

City of Cambridge

The Government Operations Committee held a public meeting on Thursday, October 6, 1994, beginning at 3:15 p.m. in the Ackermann Room for the purpose of discussing the format for the City Manager's evaluation.

Present at the hearing were Councillor Michael A. Sullivan, Chair of the Committee, Councillor Kathleen L. Born, Councillor Francis H. Duehay, Councillor Jonathan S. Myers, Vice Mayor Sheila T. Russell and Councillor William H. Walsh and City Clerk D. Margaret Drury.

Councillor Sullivan convened the hearing and explained that the purpose of the meeting was for the Government Operations Committee to establish a format for the Special City Council meeting to evaluate the City Manager in accord with provisions in the City Manager's contract. He noted that there could be a vote on the City Manager's contract at the Special Meeting.

Councillor Myers said that he would prefer to have the evaluation first and then have a vote on the contract at a later meeting, but within the next couple of weeks.

Vice Mayor Russell asked whether the City Manager would have time between now and October 19 to meet with each City Councillor individually. Robert W. Healy said that he would.

Councillor Jonathan Myers said that he would like the City Council to vote by October 31.

Councillor Duehay said that he would be pleased if there could be the evaluation discussion on October 19, and the vote on the contract on October 24.

Councillor Duehay noted that there are two parts:

- The evaluation by the City Council
- The public participation part

Councillor Duehay noted that in the last evaluation, the public participation part was polarizing. The last evaluation was very thorough, and occurred just eighteen months ago. He does not believe it needs to be repeated at this time. He suggested that each City Councillor might want to utilize the previous evaluation form.

Councillor Sullivan said that the evaluation form can be a guide, even if members do not want to fill it out completely or use the rating system.

Councillor Sullivan brought up the possibility of giving people the opportunity

to submit comments in writing, with the deadline just before the meeting.

Councillor Russell said the timing was short for that, and she did not want to have the overall evaluation period extended. She added that she thought that those members of the public who wanted to make comments would have such an opportunity in the public comment portion of the meeting.

Councillor Born asked why the short time period. She said that this is an important decision and she wants adequate time to talk to and listen to the public.

Councillor Myers said he thought the evaluation and vote on the contract could be accomplished reasonably by the end of the month.

Councillor Sullivan said that October 24th would be preferable; historically October 31 is not favored for political decisions.

Councillor Duehay said that his decision on the contract will be based on the City Manager's performance over the contract period rather than on what is said at the evaluation.

Councillor Sullivan asked about the possibility of executive session.

Robert W. Healy said that an evaluation is not sufficient to justify an executive session; there would have to be strictly a discussion of character and reputation to justify on executive session.

Councillor Duehay suggested that the Council discussion take place in the Ackermann Room and the public comment in the Sullivan Chamber.

Councillor Born said that she would prefer not to vote on the same night as the evaluation. Councillor Duehay suggested that the Government Operations Committee recommend that the vote take place on October 24, but noted that the Committee cannot bind the full Council.

Councillor Myers asked what is the purpose of the evaluation.

Councillor Duehay said that there are two parts with somewhat different purposes:

- An evaluation discussion by the Councillors with response by the City Manager; and

- A part during which the Councillors will be listening to the public. He noted that it is very important for the City Council to listen to and hear the public comments; it is also important for the City Council to take responsibility for the evaluation.

Councillor Sullivan asked City Manager Robert W. Healy for his input. Mr. Healy said that the structure is fine. He will listen to the public comment and make notes, rather than engage in debate. During the Council discussion, he will be prepared to respond to the Councillor's concerns. He said that he thinks it is a good idea to use the form developed by Jim Pritchard as a basis for the evaluation. Mr. Healy said that he would really prefer not to go back to the kind of public questionnaire used before.

Councillor Duehay said that he wants to focus on the thoughts of the City Council, while he wants to listen to the public, he believes the Council really needs to focus on its thinking. For that reason he would prefer to have the Council discussion first.

Councillor Myers said that Councillor Duehay makes a valid point; the important part is to focus on public policy, not personalities.

Councillor Duehay said that an important part is management.

Councillor Born asked what kind of format there was to get input from department heads. Councillor Sullivan said that nothing prevents department heads from speaking privately with City Councillors.

Councillor Born said that she very much prefers to have public comment first.

Councillor Duehay said that the Councillors should be aware that this will change the nature of the meeting.

Councillor Duehay said that of the hundreds of written evaluations, 15 to 18 were very useful.

Vice Mayor Russell said that she would prefer to have the Council evaluation first.

Councillor Sullivan set forth the format for the evaluation as agreed by the Government Operations Committee:

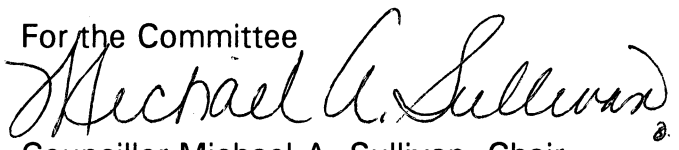
1. The City Manager will meet for approximately 1/2 hour with each Councillor individually before October 19, 1994.
2. Each City Councillor will receive a copy of the previous evaluation form to use as a guide in evaluating the City Manager, to fill out or not as they choose.
3. The City Council will hold a special meeting on October 19, 1994, beginning at 5:30 p.m. in the Sullivan Chamber to evaluate the City Manager.
4. The evaluation will consist of two parts: first, the City Councillors will conduct an evaluation discussion with the City Manager, and after that, the City Council will receive comments from the public.

It was agreed without objection by the Committee members that this evaluation format will be utilized for the evaluation meeting.

It was further agreed without objection that the Committee will recommend to the full City Council that the vote on extension of the City Manager's contract take place October 24, 1994.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:10 p.m.

For the Committee


Councillor Michael A. Sullivan, Chair

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COMMITTEE REPORTS

S420

Report from the Government Operations Committee
for a hearing held on October 6, 1994 to discuss
the format for the City Manager's evaluation.

In City Council,

October 17, 1994

*Report accepted
and placed on
file*