

City Manager Mr. William Horne – Annual Review

Oct. 14, 2020

The CM's role is described as "Supporting the Mayor and City Council's vision, mission and strategic direction to ensure that the Clearwater government provides the municipal services and infrastructure necessary for a high quality of life for all our citizens."

So this is our City Manager's job description – but there are no specific measurable goals attached to this annual evaluation. I am a strong proponent of articulating goals that can be measured and reported out. Vague statements from our evaluation form such as, "Do you have the feeling that things the Council decides or directs get done?" And "Does the CM demonstrate enough interest and enthusiasm about the Council's Vision for the City?" Do not provide a great deal of accountability. Because our CM has expressed his intention of retiring in the near future, I don't believe it's appropriate to belabor the point now that we can and should improve our annual evaluation process for our two highest paid and most powerful and impactful positions in our City. I'm hoping we can revisit this topic when we begin the search for our next CM and City Attorney.

That said,

I have had the honor and pleasure to serve on our City Council for close to six and a half months. In that time, I have met weekly with our City Manager, Mr. Horne. Mr. Horne is an experienced, competent, thoughtful, sensitive and effective leader. He is extremely honest, ethical and respected in our community. I thoroughly enjoy and value the time we spend together in discussions about city policy,

about historical perspectives and about philosophical outlooks and strategies. I could not effectively do my job without my weekly meetings with Mr. Horne.

I also want to say – clearly – these are unprecedented times we are living in- I never once mentioned COVID in my campaigning efforts. It hit us head-on in Mid-March. It has brought unimaginable challenges and hardship to many of our residents, our friends, family, neighbors and city employees. But I feel under the leadership of Mr. Horne, we are doing well. In many cases, we are doing much better than some of our surrounding municipalities. We have relatively low numbers of COVID positive employees, and I attribute this to the “no nonsense” approach Mr. Horne has had in instituting and enforcing safety precautions while at work. Also, under Mr. Horne’s direction and the outstanding efforts of our Department of Economic Development, during the last six months we instituted a Back to Business Grant program to help our small businesses weather the initial impacts of COVID 19 and the shuttering of non-essential businesses. This department also distributed funds from the CARES Act and will – as of next week – be making additional distributions. I believe Mr. Horne leads and supports his staff in making any/all resources available to help the residents of Clearwater. I applaud Mr. Horne for his calm and steady leadership style and for following the guidance of science and medical professionals in setting policy related to COVID19.

In our evaluation form (the long form) there are numerous subheadings, including external and intergovernmental relations and personnel management that, because of my short tenure, I don’t have enough context or experience to confidently comment on. However, during my brief six months, I can mention a few actions I feel are notable: I have confidence that Mr. Horne and the consultants he’s hired to advise us on Phillies negotiations will advocate in the city’s best interest when working with the

county on the Phillies' agreement; I believe that it was prudent to hire specialists to negotiate our next long-term contract.

Under Mr. Horne's leadership we have been proactive and adopted the use of police body worn cameras – we've approved the closing of two blocks of Cleveland St. to help spur economic engagement. Our downtown is beginning to change – there is new energy and life and hope.

Within the last six months Mr. Horne and city staff continue to work to reduce city expenses.

We are investigating partnering with a third party to implement energy efficiencies to reduce energy consumption, reduce pollution and save money.

We have enrolled in the Duke Solar program which will also help us save money and reduce emissions.

Finally, we are researching installing solar on our new solid waste transfer station. I applaud these sustainable, pollution reducing, and fiscally responsible moves.

Clearly, there are several positives I've witnessed within the last six months – but there are a few areas I think we could do better-

We have cost reports for the main library renovation and IC that are concerning. I understand that Mr. Horne works at the direction of our City Council. I appreciate that, but at times where the council is fickle in its direction – it might be helpful if our city manager fully recap and articulate the incurred costs and consequential costs of changes or delays in direction – and this would include reiterating the recommendations of staff and paid experts.

We also have a number of official documents (our Comprehensive Plan, our Strategic Plan and Greenprint) that serve to guide decision making and city policy. At times there are competing goals – and I feel that we could do better in giving Greenprint the weight it deserves.

Because there are no specific, mutually agreed upon annual measurable goals to report on – and because Mr. Horne is not required to submit a self-evaluation that he and I could review, I will end this way:

I know Mr. Horne has extensive experience and expertise. I feel confident in his abilities to manage the city and respond appropriately to the needs of our residents and business community. I believe he has the well-earned respect of his staff and of city employees. Within the last six months, under very challenging times related to COVID as well as social and political issues that can be divisive, Mr. Horne has been a strong, calm, deliberate and effective leader. I very much appreciate his service to our city.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Kathleen Beckman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "K".

Kathleen Beckman