last position had been Palm Beach where he had inherited the position after they had not had a manager for 9 years. He stated the previous manager had been there 6 months and let go. He stated he started the position with a 90 day action plan. He stated he laid out what would happen in his office, the elected body and surrounding communities. He stated the plan was followed until completed and a 3 year plan was developed where he had laid out the plans and objectives.

3. What did you do for your current or most recent employer that made a difference, for which you believe you will be remembered?

Mr. Vitas stated he would like to think he would be remembered positively. He stated the town of South Palm Beach had experienced a tremendous problem with beach erosion. He stated it had been going on forever. He stated he worked with the elected body in terms of trying to get the beach stabilization program passed. He stated he also worked with the Mayor and the private property owners along the ocean side. He stated he worked with the County to secure 50 year easements so that the County and City could access the beach going forward. He stated seawall work was done, some seawall restoration, and expansion of the beach. He stated all but one condo building signed. He stated he believed this was his legacy.

4. Tell us about your experience in leading and managing an organization similar to ours.

Mr. Vitas stated he had worked for a variety of organizations throughout the years; however, no county governments. He stated he did not see that there was a great difference in a large city and a small county. He stated government was government. He stated he believed in a flatter organization where there was more interaction between his office, the elected body, and the Department Heads. He stated he liked to meet with people on a regular basis.

5. What is your personal philosophy of management?

Mr. Vitas stated he did not expect others to do that which he would not do. He stated he believed in open door communications horizontally and vertically.

6. Tell us about your fiscal management experience: budgeting, reporting, cutting costs, building and maintaining reserves.

Mr. Vitas stated he had spent years honing his skills in the area of financial management. He stated he was currently working on a budget for the town of Pembroke Park which was in financial distress due to mismanagement. He stated he had done everything from budgets on green bar paper to traditional line items; to putting together high level, performance based budgets and correlating these budgets with strategic plans, action plans, capital improvement plans and integrating them. He stated the best example of this was when he worked for the City of Key West. He stated it was a very complex situation with a \$160 million annual budget. He stated he had helped build reserves. He stated the policy regarding reserves was set by the elected body. He stated the last organization he managed had several \$100,000.00 in reserves.

7. Have you ever had to champion an unpopular change? How did you handle it?

Mr. Vitas stated he had spent about 10 years in Wisconsin in a rural community. He stated the population was mostly elderly and very little commercial industry. He stated the community was basically totally undeveloped on one side of the river. He stated DOT wanted to extend the highway and through part of the undeveloped part of town. He stated the project was master planned. He stated recreational trails came up for a vote. He stated a lot of the residents believed the trails would be a waste of money; yet he knew it had to be done. He stated had championed the idea to the point where he was getting hate mail and request to be fired; however, he did not stop and in the end all of the recreational trails were built. He stated a year later some of the ones that hated him for pursuing the trails came to him and thanked him. He stated you have to believe in what you are doing.

8. Have you ever faced a significant ethical problem at work? How did you handle it?

Mr. Vitas stated he could not think of a good example of this type of situation. He stated he had seen situations that weren't correct according to State ethics law, but did not run into this too often.

9. Tell us about your experience working with a board of commissioner/directors. What approach and philosophy do you follow in working with boards?

Mr. Vitas stated his first rule of thumb was that what you say to one you say to all. He stated it was better for all of the elected officials to receive the same information consistently across the board. He stated there should be no favorites. He stated he liked to keep the playing field as level as possible. He stated he preferred email as a form of communication so that it could be sent to all Commissioners. He stated he would establish a dialogue that worked.

10. What do you think is the role of the County Manager in strategic planning for Glades County?

Mr. Vitas stated he believed the County Manager should be the head cheerleader. He stated if the manager did not believe in it, it would not get done. He stated it was a unique process and everyone had to be involved.

