



November 16, 2016

Agenda Item 3

REPORT TO THE COMMISSIONERS

FROM: Tom DeAngelo, Commissioner / Chair, Executive Director Search Committee
SUBJECT: Appointment of Executive Director / CEO

Previous Directives: In June, 2016, the Board's Chair, acting on behalf of the Board of Commissioners, authorized the formation of an Executive Director Search Committee in response to Executive Director / CEO Cora McCorvey's decision to retire from MPHA employment.

Resident Council Review/Recommendation: This Report will be discussed with the Tenant Advisory Committee (TAC) immediately prior to the Board's November 16, 2016 meeting.

Budget Impact: N/A

Affirmative Action Compliance: N/A

Procurement Review: N/A

RECOMMENDATION: Pursuant to its authority under Section 420.90(1), Minneapolis Code of Ordinances, it is recommended that the Board of Commissioners appoint Gregory P. Russ as the Agency's Executive Director and principal operating administrator effective January 1, 2017 (or other such mutually agreeable effective date) subject to confirmation by the Minneapolis City Council. It is further recommended that, upon Mr. Russ's appointment and confirmation, the Board of Commissioners authorize the Board's Chair and the Chair of the Executive Director Search Committee to establish the terms and conditions of the Executive Director's employment.

Background

The Search Committee is concluding our process of a search for the next MPHA Executive Director. This process began approximately 18 months ago, when Executive Director Cora McCorvey informed us of her intention to retire from her position at an unspecified date in the coming year or two.

As many of our Search Committee members have not been part of a comprehensive search process, we have relied in large part on our consultant, CohenTaylor, to guide us in a professional manner through a complex process within the schedule that we outlined. They have done an excellent job, providing everything we had hoped for.

By the end of 2015, when we published the Leadership Planning Report, the Committee recognized the wide range of expectations of the next Executive Director: empathy for the well-being of residents, external relation skills to enhance our opportunities with community and governmental partners, and the ability to engage staff and lead a large and complex organization. Because each of these constituent groups (residents, staff, and partners) has complementary but differing expectations, we set out to gain input from these groups earlier rather than later in our process to integrate these expectations into our search process and our evaluation criteria, before we knew the list of potential candidates. I would like to thank the Search Committee members for their hard work and commitment, their thoughtfulness, and their integrity.

I would be remiss in not acknowledging the legacy of excellence that Director McCorvey's 25 years of leadership has had on our local and national search process. On numerous occasions, CohenTaylor has reported from all corners of our country on the reputation of excellence she has established for the MPHA. We thank Cora for her service and wish her all the best in her future. With support from our Commissioners over the past 18 months, our Search Committee has been charged with the task of bringing a recommendation to the Commission for the next Executive Director. The selection of the next Executive Director will require confirmation by the Minneapolis City Council after our selection. Because several Commissioners are new to the organization since we began our work, this summary is provided to make all Commissioners aware of our process.

May, 2015: A Leadership Planning Committee was formed by Board Chair Tyler to proactively plan for future changes in the organization. This Committee included Commissioners Tyler, Rosenbaum, and Nguyen and Executive Director Cora McCorvey, chaired by Commissioner DeAngelo.

April, 2015: A two-phase process was outlined by the Committee.

Phase 1 was a leadership planning phase, scheduled for completion by the end of 2015. This phase engaged senior staff and Board Commissioners in discussions surrounding leadership planning issues and the issues that MPHA will likely face in the coming years. This phase of the process provided search committee guidelines, determined preliminary selection criteria for the next Executive Director, and articulated our intent to appoint a Search/Selection Committee at the appropriate time.

Phase 2 was a Search/Selection Committee phase, to be activated after Cora McCorvey announces her plans.

This two-phase process was intended to gain early staff and community input, assure continuity of effort over time, and result in the best choice for leading the MPHA in the future.

June, 2015: A working session occurred between senior staff and Commissioners to review the strategic plan and to discuss strategic questions.

September, 2015: The Leadership Planning Committee met with a group of senior executive staff members (as determined by Executive Director McCorvey) to discuss perspectives on the organization's strengths and future challenges. The focus was on what the organization should look like in five years, and subjects included Leadership and Leadership Development, Training, Operations, and the perceived needs by senior management to achieve future success.

January, 2016: A Leadership Planning Report was completed and made available to the public, summarizing the information and the approach that was determined during the Phase 1 process. This report provided background material to future candidates and Phase 2 recommendations that included the hiring of a search consultant, the intent to create a search committee that included Commissioners, community partners and resident representatives, and the intent to charge the search committee with the task to bring a recommendation to the Board of Commissioners who is the Hiring Authority under the Minneapolis Code of Ordinances.

January, 2016: Executive Director Cora McCorvey announced her plan to retire by February of 2017. As stated in the Leadership Planning Report, Executive Director McCorvey stepped away from the Phase 2 search process to focus on ongoing operational issues of the Agency.

February, 2016: The Leadership Planning Committee worked with Robin Harris, MPHA HR Director and Committee Advisor, to solicit proposals from Executive Search Firms to research and recruit candidates, establish a process and schedule, and otherwise advise the Committee in creating a fair and equitable process.

May, 2016: CohenTaylor, a Minneapolis-based search consultant, was selected from a group of seven national and local Executive Search Consultants who responded to our Request for Proposal.

