



The Gladwin County Board of Commissioners met for a Special Board Meeting, on June 28, 2021 for the purpose of conducting interviews for the County Administrator position. The meeting was called to order at 11:00 a.m. by Chairperson Karen Moore. The Pledge of Allegiance was said, roll called; all commissioners were present.

The Board reviewed the Consent Agenda –

The Board reviewed the consent agenda. A motion was made by Commissioner Taylor to accept the agenda as written, seconded by Commissioner Kyle Grove, all in favor, motion carried.

Chairperson Moore reviewed the process' for interviews and public comment. Reminded Board members to speak loudly.

Cash balances

Communications

Finance

Committee Meetings

New Business

1 – Interviews for County Administrator: Chairperson Moore started the process with a coin toss. Clerk Hulme choose heads to be questions A and called tails (B) for the toss – Coin toss result was tails, Questions B will be asked today. Civil attorney addressed the process for the coin toss, and how the process for Questions A & B was determined. How the questions would be asked was discussed. Chairperson Moore will ask questions to the candidates.

* Please note, all responses to interview questions are summaries and not verbatim.

(a) Laura Brandon-Maveal; 11:00 a.m.

1. Provide a brief summary of your education and work experience.
Associates in Finance from Mid Michigan College, 23 years in Customer Service and County Government including Budget, Human Resources, Payroll, Accounting, and Union Negotiations
2. Please briefly describe your experience with business attraction and retention program.
We are currently going through retention efforts at the Sheriffs' Office, I have worked directly with the Undersheriff and Jail Administrator on retention and attraction.
3. Please briefly describe your experience with business assistance programs.
Gladwin County is not structured for that, but we do have an Economic Development Corporation (EDC). The County offered appropriations to that program, and they have soared. Our Local or County Government should look at what we can give to these types of programs and how to support them once they are off the ground. Our Treasurer currently manages the repayment of Small Business Development Loans issued through the EDC.

4. Do you consider yourself a leader or a manager? How would you describe your leadership or management style?
My 23 years of management of some type. Supervised staff as a Deputy Clerk, Supervised as a County Clerk. Leadership in your role at a job, and in the community. Very active in our community as a community leader.
5. What do you perceive to be the county administrator's role in working with County Elected Officials and Department Head?
Initially the goal should be a very well created policy with limits and thresholds. Transparency and communication.
6. What are your expectations of the Board of Commissioners in relation to yourself?
Clear board acceptations, and administrative reports to the board. Policy & procedure is key.
7. Do you believe the administrator should be an active member of a service or fraternal organization? Why or why not?
I agree to an extent, I feel this position should be nonpolitical. However, there are areas that are healthy for the community, where an administrator should be a figure head.
8. How do you deal with special-interest or single interest groups?
The same way as news media. I've been trained as the Public Information Officer through Homeland security. Upfront conversation, informed communication and follow up.
9. What is the best way for an administrator to deal with an angry constituent?
They may not have all of the information, educate them.
10. How and when do you delegate authority?
Not unless that person has a full understanding of the end goal. It is my job to make the board shine, it gives transparency to our residents. I would never delegate my responsibilities unless that person is working collaboratively with me.
11. Have you ever been at the bargaining table and been actively engaged in negotiating an agreement?
In my 23 yrs. of experience, I have been on both sides of the table. And now as the Interim Administrator, I work on cost findings and union contract language.
12. How do you educate, encourage and motivate employees?
With limited finance it is hard, but education is motivation. It's important to make employees comfortable in their duties and responsibilities. I believe in "Train the Trainer" to educate their employees. On Friday's I did popcorn days.
13. Are you familiar with state and federal laws relating to nondiscrimination, sexual harassment, employees with disabilities and equal opportunity?
I am. One of the ways is bi-annual through BS&A. Also, the County Clerks Association, United County Officers Association gives updates and briefings on law changes. As well as a working relationship with legal advisors.
14. Have charges of violation of state or federal employment laws or a grievance ever been filed against you? If so, please explain.
No. The County was sued; I was not named specifically.
15. What experience have you had in the preparation and implementation of personnel rules regulations, procedures and compensation plans? Please describe.
I have drafted policy, procedure, and union contracts. I've also handled Health Care Plan shopping; the State requirement is every three years, but Gladwin County does this every year, to make sure we are protecting our finances and our employees. This shows the State that we are collaboratively working on the Health Care Plan.

