

**SPECIAL BOARD OF TRUSTEE MEETING MINUTES  
GENERAL MANAGER SITUATION  
JUNE 6, 2008**

**Present**                      **Gene Bowen, James Flood, Cathy Gabrielson, Warren Olson, Walt Platt, Warren Schmidt, Gary Williams,**

**Conference Call:**        **Grant Murrell, Greg Willeford**

## Introductory Comments

President Warren Olson called the meeting to order at 7 pm and explained the purpose of the meeting, which was to discuss the general manager position, update the job description and set a salary for it to be advertised. He began the meeting agenda by asking the following question: “What are the issues important to the Board regarding General Manager?” Each board member, in turn, was asked this question, as well as other members. Their answers are as follows:

## General Manager Candidate Search

## Jim Flood

- State that important issues should be water company, trash compacting, homeowners organization – in that order. The priority should be that we find someone who understands how to run a water system.
- Also important to find someone with project (goals) management skills, i.e. The ability to implement the Six-year water plan, bridges project, etc.
- Stated that if job description does not already contain this, then board goals should be added.

## Walt Platt

- Stated that important issues should be fiscal responsibility – ability to help develop a budget and understanding that if ideas/materials/expenses cannot be funded then they should not be recommended.
- Also stated that the GM should receive recommendations/decisions from the B.O.T. And implement them, however, the B.O.T. , once having provided the GM with the recommendations/decisions, should then not be involved in the implementation of the recommendations/decisions.
- Agreed that job description already reflects this issue adequately.

## Warren Schmidt

- Stated that important issues are time spent in the office versus time in the field. Believes that less time should be spent in the office, on computer, making documents, and more out of the office doing the active field work. He stated that good delegation skills are necessary, allowing the GM to be more involved in the association's operations, such as water main breakage, etc.
- Agreed that job description reflects this adequately under “management practices”.

## Kathy Gabrielson

- Stated that the GM should deal with paid employees and volunteers differently. Would like to see the GM do a better job supporting the volunteers.

### **Greg Willeford**

- Stated that project management skills are very important, specifically in the area of motivating others to complete tasks and holding others accountable for completion of tasks, projects, etc. The GM should be a good task master, holding himself/herself personally accountable to get the job done and hold others accountable as well.
- Also, equally important are good people skills, effective communication and good administrative abilities

### **Grant Murrell**

- Expressed some concern that he has heard comments from the general membership with regard to whether or not a General Manager is necessary. He stated that this perception is due to the fact that ten years ago SHOA didn't need one. Therefore, he stated that SHOA may need to communicate this need to the membership.
- Disagreed with Walt, regarding the B.O.T.'s involvement following providing the GM with a recommendations/decision. Stated board needs to be involved and make sure that recommendations of board are carried out.
- Stated issues that are important are the need to find someone who is out in the field and involved in Surfside actual community, but not behind a computer cranking out graphs, etc.
- Also stated another important issue is that Surfside needs the GM to act as a lobbyist to contact with legislature, i.e. Past water meter situation, where someone was needed to contact government authorities to explain that our water situation is different than most other metro water situations to get assistance with low interest loans, etc.
- Agrees that an important issue for GM is that the water system must be understood. He recommended that the GM be someone with a degree in public administration, or experience in utility operations, project management, etc.

### **Gary Williams**

- Stated that the important issue is that the GM be somebody with technical knowledge in water systems and how it runs.
- Also stated that the GM needs basic knowledge of entire operation to a point that the manager can help coach the employees and make suggestions to improve our process and make it fiscally responsible. The GM needs to be someone who will think outside the box with new ways to do things that can save money.
- Also agreed that project management is a very important skill for the GM to have which would result in less rehashing of old business at board meetings. The difference would result in old business being more readily dealt with and each new board meeting would show a readiness to move on to other projects.
- Also stated that Communication skills are imperative. This will result in an ability to deal well with staff, volunteers and membership as a whole and get out there (in the field) and deal with upset members, resolving issues of conflict, etc.
- Gary stated he has observed managers who have displayed good technical skills and managers who have displayed good people skills, and his experience has shown that the best managers are the ones with people skills with a servant's attitude. They may not know the business but do all they can to learn the business and they turn out to be best.