11. Give us some examples of how and when you were the spokesperson for your current or most recent employer.

Mr. Vitas stated as a manager he did get caught up in being a spokesperson for the organization. He stated he believed the media expected it. He stated Key West had been the most active place he had played the role of spokesperson. He stated it was a city that never slept. He stated if the Mayor could not be there, he was asked to be the spokesperson. He stated you had to be careful, but he had no problem being in the limelight.

12. Tell us about your experiences with Staff development. How do you think your current or most recent staff would describe you?

Mr. Vitas stated his staff loved him. He stated they were very supportive. He stated he had spent a large portion of his career mentoring people to stay in this profession. He stated it was a tough profession. He stated he had hired numerous students out of universities that had studied public administration and many of them were managers today. He stated making training available to staff was crucial. He stated the world and the laws were changing all of the time. He stated people needed to be engaged with their own professional interests.

13. How do you stay informed of current ideas on management in the government agency field?

Mr. Vitas stated the Florida City/County Managers Association helped him stay informed. He stated he attended conferences and networked. He stated he learned from other's experiences about things at the state and national level. He stated he also read a lot of publications from the association as well as others.

14. In your opinion, how does Florida's "Government in the Sunshine Law" affect how you will manage? How will this law have an effect on your dealings with the Commissioners? The media? Explain.

Mr. Vitas stated the Sunshine Law would affect every issue, every day. He stated it was a strict set of guidelines and rules and he believed the law needed to be followed. He stated corruption would breed itself when people operated in the shadows. He stated you would not find him in the shadows and if anyone tried to take him there he would leave.

15. In this position, you will be met with many demands, internally and externally. Realizing that you cannot respond to everything, how will you determine what you can delegate, and how will you manage this delegation process?

Mr. Vitas stated he would manage very carefully. He stated each person had their own set of skill sets and knowledge. He stated he would get to know the staff first and then get the results that were needed.

16. Under the leadership, what will be the organizational philosophy of Glades County? How will this be beneficial to the employees and community?

Mr. Vitas stated with any change in leadership came new ideas and a sense of direction. He stated Glades County had a lot of cattle country, sugarcane, and the soil was the wealth here. He stated he were to try to build a legacy here it would probably relate to solving the problems with the Corps and the taking of lands for water restoration. He stated he believed another issue in Glades County was the need for housing. He stated there needed to be a reason for people to be here. He stated people needed to have a reason to stop in Glades County. He stated there needed to be vertical structure to resolve the budget issues.

17. Describe a situation you have experienced when an immediate had to be made, even if most of the relevant data was not available.

Mr. Vitas stated he was usually pretty well organized. He stated storm events often needed immediate decisions to be made. He stated a lot of operations and spending ceased during the moment of the storm and afterwards you would procure what was needed.

18. Based upon what you have read and heard, what ideas do you have about continuing and increasing the success of Glades County?

Mr. Vitas stated he believed the Commission was looking for someone to come in and try to maintain the quality of life in Glades County. He stated a lot of the residents had been here 5 – 6 generations or more. He stated at the same there was an interest to grow the County and raise revenues. He stated the corridors needed to be taken advantage of. He stated capturing a part of the money that flowed through the County was important. He stated the additional revenues could provide affordable housing. He stated there was a lot of development going on to the East of the County and Glades County needed to capture some of it.

19. Are there any programs, policies, or actions of Glades County that you have heard of with which you have concerns or differences?

Mr. Vitas stated he did not know of any.

20. If you hired for this position and are still with Glades County two years from now, how do you think the organization will be different?

Mr. Vitas he believed you would see an organization that was well embraced. He stated he was a team builder and got very close with the people he worked with. He stated he built relationships that would last.

Chairman Ahern asked if the Board had any follow up questions for Mr. Vitas. There were none.