June, 2016: The MPHA Leadership Planning Committee (Commissioners Tyler, Rosenbaum, Lutz, and DeAngelo) gave an update on the search process to the Board of Commissioners. In addition to communicating the selection of CohenTaylor, the Committee reported:

Assembly of a Search Committee to bring direct input into the search process from MPHA Commissioners, residents, community partners, and the City of Minneapolis. This committee included:

Clayton Tyler, MPHA Commissioner and Board Chair

Jim Rosenbaum, MPHA Commissioner

Steven Belton, President/CEO of the Minneapolis Urban League

Lisa Goodman, Minneapolis City Council Member

Mary McGovern, Chair of the Minneapolis High Rise Representative Council

Chuck Lutz, MPHA Commissioner

Thomas DeAngelo, MPHA Commissioner and Search Committee Chair
Robin Harris, MPHA HR Director and Advisor to the Search Committee

An outline of the overall schedule, consisting of the following major phases:

Community Outreach June-August, 2016
Solicit and Develop List of Candidates July-September, 2016
Interview shortlist of Candidates October, 2016
Candidate Recommendation to MPHA Board November 2016 Board Meeting
Public inquiries regarding the process were directed to info@cohentaylor.com

July, 2016: The Search Committee gave an update to the MPHA Commissioners at the July Board Meeting. The Committee reported on the Community Outreach Phase of our process, structured to reach out to a cross section of community partners, senior staff, and MPHA resident groups to provide the Committee with input regarding the search for the next Executive Director for MPHA.

On July 7, 2016, the Minneapolis High Rise Council hosted a forum that was noticed to interested High Rise, Glendale, and Scattered Site residents. Approximately 50 residents attended. Participants were asked to provide input into the qualities desired in the next Executive Director and the important issues facing MPHA now and in the future. Five Search Committee members and MPHA Commissioner Tamir Mohamud attended this listening session. Many thoughtful comments were received, and a transcript of these comments was shared with the Commissioners and the Search Committee.

CohenTaylor conducted a series of meetings with Cora McCorvey and senior staff members during the week of July 11-15 to gain their input into the search process. In addition, CohenTaylor reached out to over 60 community partners as well as local and national housing experts to gain their perspective and input as to MPHA's position in the affordable housing industry locally and nationally.

MPHA began posting information regarding this Executive Search at <http://www.mphaonline.org/> This posting included the Position Profile, the 2015 Leadership Planning Report, the Executive Search Updates, and other information as it becomes available. Aug.-Sept. 2016 During this period, the Search Committee had weekly alternating phone meetings and reports from CohenTaylor on progress regarding number of candidates and feedback about MPHA from various resident and partner organizations and national thought leaders. All discussions between candidates and CohenTaylor remained confidential and the Committee responded to questions from prospective candidates. At the end of this period, the Search Committee agreed to the following Key Attributes that should inform the search and selection process:

Commitment to and passion for the mission of MPHA

High cultural competence
Empathy for the well-being of residents

Strong communicator with consensus building skills

Strong external relations skills

Instinctive relationship builder willing to be the face of the organization locally and nationally

Ability and willingness to engage community partners and elected leaders

Understanding of complex programmatic and financial partnership possibilities

Experience and ability to lead a large and complex organization

Experience and demonstrated ability to work within a highly-regulated environment

Knowledge or appreciation of the operations, services, and activities of a comprehensive public housing program

September, 2016: A strategic planning session occurred between MPHA Commissioners and various City and governmental partners to discuss issues and refine our current MPHA Strategic Plan. This session was taped and made available to the public and to prospective candidates.

October, 2016: CohenTaylor presented a summary of their research during the past three months. They summarized their proactive recruiting outreach activities. They reached out to well over 200 individuals from over 130 organizations locally, nationally, and even internationally. They conducted over 50 phone screens, Skype, and in-person interviews. The candidate pool over the course of the search was broadly representative of diverse and underrepresented communities. From this work, they gave an overview of 14 candidates that they were bringing forward for consideration by the Search Committee. This list of candidates represented a diverse and exciting range of local and national candidates.

The Search Committee discussed the preliminary slate of candidates presented by CohenTaylor and reviewed resumes with the Key Attributes as guiding principles. From this discussion, the Search Committee unanimously agreed on four candidates to be considered for first round interviews.

October, 2016: The Search Committee conducted interviews with the four candidates. The Committee created a preliminary ranking of candidates and agreed to meet again regarding the candidates after further research on the following issues:

Compensation discussions with selected individuals

Approach to pre-employment evaluations with selected individuals

Background check/Referencing of selected individuals

Determine staff, residents, and external communications plans

The Search Committee reaffirmed their charge to complete the search process and make a recommendation to the MPHA Commissioners at the November MPHA Board of Commissioners meeting.

November, 2016: The Search Committee met to review additional information on selected individuals regarding background checks, references, pre-employment evaluations, and

compensation. After discussion on these items, the Search Committee members present at the meeting again reviewed the Key Attributes and unanimously agreed to recommend Gregory Russ for the Executive Director/CEO position to the MPHA Board of Commissioners.

A brief biographical summary about Gregory Russ and a copy of his resume is attached to this Report for your review and consideration.

This Report was prepared by Dennis A. Goldberg, Deputy Executive Director / COO and Robin Harris, Director of Human Resources. For further information, please contact Ms. Harris at (612) 342-1484 or rharris@mplspha.org.