### **Gene Bowen**

- Paramount issue for GM is their expertise in Fiscal responsibility and upcoming SHOA issues, i.e. New water plan, will demand this to make sure dollars are well spent.
- Also important is that the GM should be a good communicator, out in community, shaking hands and getting to know people. He should be able to recognize all members, no matter who they are.
- Gene suggested that SHOA needs to look at the GM job description as a “wish list”, knowing we likely can't find someone with all attributes, but we do need to prioritize and seek someone with the most desirable attributes.

### **Warren Olson**

- Stated he agrees with most points made
- Does see the General Management as a service that SHOA provides and therefore, the GM should be serving the needs of the public and serving the needs of the staff and the volunteers and doing whatever it takes to help others get their needs met.
- He also stated that the General Manager needs a strong service ethic helping the staff to do their job better.
- Additionally, General Manager needs to be the central nervous system of the association, knowing what everyone is doing and balancing the needs of each component of the system.
- The GM will need excellent leadership skills with the ability to take everyone's vision and pull it together and work towards that vision.

### **Board Candidates Opinions**

#### **Larry Nelson**

- Believes that the job descriptions depicts expectations that are too high to reach with the SHOA resources (salary) available, as well as the pool of applicants.
- Make sure you have the people to do the job and make sure they have adequate resources to do the job. The GM should be adept at keeping SHOA processes as simple as possible. The GM's job is to make things happen but not to do them all.
- The GM can't operate efficiently with nine different bosses; he must be given authority to focus on the needs at the time that they are necessary.
- The GM needs to make it a priority that people who aren't being heard are heard. Additionally the GM needs to get along well with the people and this alone will solve most problems.

#### **John Reichenbach**

- Priority should be to find someone with a lot of people skills able to work with diverse groups of people with diverse needs. The GM should be someone who can figure out what is important and what is a whim.
- The GM should have a good general leadership/management background, knowing how to delegate and let committees do their work – policies come from board and manager implements those policies.
- The GM should be responsible for all maintenance work accomplished at SHOA. However, the office work should be separated from the maintenance. Two managers

would be best, one for maintenance and one for office.

### **Debbie Richmond**

- The new GM should have more knowledge of the water system
- Additionally, SHOA should move away from a GM who does clerical duties as there is more of a need for someone who is more hands on out in the field.

### **Chris Hanson**

- Agrees with Larry – thinks our expectations are too high
- agrees that need a mgr that is out in SHOA (in the field) not carrying out administrative duties
- manager who takes responsibility and is the first one to take the blame and then try to solve the issue later – he takes responsibility and has skills to resolve the issues.
- Communication needs to be better and there is people available to give the info and if had a manager that was up front if there is a problem then this can be discussed openly.
- Someone who can deal with budget issues even though resources are

### **Additional Members Opinions**

#### **Larry Amonson**

- former accountant with \$20,000,000 budget and understand budget issues
- Someone needs to be familiar with entire association, every street as well as water system.
- People person who gives good feedback and doesn't ignore suggestions.

#### **Jerry Dunn**

- Membership is not getting what they deserve and the board appears to be eliminating the membership from making decision that should be their's to make, ie. New positions should go to vote of the members and by laws should be amended to indicate that new positions should be presented to the membership for a vote. General Manager should have been voted on by the membership and four new positions have been created without input from the members. Budget has increased and appropriate decision were not made, etc. Doesn't think membership is represented well by the board. Thinks General Manager Position should be tabled until the membership is polled to see if they want that.

#### **Larry Raymer**

- Gen Mgr needs to be someone who can pull Surfside together and stop different factions from pulling against each other.
- Job Description is going to be very hard to fit into our financial resources.