Candidate Name: Jennifer James-Mesloh

1. Will you please describe your interest in becoming County Manager?

Mrs. James- Mesloh stated she had a combination of personal and professional reasons for being interested in the County Manager position. She stated she was an 8th generation Floridian from the general area. She stated this position would allow her to come home. She stated she was looking for a community where she could have longevity and sustainability. She stated she believed this position would be a good fit for her because she did have experience in grant writing and bonding. She stated she was currently working as a County Manager and had a background in infrastructure. She stated she currently managed water, sewer, electric, garbage, fire department, etc.

2. Tell us about your current position or most recent position and how you helped the organization accomplish its goals and mission.

Mrs. James-Mesloh stated she was currently a Manager for a small community in Michigan. She stated she had been in the position for a year and a half. She stated she had been asked to address a handful of topics by the Council. She stated the big issues were the budget and finances. She stated both were in bad shape. She stated in January and identified very quickly that the organization was going to red line by October. She stated she had pull the organization from the brink of collapse. She stated the organization was now financially stable. She stated she had aligned the budget with the State of Michigan's charge accounts and the Federal Government. She stated the budget was such a mess that they had to start over. She stated 18 months later the village had a budget that worked. She stated she had been able to reduce expenditures in all areas and the organization was financially stable.

3. What did you do for your current or most recent employer that made a difference, for which you believe you will be remembered?

Mrs. James-Mesloh she stated the Village had 27 checking accounts and one of the things they had done was instead of revisiting the rates they were moving money from one account to the other. She stated she had evaluated these accounts and the Village had taken out approximately \$12 million in debt and lowered the utility rates. She stated she had to raise the rates to get the budget stable. She stated she had also updated the software they were using.

4. Tell us about your experience in leading and managing an organization similar to ours.

Mrs. James-Mesloh stated the Village was small, rural, and resource strapped. She stated she appreciated that dynamic. She stated she was responsible for all departments and units. She stated the organization had not had any change in the organizational chart, change in job titles, or job descriptions since the 1980's. She stated she had been able to identify the tasks that needed to happen and then realign the organization.

5. What is your personal philosophy of management?

Mrs. James-Mesloh stated she took a very collaborative approach to management. She stated she enjoyed serving on committees and was very transparent. She stated she talked with her staff and got their recommendations on certain issues. She stated she currently worked with 7 diverse individuals. She stated she had a fantastic relationship with all of them. She stated each individual liked different methods of communication and she tried to accommodate each of them. She stated she kept them all informed and they never went into a meeting without knowing what the issues were and what the options were. She stated she viewed her position as the “information gatherer”. She stated she would then provide that information to her board and allowed them to make the decisions on how to move forward.

6. Tell us about your fiscal management experience: budgeting, reporting, cutting costs, building and maintaining reserves.

Mrs. James-Mesloh stated she had gone through a complete budget revamp at her current position. She stated she had basically built a municipality from zero. She stated she had built the budget back from scratch. She stated she had also reviewed and changed the personnel cost summaries. She stated some staff operated in multiple areas and their salaries had to be charged from each budget. She stated prior to her review all of the fringe benefits were being charged to electric, regardless of where the employee worked. She stated all of the retiree benefits were being charged to the motor pool. She stated she was in the first year (calendar year) of the new budget. She stated they had decided to review capital improvements and management of buildings/grounds. She stated a lot of equipment had been updated.

7. Have you ever had to champion an unpopular change? How did you handle it?

Mrs. James-Mesloh stated she was the Public Information Officer when she worked with the Lee County Health Department. She stated the department had been responsible for the Swine flu vaccinations within Lee County. She stated there was a lot of misinformation going around about the vaccine. She stated she had to help develop campaigns and media information for different target audiences. She stated she had attended fairs and dramatically increase the number of vaccinations. She stated she had to look at water rates at her current position. She stated it had been a really hard decision to make. She stated a lot of information had been provided regarding the facts. She stated she currently did weekly radio interviews and updates regarding the community she worked for. She stated letters to the editor and newsletter were very good tools to get information out to the public.

