

**TERRILL L. HILL**  
MAYOR - COMMISSIONER

**MARY LAWSON BROWN**  
VICE MAYOR - COMMISSIONER

**RUFUS J. BOROM**  
COMMISSIONER

**JUSTIN R. CAMPBELL**  
COMMISSIONER

**JAMES NORWOOD, JR.**  
COMMISSIONER



**BETSY JORDAN DRIGGERS**  
CITY CLERK

**MATTHEW D. REYNOLDS**  
FINANCE DIRECTOR

**JAMES A. GRIFFITH**  
INTERIM CHIEF OF POLICE

**MICHAEL LAMBERT**  
CHIEF FIRE DEPT

**DONALD E. HOLMES**  
CITY ATTORNEY

*Regular meeting 2nd and 4th Thursdays each month at 6:00 p.m.*

**MINUTES**  
**CITY OF PALATKA – CALLED MEETING**  
**CITY MANAGER FINALIST INTERVIEWS**  
May 26, 2015 – 1:00 p.m.

Proceedings of a called meeting of the City Commission of the City of Palatka, Florida, held on the 26<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2015.

**PRESENT:** Mayor Terrill L. Hill  
Commissioner Mary Lawson Brown  
Commissioner Rufus Borom  
Commissioner Justin Campbell  
Commissioner James Norwood, Jr.

Also Present: Interim City Manager Allen R. Bush; City Clerk Betsy Jordan Driggers; Finance Director Matt Reynolds; Interim Police Chief James Griffith; Fire Chief Mike Lambert

**CALL TO ORDER & Reading of Special Meeting Call** – Mayor Hill called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m. and read the following special meeting call, which was issued on May 19, 2015:

**TO COMMISSIONERS: MARY LAWSON BROWN, RUFUS BOROM,  
JUSTIN CAMPBELL AND JAMES NORWOOD, Jr.:**

You are hereby notified that a special called meeting of the City Commission is called to be held at the regular meeting place of the City Commission at City Hall, 201 N. 2nd Street, in the City of Palatka to begin at 1:00 p.m. Tuesday, May 26, 2015.

The purpose of the meeting is to interview the finalist candidates for the position of City Manager.

/s/ Terrill L. Hill  
Terrill L. Hill, MAYOR

We acknowledge receipt of a copy of the foregoing notice of a special called meeting on the 19<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2015.

/s/ Mary Lawson Brown  
COMMISSIONER

/s/ Justin Campbell  
COMMISSIONER

/s/ James Norwood, Jr.  
COMMISSIONER

/s/ Rufus Borom  
COMMISSIONER

## **INVOCATION & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – Commissioner Borom**

1. **OPENING REMARKS AND INSTRUCTIONS** - Mayor Hill stated they had all been provided with a matrix to score by education, practical and other experience, and specific standards as advertised, including golf course/airport management experience. There are seven standard questions all candidates will be asked, and members of the Commission will be given an opportunity to ask other questions.

At the end they will score the candidates and can use the scores as a tool. They will make decisions based upon individuals, dialogue and interaction with the candidates. There is no public comment allowed during interviews.

2. **CITY MANAGER FINALIST INTERVIEWS** – Beginning at 1:15 p.m., Finalist Candidates were interviewed in the following order:
  - Patrick Kennedy
  - James Drumm
  - Lyndon Bonner
  - Donald E. Holmes
  - Terry Suggs

The following questions were asked of each candidate:

1. Where do you see yourself in 5 years? 10 years?
2. Where do you see Palatka in 5 years? 10 years?
3. What is your experience in dealing with the media (television, newspaper, radio, WWW)? Do you see the media as a positive force, and if so, how?
4. Talk about the most controversial issue you have encountered as a manager/administrator. Be specific. How was it resolved? What would you have done differently?
5. How do you build commission consensus on a “split” commission?
6. How do you assess the impact of new technologies on the operations of a city like Palatka?
7. What sort of things do you do for relaxation off the job?