Personnel Policy is currently being worked on, at the county. The Auditors will look for these things.

16. Tell me about a time when you were asked to do something you did not want to do or were uncomfortable with. How did you react? What did you learn?

We were working through a difficult budget about 7-8 years ago, along with open enrollment for health care. Someone had asked for "who has what plan & claim exposure". I was uncomfortable and declined. The request escalated, and the attorney of record also declined the request. It was uncomfortable, but I did preserve the respect of the employees.

17. Give an example of when you had to work with someone who was difficult to get along with. How did you handle the interactions with that person?

The Treasurer and I have had to work on having the relationship we do today. We challenged each other in the past, and now we are able to ask each other when we have questions and bounce things off each other.

18. Tell me about the last time something significant did not go according to plan with your job? What was the outcome? What did you learn?

I was defeated as County Clerk in 2020. This resulted in an openminded thought process about what I wanted to do with my career. How can I use my experience and relationships with employees? As the Interim Administrator I have been able to create a foundation for whoever comes in, for the success of the county.

- Commissioner Rick Grove asked about Grant writing experience?

I have written grants exceeding \$500,000. I choose them based on how/ if they can be implemented, and are they sustainable?

- Commissioner Kyle Grove asked should our Administrator plan to do outreach?

I don't think the county can do that at a business level but could work with our local government to bring business' here; offer incentives. Show what we are working on, could be the end line on keeping them here.

- Commissioner Szuch asked what the applicant thought the greatest challenge is facing Gladwin County?

The budget is fine, but we could do better. The county should implement a 3/5/10 year plan. Financial forecast is my biggest concern.

Laura shared that community involvement has to be key. Mentioned her awards and certification from the United County Officers, which is equivalent to an associates degree. Expressed that employee relationships are important, and must have boundaries and guidelines, in order to reach the common goals of the county.

(b) James Sumner, 12:00 p.m.

1. Provide a brief summary of your education and work experience.

Tool & Die apprenticeship, Seattle Greenriver Community College Law Classes, Journeyman Machinist, Commercial Estimating, Contract Negotiation, Surveillance, and Plant Management

2. Please briefly describe your experience with business attraction and retention program.

With Boyne I handled the contract negotiation, estimating.

3. Please briefly describe your experience with business assistance programs.

Business assistance from plant management.

4. Do you consider yourself a leader or a manager? How would you describe your leadership or management style?
Yes, primarily I focus on transparency, accountability and performance reviews.
5. What do you perceive to be the county administrator's role in working with County Elected Officials and Department Head?
As an Administrator I would support the Boards goals and objectives. Work with departments heads on budgets and obtaining grants.
6. What are your expectations of the Board of Commissioners in relation to yourself?
Recognizing situations, have viability to meet short and long terms goals.
7. Do you believe the administrator should be an active member of a service or fraternal organization? Why or why not?
Where it is ethical and feasible, I served as Habitat for Humanity. Something with a conflict of interest would not be appropriate.
8. How do you deal with special-interest or single interest groups?
Whatever I can do to support the board in a timely manner.
9. What is the best way for an administrator to deal with an angry constituent?
Respectively disagree and treat the person with respect.
10. How and when do you delegate authority?
In this position, I would work with departments on budget and report to the board.
11. Have you ever been at the bargaining table and been actively engaged in negotiating an agreement?
Yes, with the UAW in Detroit for the stamping plants.
12. How do you educate, encourage and motivate employees?
I'm a big believer in getting youth involved.
13. Are you familiar with state and federal laws relating to nondiscrimination, sexual harassment, employees with disabilities and equal opportunity?
Yes, gave examples of different situations.
14. Have charges of violation of state or federal employment laws or a grievance ever been filed against you? If so, please explain.
No
15. What experience have you had in the preparation and implementation of personnel rules regulations, procedures and compensation plans? Please describe.
Contract negotiation at Boyne had certain criteria that had to be followed or it could be rejected.
16. Tell me about a time when you were asked to do something you did not want to do or were uncomfortable with. How did you react? What did you learn?
When I was in Israel, there was a situation where I was denied access and I took it up with the director.
17. Give an example of when you had to work with someone who was difficult to get along with. How did you handle the interactions with that person?
In Germany, there was a quality control manager that was hard to get along with but we had a direct conversation, and things worked out.
18. Tell me about the last time something significant did not go according to plan with your job? What was the outcome? What did you learn?
Quality & timely delivery has been my goal. Working with diverse people can result in confrontation. We would have to work together to get the job done.