#### **John Walsh**

- Skills we are asking for need to be prioritized, with a focus on the soft skills of communication, hands-on working with people, coordination of staff and board and members.
- Membership needs to be happy and this is an indication of whether or not things are being done correctly.

## **Other General Manager Candidate Search Business**

- Advertisement Issues
  - The job description will be posted at the SHOA office and in other prominent areas in Surfside and around the Peninsula. Members and staff are encouraged to promote this job opening by word of mouth.
  - Publications and on-line sites have been researched and will be used. Several sites were discussed including the following:
    - Chinook Observer
    - Daily Astorian
    - Oregonian
    - The News Tribune
    - Seattle Times and PI
    - Spokesman Review
    - Career Builder.com
    - Monster.com
    - Oregon and Washington Workforce
    - Possible Direct Mailing to counties
  - Further research should be done to identify retiree candidates, such as military retirees, etc. This will be accomplished by certain B.O.T. members and the Secretary to the Board.
  - The wording of the job posting ad was discussed and it was decided that the add should be worded to reflect Long Beach Peninsula's coastal reference attraction for any ads outside of Washington State.
  - The advertising will occur for the next 3-4 weeks and GM interviews will likely occur after the board election with. Hopefully an offer will be extended to the best candidate on the third or fourth week of July with a start date in early August.
  - Cost of Advertising
    - It is expected that advertising costs can be estimated to be \$2,000 to \$3,000. This will be researched further by Walt Plath, who stated this amount is likely to be within the budget capabilities
- Background Checks, etc.
  - It was determined that background checks will occur and that releases should be signed authorizing these types of checks.
  - The secretary was asked to be sure that the SHOA's employment application has an area on it asking pertinent questions such as have they been convicted of a felony or a gross misdemeanor crime? Additionally the secretary will make sure that the SHOA employment application has an areas to sign for authorization of background/credit checks.

## **General Manager Job Description**

- Discussion occurred between B.O.T. members and it was decided to make the following changes/additions to the job descriptions;
  - Water Delivery or Utility Experience: Understanding and works closely with water department staff to guarantee uninterrupted high quality water service.
  - Project Management Experience: Understands and has experience with project management, especially as related to construction; is capable of developing, implementing and executing complex projects.
  - a) Government Relations: Maintains positive and effective relationships with all

relevant governmental entities and agencies, including legislative and administrative rule setting entities that affect the Interests of the Association.

- The Job descriptions of the General Manager will be posted to the website and it will also be given out to those who apply, either mailed or handed out. Additionally it will be used for interviewing.

#### **Upcoming Board Meeting 06/21/08**

- The June 21 meeting will include the Starheim hearing and a workshop after the main meeting with Karl Johnson to discuss and work through the six-year water plan, including cost considerations as well as approval by the State. The agenda will include a schedule for these items to be addressed. Additionally there will be an introduction of the B.O.T. candidates to occur early on in the meeting.
- Meeting broke at 9:05 p.m. and went into closed session to discuss financial matters.

#### **Motions Following Closed Session**

- Flood moved and Williams seconded to set the General Manager's salary between \$55,000 and \$65,000 a year. The motion was passed 8-0 unanimously.
- Flood moved and Williams seconded that an incentive fund of \$5,000, be set aside from the contingency fund, to be offered to employees who take on added responsibilities to insure that core functions continue seamlessly during the interim period, prior to the successful hiring of a new General Manager. The motion was passed 8-0 unanimously.
- Murrell amended the motion to set aside \$5,000 from the contingency fund. Both Flood and Williams accepted the amendment. The motion passed as amended 8-0 unanimously.
- Gabrielson moved and Schmidt seconded to adjourn the meeting at 9:57 P.M. Motion passed 8-0. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

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Warren Olson, President to the Board

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Greg Willeford, Exec. Committee Secretary

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Dinah McCreddie, Recording Secretary