The following supplemental questions were asked of Mr. Kennedy:

1. Hill – What type of businesses do you think should be actively attracted to Palatka?
2. Norwood – How do you cope with negative press?
3. Brown – How do you handle getting information to the Commission before it gets to the newspaper?
4. Norwood – the City has had its share of criticism from local businesses regarding keeping lines of communication open between business and the City. How would he handle keeping those lines of communication open? Borom – what forms of communication would he employ?
5. Brown - How would you get your employees trained and up to date on new technology?
6. Norwood – What is the City Manager’s role in growth management? Does he believe he has a responsibility to seek new development to grow in the direction the Commission has set?
7. Norwood – what are your primary five support agencies that you would need to form a relationship with?
8. Campbell – How would he build diversity in City departments other than Sanitation?
9. Campbell – How would he build relationship with the individuals doing the every-day jobs and what type of program would he put in place to recognize employees who are going above and beyond to do more with less?
10. Campbell – How would he categorize his leadership style and abilities?

11. Hill – He said in his interview that he is not a morning person. What are the hours he now keeps?
12. Hill – He said he had purchased a home in Crescent City. They will require the City Manager to be a citizen of Palatka. How would he handle relocating to Palatka? How can they expect others to invest in Palatka and become a part of the Community when the City Manager lives elsewhere?

Following Mr. Kennedy's interview, discussion was held regarding the requirement of the City Manager to live within the City Limits.

The following supplemental questions were asked of Mr. Drumm:

1. Norwood – Have you had an opportunity to look at Palatka and identify an area that needs growth?
2. Borom – Do you have any experience in Growth Management and how would you apply that to Palatka?
3. Hill – Do you have any interactive methods you would employ to get information out?
4. Norwood – How do you handle negative press?
5. Brown – How do you handle getting information to the Commission before it gets to the newspaper, or something that's going in the newspaper?
6. Campbell – The newspaper provided an advance story noting a Zephyrhills Commission had criticized his "communication skills" and his tenure in High Springs in which it was felt that he did not have a good understanding of the budget. Would he expound on this?
7. Hill - One of the requirements of this job is that the City Manager lives in the community. What are his views on that?
8. Norwood – If he became City Manager of Palatka, what five support groups or agencies would he depend upon to carry out his duties?
9. Borom – if selected, what would be his first year, three year and five-year priorities and/or strategies?
10. Norwood – asked him to expound on current projects currently underway in Palatka.
11. Brown – what new ideas could he bring to the Commission that would attract more people and businesses to the area, considering the St. Johns River is the focal point?
12. Campbell – The city is faced with a lot of filling of positions once the City Manager's position is filled. What are his methods of advertising jobs outside of Palatka and how would he encourage diversity?
13. Campbell – with his 20 years of experience in municipal management, can he provide one thing he is proud to say that he had a role in?
14. Hill – Palatka has a large population of citizens living below the poverty level. Has he had any experience with a local Housing Authority?
15. Hill – has he had an opportunity to tour Palatka? What does he consider Palatka's strengths and weaknesses?

The following supplemental questions were asked of Mr. Bonner:

1. Norwood – What would his roll be in pursuit of manufacturing and other jobs and economic opportunities?
2. Hill – what in his eyes are the strengths and weaknesses of the community?
3. Brown – How does he feel about doing global business from a small community?
4. Brown – Sometimes news hits the newspaper before Commissioners are informed. How does he handle getting information to the Commission before it gets to the newspaper?
5. Brown – Is he open minded enough to listen to the Commissioners who are the eyes and ears of the community, and listen to the history behind the community? What is his history within the community and is he still in touch with local friends?
6. Hill – How does he feel about moving into this community?
7. Norwood – Has he seen any growth management opportunities in the community?

8. Norwood – What organizations would he forge alliances with to help him be an efficient city manager?
9. Hill – He was in Bunnell from 2002 to 2006. Talk about his tenure there and how it came to an end. What is the legacy he left there?
10. Hill – What is the legacy he hopes to leave here?

The following supplemental questions were asked of Mr. Holmes:

