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COMMENTS AT COUNCIL MEETING -12-17-2011

Good morning Mayor Euille, V.M. Donely council members and welcome City Manager Young. I am here to speak about the hiring/firing policies for city staff. I am sure you read my rant in Alexandria News.org concerning Mr. Wanamker, former deputy director for General Services. I am not going to speak to the outcome of his felony charge and resignation, but rather am addressing the city's method of hiring upper management staff and the recruiting firms the city utilizes to search for upper management staff. I don't know what current city policy is regarding search firms, but whatever it is it needs to be reviewed and changed. When the city spends thousands of dollars on these search firms, how do you select the recruiting company and what type of vetting process does the city do for whatever firm the city hires? In the case of Mr. Wanamaker and future searches, it appears to me that this company should have done not only an in depth background check, criminal check along with checking references, but a complete and through investigation wherein there would be newspaper articles and other information about the perspective employee. In Mr. Wanamaker's case there were articles in the Buffalo newspapers that discussed his problems while working in Buffalo even though no charges had been filed by the City of Buffalo nor the FBI. Further, I believe that whenever a city employee, no matter what title/position he/she has, when they have been convicted of a felony they should be terminated immediately and/or placed on unpaid administrative leave even if the city has to do its own internal investigation about said employee/employees.

I hope City Manager Young will begin to not only review the hiring process for Alexandria and especially administrative staff, but make the necessary changes ASAP and report back to council in January, 2012 so that there are clearly defined guidelines and criteria for hiring search firms and their reputation for doing what I have stated above and for city staff to make the appropriate determination should this matter arise again with any other city employee or city administrative staff. Regarding Mr. Wanamaker's case, all that was needed was a Google search to reveal the "red flags".

Thank you,

**Annabelle Fisher
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