

## Palm Beach Post

### LAKE WORTH'S CANDID AD LURES 44 CITY MANAGER APPLICANTS

**BYLINE:** ALEXANDRA NAVARRO CLIFTON, Palm Beach Post Staff Writer

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If you like challenges, Lake Worth is the place for you.

Unlike some cities that lure prospective city managers with promises of efficient employees and easygoing bosses, the city's executive search firm charged with replacing retiring City Manager Wendy Newmyer tried to paint an honest picture of this small seaside city. "Resources are limited, and the streets and water/sewer utility infrastructure will soon need to be upgraded," said the ad placed by **Colin Baenziger & Associates**. "On a positive note, the condition of the city has improved dramatically over the past six years."

Still, 44 applicants responded to the ad: one city employee, four Floridians and government administrators from all over the East Coast. The application period ended Feb. 21. The job is expected to pay between \$90,000 and \$130,000 a year.

Applicants include Coral Springs Planning and Engineering Director Wagner Almeida, Punta Gorda Assistant City Manager William Foster, Hallandale Beach Deputy City Manager Charity Good, Stuart Administrative Services Director William Underwood and Lake Worth municipal water systems supervisor Daniel Derringer.

Newmyer's replacement will be selected March 28, two weeks after the election and just a few days after the expected runoff. So a new city commission and possibly a new mayor will make the final choice. The commission hired **Colin Baenziger & Associates** for \$9,500 in January to conduct the search.

The commission recently approved a plan to allow Baenziger and Newmyer to whittle down the list to a final five. They and their spouses will be flown to Lake Worth for two days of schmoozing and interviews. But a new commission could change the plan if it wants to, and at least one commission candidate questions the process.

Former Commissioner Retha Lowe, who is running for the open District 1 seat, said the commission should have a more active role.

"I want to see all the applications, not just the top five," she said.

Baenziger said most candidates want to know what the commissioners are like. He said he tries to be honest yet positive.

"Politics in the town can be a little bit ugly," he said he tells job candidates. But the political candidates "seem to vent at each other rather than at the manager."

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