8. Have you ever faced a significant ethical problem at work? How did you handle it?

Mrs. James-Mesloh stated she had been fortunate and had not had to address any ethical problems at work. She stated she kept in contact with different agencies and attorneys to make sure the organization was in compliance with local and state laws.

9. Tell us about your experience working with a board of commissioner/directors. What approach and philosophy do you follow in working with boards?

Mrs. James-Mesloh stated she spent a significant amount of time talking with the Board members individually. She stated she felt having a background in communication was very helpful. She stated she was very collaborative and very informative. She stated she would never want her Board members to enter a meeting without knowing the issues and the options available.

10. What do you think is the role of the County Manager in strategic planning for Glades County?

Mrs. James-Mesloh stated she would have the Board members tell her what their goals and objectives were and what things were important to them. She stated she would take the information and figure out how to make it happen. She stated she had taught strategic planning as a College Professor. She stated if the Board members wanted her to come up with the issues and what needed to be focused on, she could do that too. She stated her first responsibility would be to ask the Board what direction it wanted to go. She stated she could get the Board there. She stated with the strategic planning you would first need to identify the stakeholders. She stated she would then go and talk with them and develop a plan to address the issues. She stated the Board would also need a dialogue with the communities.

11. Give us some examples of how and when you were the spokesperson for your current or most recent employer.

Mrs. James-Mesloh stated she was the Public Information Officer for the Lee County Health Department and was their media spokesperson. She stated she was on the news daily and did interviews on a regular basis. She stated she was currently the key spokesperson for her organization. She stated her current Council members did not enjoy being in front of a camera or doing interviews. She stated she enjoyed it and had done it for years.

12. Tell us about your experiences with Staff development. How do you think your current or most recent staff would describe you?

Mrs. James-Mesloh stated there was no Safety Plan and no safety evaluations had been done at her current organization. She stated there had not been any staff meetings. She stated each department was going on in its own direction. She stated she had helped them evaluate their safety and held safety meetings. She stated she now had staff meetings and Department Head meetings. She stated she was very interested in what her staff had to say. She stated they were the ones doing the job on a daily basis. She stated she was very collaborative and enjoyed this process.

13. How do you stay informed of current ideas on management in the government agency field?

Mrs. James-Mesloh stated she had a Ph.D. in Public Affairs and was used to doing a tremendous amount of research. She stated analyzing and gathering information was what she had been trained to do in academics. She stated she read a tremendous amount of active journals and stayed up with current trends in the industry. She stated professional organizations were also a great way to learn what communities nearby were doing.

14. In your opinion, how does Florida’s “Government in the Sunshine Law” affect how you will manage? How will this law have an effect on your dealings with the Commissioners? The media? Explain.

Mrs. James-Mesloh stated she would follow the law. She stated she did meet one on one a lot with her Board members at her current position. She stated she recognized that the Sunshine Law was very important and very critical. She stated she appreciated and understood that her actions were always in the public eye.

15. In this position, you will be met with many demands, internally and externally. Realizing that you cannot respond to everything, how will you determine what you can delegate, and how will you manage this delegation process?

Mrs. James-Mesloh stated time management and prioritizing tasks were challenges that she felt everyone encountered. She stated she felt it was important that the County Manager knew the job descriptions of her staff. She stated she liked to follow the chain of command in most situations.

16. Under the leadership, what will be the organizational philosophy of Glades County? How will this be beneficial to the employees and community?

Mrs. James-Mesloh stated she would look at what the customer service issues and what the County wanted and how to achieve them. She stated staff was very receptive when they had very clear guidelines and clear job descriptions. She stated she believed in timely performance evaluations. She stated she was very collaborative in her management style.

17. Describe a situation you have experienced when an immediate decision had to be made, even if most of the relevant data was not available.

Mrs. James-Mesloh stated she believed that regardless of the time line that you had to make a decision, you should always try to gather as much information as possible. She stated sometimes there was no right or wrong answer. She stated she would look at what was legal, the ordinances, and other staff recommendations in making a decision. She stated she would look to the experts for help in making decisions such as these.

