

THE SPECIAL WORK SESSION OF THE FORTIETH COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BERKLEY, MICHIGAN WAS CALLED TO ORDER AT 5:30 PM ON MONDAY, AUGUST 8, 2025 BY MAYOR DEAN

- PRESENT:** Councilmember Steve Baker
Mayor Pro Tem Ross Gavin
Councilmember Dennis Hennen
Councilmember Gregory Patterson
Councilmember Jessica Vilani
Mayor Bridget Dean
- ABSENT:** Councilmember Clarence Black

OTHER STAFF PRESENT:
City Manager Crystal VanVleck
City Clerk Victoria Mitchell
Director of Communications Caitlin Flora

APPROVAL OF AGENDA
Councilmember Patterson moved to approve the Agenda
Seconded by Councilmember Vilani
Ayes: Gavin, Hennen, Patterson, Vilani, Baker and Dean
Nays: None
Absent: Black
Motion Approved.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

REGULAR AGENDA

DISCUSSION: Matter of discussing legal service proposals.

City Manager VanVleck opened the Work Session to discuss legal service proposals.

City Manager VanVleck said an RFP for legal services was posted in May, and the City received eight responses. All but one firm had municipal experience.

City Manager VanVleck stated that the goal of the work session is for council members to decide how many and who they would like to bring in for interviews, and then to conclude with next steps.

City Manager VanVleck would also like to discuss questions they would like to ask during the interview process. She said once the questions are determined, she will forward them to the City’s human resource director.

City Manager VanVleck said the City’s current legal services firm, Hafeli Staran & Christ, P.C., would automatically receive an interview invitation.

Councilmember Baker said in the past, the Council brought three to four firms in for interviews.

After the discussion, the consensus was to invite four firms in total for an interview.

City Manager VanVleck proceeded to review council members’ scores previously submitted individually submitted via a rubric.

- Weighted categories included on the rubric were:
- Prior Experience & Assigned Team (25%)
 - Proposed Approach (20%)
 - Firm Capacity (20%)
 - Proposed Fees (20%)
 - Overall (15%)

- Other factors discussed included:
- Billing/cost
 - Staffing
 - Timeliness
 - Location
 - Communication
 - Proactiveness/Environmental Scan
 - Training/Seminars

The group discussed how to develop questions and how much time to allot for each question. They agreed that 20-30 minutes per interviewee seems appropriate.

Topics for possible questions included:

- More aggressive prosecution
- Finding creative legal solutions
- Ordinance creation
- Reliability and responsiveness
- Turnaround time
- Why should we choose your firm

A discussion took place regarding how to positively frame questions and how to select the order of the interviewees.

City Manager VanVleck said she would reach out to each firm and let them know the date and time once the Council votes on whom to invite.

The group discussed making a motion at the 7 p.m. Regular City Council meeting to invite the firms with the highest three scores for an interview along with the City's existing legal firm.

ADJOURNMENT:

Councilmember Patterson moved to adjourn the Special Meeting at 6:38 PM
Seconded by Councilmember Vilani
Ayes: Gavin, Hennen, Patterson, Vilani, Baker and Dean
Nays: None
Absent: Black
Motion Approved.

ATTEST:

Bridget Dean, Mayor

Victoria Mitchell, City Clerk