- Commissioner Rick Grove asked about his ability to separate friendship from business?
I am comfortable with that, I've had a good relationship with people, but that has nothing to do with getting my job done.
- Commissioner Rick Grove asked about grant writing?
No, but I think they are important.
- Commissioner Szuch asked what the applicant thought is the biggest challenge facing Gladwin County?
The website is difficult to find information on. It took a long time to find the budget. It is important to be organized, not have hidden agendas, and be transparent.

Mr. Sumner stated he has been to three commissioners' meetings, but audibility is poor. Would like to see a microphone/speaker system. Finds the Michigan County Government book for informative; recommends that the county has copies. Believes in having charts and viability, received awards from former employers for profitability.

(c) Dennis Sparks, 1:00 p.m., virtually from Virginia

1. Provide a brief summary of your education and work experience.
Two Associates Degrees; Business Administration & Teaching, a Bachelors in Business Law , a Masters in Business Administration & Finance. I have 30 years of experience in City and County Management across the United States.
2. Please briefly describe your experience with business attraction and retention program.
I've been responsible for creation and retention in a cross section of businesses including manufact, retail, office & medical facilities. I was able to convince a worldwide mining machinery division to move to my county in Virginia.
3. Please briefly describe your experience with business assistance programs.
We had a TIF District in Mayville Illinois, a population of about 28,000; we used these districts as incentive to draw in businesses. I also worked with Virginia Community Development and local colleges.
4. Do you consider yourself a leader or a manager? How would you describe your leadership or management style?
Both, I'm a good manger because I manage the overall organization & a good leader, because I'm a good supervisor who leads by example. Gave examples.
5. What do you perceive to be the county administrator's role in working with County Elected Officials and Department Head?
Work for the Commissioners, but also as a liaison to the elected officials. Sometimes it's a fine line not to cross, but I am here to assist where I can.
6. What are your expectations of the Board of Commissioners in relation to yourself?
Similar to a corporate board and a president. Serve as an advisor to the board and carry out their wishes.
7. Do you believe the administrator should be an active member of a service or fraternal organization? Why or why not?
I purposely don't join different organizations because my job is to represent you and carry out your wishes.
8. How do you deal with special-interest or single interest groups?
I maintain an open-door policy for everyone. I talk with citizens honestly. Treat people like I would want to be treated.
9. What is the best way for an administrator to deal with an angry constituent?

Talk with them and work to solve it. If I can't, I tell them, and refer them to someone else.

