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South Notebook: Headhunter earns his paycheck

Background checks steered Estero village council away from one candidate with an impressive resume with news of a pricey settlement in a sexual harassment case.

Estero village council members received a list of semi-finalists for the permanent village manager's position last week, six candidates pared from a list of 80 applicants.

They quickly found out why it may have been worth the more than \$20,000 spent hiring a search consultant.

The firm, Colin Baenziger & Associates, compiled a dossier of more than 600 pages covering the semi-finalists. The material details investigations that burrowed into backgrounds, answers to job history questions and reference checks.

Council member Bill Ribble, who has an extensive background in business operations, said that he looked into some candidates who were not recommended and fired off an email asking why.

“Within 30 seconds (Baenziger) sent me the reason why the one person I thought very highly of (wasn't included),” Ribble said.

The reason Baenziger gave for leaving the candidate out, according to Ribble: “Major sexual harassment charges that cost the county a ton of money.”