18. Based upon what you have read and heard, what ideas do you have about continuing and increasing the success of Glades County?

Mrs. James-Mesloh stated everyone defined success differently. She stated Glades County had a wonderful resource in Tracy Whirls, Glades County Economic Development Council – Executive Director. She stated she had known Ms. Whirls for a long time and believed she had extensive knowledge. She stated allowing people to do their jobs and supplying them with the resources they needed would help make the County more successful. She stated she would look at things that were dependent upon economic development. She stated she would ask the Board members what success meant to them and then help them pursue and accomplish those things.

19. Are there any programs, policies, or actions of Glades County that you have heard of with which you have concerns or differences?

Mrs. James-Mesloh stated she was very interested in being a part of the discussion regarding a waste water treatment plant. She stated she would like to look at the feasibility of expanding the existing facility versus building a new system. She stated debt was always a concern.

20. If you hired for this position and are still with Glades County two years from now, how do you think the organization will be different?

Mrs. James-Mesloh stated she felt the future of Glades County in 2 years would dramatically depend on what her marching orders were from the Board. She stated she would ask what the Board wanted accomplished over the next few years and then work out the details to make them happen.

Chairman Ahern asked if the Board had any further questions for Mrs. James-Mesloh. There were none.

Chairman Ahern recessed the meeting at 1:51 p.m.

Chairman Ahern called the meeting back to order at 2:07 p.m.

Vice Chairman Stanley stated he was ready to rank the candidates.

Commissioner Storter Long stated she believed the ranking should be down in writing.

Attorney Pringle stated the candidates could be released to go at this time. He stated they could join the rest of the meeting if they so desired.

The Commissioners ranked the candidates (in writing).

Commissioner Strenth stated he did not feel that any of the candidates were good for Glades County and did not wish to rank them.

Attorney Pringle explained that the Board was not bound by the rankings. He asked that the written rankings be signed and dated. He stated the Board had not done anything to this point that would require the Board to choose a particular candidate. He stated the Board still had the choice of not choosing any of the candidates.

The written rankings were turned over to Attorney Pringle. He explained that he would disclose the rankings and keep them as a part of the record. He stated he would tally the rankings and disclose the totals and then the Board could decide what it wished to do from that point forward. The totaled the rankings.

Chairman Ahern stated he did have a couple of things that had come up since the last meeting that he would like to bring to the Board's attention. He stated Mr. Bass was getting closer to getting some more classes offered at the Training Center. He stated

he and Russell Echols had meet with the aides from Senator Nelson and Senator Rubio's offices to discuss the Moore Haven Canal project. He stated additional funding was needed and the meeting had gone well. He stated the lease on the Duda property off of Bronson Road would be on the next agenda for discussion. He stated he would be meeting with Tommy Duda tomorrow to discuss the options. He commented on some issues that the SHIP Coordinator was dealing with.

Cindy Ricker, SHIP Coordinator, stated she had spoken with all of the Commissioner except for Vice Chairman Stanley. She stated she had discussed the issue with Mr. Chaney and he was looking into a new strategy for the Thatcher project.

Attorney Pringle totaled and confirmed the totals of the individual rankings of the Commissioners. He disclosed the following rankings for the record:

Commissioner Storter Long

1. Angela Hill
2. Jennifer James-Mesloh
3. Martin Murphy
4. Bogdan Vitas

Commissioner Pryor

1. Jennifer James-Mesloh
2. Angela Hill
3. Bogdan Vitas
4. Martin Murphy

Chairman Ahern

1. Jennifer James-Mesloh
2. Bogdan Vitas
3. Martin Murphy
4. Angela Hill

Vice Chairman Stanley

1. Jennifer James-Mesloh
2. Martin Murphy
3. Bogdan Vitas
4. Angela Hill

Commissioner Strenth

(Indicated his preference was to not select any of the candidates; however, then ranked them as follows)

1. Martine Murphy
2. Jennifer James-Mesloh
3. Bogdan Vitas
4. Angela Hill

Attorney Pringle stated the total of the rankings were as follows:

Jennifer James-Mesloh - 7

Martin Murphy - 13

Angela Hill and Bogdan Vitas tied with a score of 15

Attorney Pringle made the rankings a part of the record. He reminded the Board that these rankings were not binding and the Board could decide what the next step would be.

