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Profile and Challenge Statement on the Search for the:

City Manager

for

Portsmouth, New Hampshire

For further information on this position please contact:

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The economy is expanding in Portsmouth. In the field of computer technology, Bottomline Technologies and Blue Fin Technologies, together employing over three hundred people, have recently opened offices in downtown Portsmouth. The City has recently seen the opening of a one-hundred room Marriott Courtyard Hotel in the downtown area. The Osprey Landing housing redevelopment project is underway with the construction of approximately three hundred and twenty-nine new rental units, eighty single family homes, one-hundred condominiums and an office and research park. Liberty Mutual, another major employer, has brought in over three hundred new jobs to their offices in the Portsmouth area over the last twelve months. Several additional major construction projects are either being planned or are already underway.

Current Situation

After twenty years of stable leadership from 1970 to 1990, the City of Portsmouth now seeks its third City Manager in the last six years. The most recent City Manager left the position after three years as the result of his contract not being renewed by the City Council. The prior City Manager left after twenty months when he became embroiled in a controversy that made it impossible for him to continue in his leadership role within the City. In both instances, the Finance Director for the City was named Interim Manager. He is not a candidate for the permanent position.

The rapid turnover of two City Managers has left the community, the Council, the municipal employees and department heads with a feeling of instability and a lack of permanent leadership and direction. The Council wants to return to a period of stable leadership and looks forward to working with a new City Manager who will provide that leadership, stability, and direction.

Challenges

The following challenges comprise the principal agenda awaiting the next City Manager:

- ✓ Restore a sense of management, leadership and direction for City government.
- ✓ Improve the morale, esprit de corps and productivity of the municipal workforce.
- ✓ Convey a take-charge image and style that enables the members of the City Council to return to their policy-approving and oversight role, and allows them to remove themselves from daily operations.
- ✓ Negotiate with the Pease Development Authority for the conveyance of two parcels of property to the City that are located on the grounds of the former Pease Air Force Base for commercial development.

- ✓ Evaluate the organizational structure of City Departments in order to ensure operational and management efficiency.
- ✓ Manage the process of siting a new City Library and work closely with architects, members of the community and Council Members in the review process.
- ✓ Propose solutions to the need for transportation planning including the need for additional downtown parking spaces and work with all interested parties to develop acceptable solutions.
- ✓ Evaluate the benefit of consolidating and relocating recreational activities that currently take place within two downtown buildings so that they may be sold for commercial use and find a suitable accessible location for the programs at another site.
- ✓ Ensure that all City services are being provided as efficiently and effectively as possible without sacrificing quality and recognize the need to allocate tax dollars prudently.
- ✓ Review systems issues and proposed integration plans and complete the automation and networking of City departments so that communication is enhanced and the full benefit of automation is realized.
- ✓ Hire a full-time Human Resources Director and charge him/her with the responsibility for automating and implementing a human resources information system, and developing training and education programs, hiring procedures, and a personnel manual.
- ✓ Bring stability and predictability to the budget process by establishing measurable and quantifiable City-wide priority objectives and then department priority objectives so that City priorities are addressed in a systematic and strategic manner.
- ✓ Establish priority objectives for department heads and hold them accountable for the attainment of those objectives.
- ✓ Become an active participant in the business, volunteer and civic communities and with neighborhood groups by actively participating in community meetings and initiating contact with community, business and civic leaders as well as with individual citizens of the City.
- ✓ Focus on the continued revitalization of the downtown business area while remaining attentive to issues faced by those who live within the downtown area.
- ✓ Inform the members of the City Council of the progress and status of issues so that they can be knowledgeable in their dealings with constituents and at City Council meetings while remaining detached from the direct daily management of the City.

- ✓ Establish and manage the relationships with the Police and Fire Commissioners, Police and Fire Chiefs, Chairperson of the School Board, and School Superintendent so that all are working toward common goals and for the common good of the City.
- ✓ Improve the relationship with the Pease Development Authority.
- ✓ Work with staff and members of the community in the development of a long-range plan for the City of Portsmouth to determine what the City will look like and how it will support and provide for its citizens, businesses and employees in twenty years.
- ✓ Manage the ongoing process of closing and capping the City's superfund site, the Coakley Landfill.
- ✓ Evaluate the age and condition of the City's fleet of vehicles and prepare a plan for preventive maintenance and replacement on a scheduled basis.
- ✓ Review the need for the reopening of a second fire substation within the City.

The Ideal Candidate

As the preceding discussion makes clear, this assignment is a leadership challenge with considerable opportunities for success. The person who fills this position must be an outstanding administrator/ leader with energy, vision, sound judgment and common sense in order that he or she may respond successfully to the identified challenges. While the next City Manager may not possess all of the following attributes, it is expected that the appointee will bring most of these characteristics to the position.

Personal Attributes

A strong, confident, balanced, mature and visible leader and administrator who possesses an abundance of common sense, good judgment and integrity. A visionary, strategic thinker and planner who can translate broad goals and specific objectives into plans of action and then set the direction and hold staff accountable for the completion of tasks and assignments.

A healer and a unifier, a builder of teams and a proponent of teamwork. A person who believes in his or her ability to create a sense of esprit de corps among a workforce.

A manager who is comfortable making a decision, communicating that decision and then standing behind it even in the face of adversity.

A good listener and an effective communicator with strong oral, written and interpersonal skills.

A direct and assertive individual who understands the value of the use of friendly persuasion and yet can disagree when necessary without becoming confrontational or disagreeable.

An accessible, inclusive leader/mentor with a track record of bringing people together around complex goals or objectives and developing consensus among community groups, business leaders, government representatives and elected officials who may not share common priorities.

A person who is very hands-on and detail-oriented and who is able to monitor the operations of all departments by tracking complex projects through delegation of authority while holding key staff accountable for problem resolution and implementation of priority objectives in an efficient and effective manner.

A highly visible leader who is in the community regularly, being seen by and interacting with City employees, department heads, business and community leaders, and members of neighborhood associations and civic organizations. A person who is neither chair-bound nor desk-bound.

A manager who understands the need for follow-up and follow-through and who knows how to keep the members of the City Council apprised of the current status of projects or issues of significance.

A person who is willing to reach out to all staff, and be direct, inclusive, available and supportive while establishing and maintaining high levels of effort and superior standards of performance.

A manager who can build and retain an open, honest, direct and productive working relationship with the members of the City Council based upon mutual respect and a clear understanding of the divisions of labor while acknowledging the Council's need for information and responsiveness on certain issues.

A team leader who understands that proper utilization of technology strengthens government and provides greater capacity to solve problems, address issues or enhance communication.

The successful candidate must be able to communicate City Council and administrative priorities while remaining responsive and respectful of individual concerns. The candidate must be nonpolitical but understand local government politics.

Professional Attributes

A college degree with an MBA/MPA or a related degree preferred.

At least eight to ten years of senior management experience within a comparable municipal government or other type of organization or entity required.