1. Borom – what strategy would he employ to make the City feel more like they are more unified and have a stake in what is happening in the City?
2. Borom – How long have you been in the community (39 years) and what do you believe Palatka needs in order to grow?
3. Holmes – How would he assess the City's media strategy and what would he do to make it more effective? Does he have any innovative ideas as to how he would put this strategy into place?
4. Brown – What would he do to be sure the Commission received information before reading it in the newspaper?
5. Norwood – How would he open communications with all the different groups in Palatka such as DPI and Kiwanis?
6. Borom – How would he communicate with various groups so that the message stays consistent and not misunderstood?
7. Brown – Will he be open-minded enough to listen to staff and take suggestions from them, even staff at the lowest level?
8. Brown – How will he encourage the public to bring their issues to him or to the Commission?
9. Campbell – During his interview he said there was a population in Palatka that has a perception that they aren't being served; what is that population and how would he work to change that perception?
10. Campbell – The Commission is trying to rebuild certain relationships. What does he believe the City can do to engage with the School Board or the County?
11. Norwood - What is he offering the City of Palatka as City Manager?
12. Norwood – What can he do to encourage and implement economic growth & development?
13. Norwood – How would he build diversity amongst the City's various departments and administration?
14. Brown – What can the City do to keep existing businesses here and in business?
15. Borom – What would his strategy be in order to help build an economic base?
16. Borom – If chosen as City Manager, what would be the one-year, three-year and five year plan?
17. Borom – How would he stabilize the City's financial situation?
18. Campbell – What is his plan to overcome his lack of experience in managing a city?
19. Borom – Given his "learning curve" how long would it take him to fill critical positions such as Police Chief and Main Street Manager?
20. Hill – In his 15-year tenure as City Manager, there have been some questionable decisions that have been made. If the City is on the cusp of change, what difference would he make as City Manager as opposed to City Attorney?
21. Hill – what does he see as Palatka's strengths and weaknesses?
22. Hill – There have been some concerns that this is a 'retirement job" for him. Please address this and what is it that he brings to the table when compared to the other candidates for City Manager?

The following supplemental questions were asked of Mr. Suggs:

1. Norwood – isn't the Keystone Heights Airport an asset of the City?
2. Brown – Please provide examples of "other funding sources" other than ad valorem tax.
3. Borom – what strategies would he use in year 1, year 3 and year 5 of his tenure?

4. Norwood – How would he work with different groups that are vested in the community and build a consensus with those groups on the City's direction?
5. Norwood – How would he make City administration look more like the City's diverse population and what strategies would he use to make it more diverse?
6. Brown – would he move to the City of Palatka?
7. Hill – Keystone has a population of 1,600 people and Palatka has a population of around 11,000. How would he make that adjustment?
8. Hill – How would he raise the "poverty level" floor in Palatka?
9. Hill – What does he see as Palatka's strengths and weaknesses?

### 3. **SCORING OF CANDIDATES; SELECTION OF CITY MANAGER**

Mayor Hill proposed the Commission hold dialogue on each candidate and take a vote. Discussion ensued as to the method of choosing each member's top candidates.

The Commission discussed each candidate's interview in alphabetical order, including how each candidate fits into the community, his vision for Palatka, and competence in the field. Answers and impressions from both interviews were considered. On the matter of taking prior experience as a City Manager into account, Commissioner Campbell said for the record, the scale they use to score one candidate should be applied to all.

A score sheet was distributed and members of the Commission were asked to rank each candidate from 1 (being the lowest score) to 5 (being the highest score). The Clerk collected the ballots and announced the scores. The three candidates with the highest scores were Terry Suggs, James Drumm and Donald Holmes. There was consensus to re-vote on the three highest scoring candidates.

A ballot was re-distributed wherein members of the Commission were asked to write in their two top choices, narrowing the field further by listing them in order of choice. Mr. Suggs received four #1 rankings. Mr. Holmes received one #1 ranking and three #2 rankings. Mr. Drumm received two #2 rankings.

After discussion, Commissioner Norwood moved to appoint Don Holmes as City Manager. The motion died for lack of a second.

Commissioner Campbell moved to appoint Terry Suggs as City Manager. Commissioner Borom seconded the motion. A roll-call vote was requested and taken, which yielded the following results: Commissioners Borom, Brown, and Campbell, yes; Commissioner Norwood and Mayor Hill, No. The motion passed three in favor, opposed by Commissioner Norwood and Mayor Hill.

4. **PUBLIC COMMENTS** – There were none
5. **ADJOURN** – There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

ANY PERSON WISHING TO APPEAL ANY DECISION MADE BY THE CITY COMMISSION WITH RESPECT TO ANY MATTER CONSIDERED AT SUCH MEETING WILL NEED A RECORD OF THE PROCEEDINGS, AND FOR SUCH PURPOSE MAY NEED TO INSURE THAT A VERBATIM RECORD OF THE PROCEEDINGS IS MADE WHICH RECORD INCLUDES THE TESTIMONY AND EVIDENCE UPON WHICH THE APPEAL IS TO BE BASED. FS 286.105