Commissioner Storter Long stated she believed the number one ranked person should be offered the job.

Commissioner Strenth stated there were some good candidates; however, he was not satisfied. He stated this was the first round of interviews. He stated there were other candidates that could still be interviewed.

Vice Chairman Stanley stated he felt Mrs. James-Mesloh should be offered the job.

Commissioner Pryor agreed. He stated there should be a 90 day probation period.

Attorney Pringle suggested a probation period of 6 months instead of 90 days.

Commissioner Storter Long suggested 90 days and then a re-evaluation.

There was some discussion regarding the salary range.

Commissioner Strenth suggested the Board try to negotiate with Mr. Helfenburger and Mr. Carlisle to see if one of them would consider coming back.

ON MOTION of Vice Chairman Stanley seconded by Commissioner Storter Long the Board authorized to enter into a contract with Jennifer James-Mesloh for the County Manager position.

Motion carried by 4 – 1 vote.

Commissioner Strenth voted against the motion on the floor.

Chairman Ahern stated there would be 6 month probation period and the salary range was already in place.

Chairman Ahern recessed the meeting at 2:36 p.m.

Chairman Ahern called the meeting back to order at 2:47 p.m.

Chairman Ahern asked Attorney Pringle to give update on the Duda property.

Attorney Pringle stated an easement had been granted to the County on Bronson Road years ago so that the County had access to the spoil material along the River. He stated the easement was an older recorded easement and after review he believed it was a perpetual easement. He stated he could not find language that limited its term. He stated the easement was still in effect. He stated the County had been asked by Duda to vacate or extinguish the easement.

Chairman Ahern stated he had heard that Water Management was going to lease the property back to Duda for 15 years. He stated Duda would maintain approximately 250 acres between C-19 and Hwy 78. He commented on possibly selling the easement to Duda. He commented on the problems with trying to get Duda to help with the infrastructure on the America's Gateway property.

There was a discussion regarding the easement and what could possibly be negotiated with Duda.

PUBLIC INPUT ON NON AGENDA ITEMS

There was none.

COMMISSIONERS ITEMS/COMMENTS

Commissioner Storter Long explained why she chose to vote against amending the agenda this morning. She stated the County had a Deputy County Manager that was not being used. She stated she believed that position needed to be there as a buffer for the Chairman.

Chairman Ahern stated he and Vice Chairman Stanley would continue to share the duties until the new County Manager was in place.

Commissioner Pryor welcomed Mrs. James-Mesloh to Glades County.

Vice Chairman Stanley stated the Army Corps would hold a meeting on August 6th at 6:00 p.m. He commented on the proposed reservoir at Buckhead Ridge and the requested ½ mile corridor down Highway 78 that would be used for development.

Commissioner Strenth congratulated Mrs. James-Mesloh on being ranked number one.

ADJOURN

ON MOTION of Commissioner Pryor seconded by Vice Chairman Stanley the Board adjourned the meeting.

Motion carried by 5 – 0 vote.

There being no further discussion, Chairman Ahern adjourned the meeting at 3:45 p.m.

John Ahern, Chairman

ATTEST:

Sandra H. Brown, Clerk of the Circuit Court

Approved: June 10, 2019

THESE MINUTES ARE NOT A VERBATIM RECORD. TAPES ARE AVAILABLE FOR ANYONE INTERESTED IN LISTENING TO THE ENTIRE MEETING.