10. How and when do you delegate authority?
On the basis of need. One person cannot do it all and shouldn't. I provide advice and tools and hold them accountable.
 11. Have you ever been at the bargaining table and been actively engaged in negotiating an agreement?
I do. FOP (Fraternal Order of Police), Firefighters Union, and government employees, but Virginia is a non-union state.
 12. How do you educate, encourage and motivate employees?
Be straight forward with them, give recognition and assistance.
 13. Are you familiar with state and federal laws relating to nondiscrimination, sexual harassment, employees with disabilities and equal opportunity?
Yes. That is a dynamic situation that changes often. I have written personnel policy and managed employees under them.
 14. Have charges of violation of state or federal employment laws or a grievance ever been filed against you? If so, please explain.
No
 15. What experience have you had in the preparation and implementation of personnel rules, regulations, procedures and compensation plans? Please describe.
I've written all of those policies and created employee performance evaluations.
 16. Tell me about a time when you were asked to do something you did not want to do or were uncomfortable with. How did you react? What did you learn?
You're in charge, I work for you. It doesn't matter if I like it or not. I'm a professional and I do my job.
 17. Give an example of when you had to work with someone who was difficult to get along with. How did you handle the interactions with that person?
It depends on the situation. Talk with them, explain the situation, and be progressive. Gave a personal example of a situation he was in.
 18. Tell me about the last time something significant did not go according to plan with your job? What was the outcome? What did you learn?
Cannot think of an example. Things always go wrong, that's life. You adapt to it, correct it, or go in a different direction.
- Commissioner Rick Grove asked about his ability to separate friendship from business?
I do my job first, it's not a matter of making friends. I do what's right.
 - Commissioner Rick Grove asked about grant writing?
I've created positions for grant writers, supervised them, and attended training for grant writing. Grants for Police, EDC, CDBG as an example.
 - When looking for grants what do you look for to pursue?
The need and availability, grants that will do some good. Infrastructure is almost always a need.
 - Commissioner Szuch asked what the applicant thought is the biggest challenge facing Gladwin County?
I don't know, I'm an outsider coming in. I only know the problems MI is having that I see on television.
 - Commissioner Taylor asked if it is important to be known in the community, and if so how would you do that without joining community groups?
Go to people and talk to them, speak at groups.

Mr. Sparks asked about salary. I saw \$55,000 in the budget, & I don't want to waste anyone's time. Chairperson Moore offered to call and discuss this. Mr. Sparks shared that he had been hired to do a budget, after the budget was due. He worked many late nights and got it done. Then Hurricane Katrina hit, then Hurricane Rita. He explained the events of his employment during this time, and the outcome.

Chairperson Comments

Three more interviews on Wednesday. Remember analysis should be non-discriminatory.

Board Comments / Reports

Commissioner Kyle Grove, District 1 – none

Commissioner Ron Taylor, District 2 –none

- Did have to go out to Chapel damn last night to release some water because of all of the rain.

Commissioner Michael Szuch, District 3 –none

Commissioner Moore, District 4 –none

Commissioner Rick Grove, District 5 –none

Report from Civil Attorney-

Consultant's report contains leads from the group of community leaders. Each Consultant provides different specialized tasks. Larry Merrill, retired director of MI Township Association seems to be the best fit. Provides a range of services from presentations to thorough process review. \$150 / hr. She will provide the board with his credentials.

Clarification was given that the panel of community leaders did not say we did not have a qualified candidate. They said there was more work to do.

Perdue Pharma packet is asking you to approve / disapprove a new Chapter 11 plan.

Public Comment -


- Diana Mella, Gladwin Township stated her concerns over Ms. Maveal's answers to employee motivation and lawsuit questions, as well as her biggest concern being a 3/5/10 year plan for financial forecasting. Ms. Mella sked why this plan hadn't been put in place while Ms. Maveal was County Clerk. She believes Dennis Sparks was the best interview of the day, agreeing with his view of not joining organizations. She also agreed with his response regarding delegating authority, employee recognition, and grant writing.

No other public comment.

A motion was made by Commissioner Kyle Grove to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Rick Grove. All in favor, meeting adjourned at 2:00 p.m.



Karrie Hulme, County Clerk



Karen Moore, Chairperson

Posted 7/13/21