

MINUTES OF HUMAN RELATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING

LANE TRANSIT DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS

May 18, 2015

Pursuant to notice given to *The Register-Guard* for publication on May 15, 2015, and distributed to persons on the mailing list of the District, a meeting of the Lane Transit District Board of Director's Human Relations Committee was held at 8:00 a.m. on Monday, May 18, 2015, in the District's Conference Room at 3500 E 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Eugene.

Present: Gary Gillespie, Chair  
Gary Wildish  
Julie Grossman  
Roland Hoskins, Director of Administrative Services  
David Collier, Human Relations Manager  
Jeanne Schapper, Clerk of the Board  
Mackenzie Cowan, Human Relations Secretary/Recording Secretary  
Andrea Sims, Vice President, Waters and Company  
Celia Kupersmith, Principal, KL2 Connects LLC  
Al Schlimm, Principal, KL2 Connects LLC  
Tony Kouneski, Principal, KL2 Connects LLC

**CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL:** Mr. Gillespie called the meeting to order and called the roll at 8:12 a.m.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Mr. Wildish moved approval of the April 9, 2015, minutes; Ms. Grossman provided the second.

VOTE The motion was approved as follows:

AYES: Gillespie, Wildish, Grossman (3)  
NAYS: None

**EXECUTIVE SEARCH FIRM SELECTION PROCESS:** Mr. Hoskins said that references for both executive search firms checked out quite well. Mr. Gillespie asked if staff spoke to a reference in Ashland, Oregon, for Waters and Company. Mr. Hoskins responded that the City of Ashland was quite thrilled with Waters and Company's work; the staff felt that the firm adapted, helped keep costs down, and involved the community in the process.

Mr. Collier called Andrea Sims, the Vice President of Waters and Company via Skype. Ms. Sims began her presentation for Waters and Company Executive Recruitment. She said that approximately 99 percent of Waters and Company's recruitments are in the public sector; their work is nationwide and includes a variety of high-level positions. Waters and Company understands the unique challenges an organization may face when dealing with the public. They have a very thorough process: the recruiters will visit the hiring organization and meet with the individuals in charge of the hire to determine the job profile and the issues that the organization faces. Water's and Company's goal is to offer the most qualified candidates from throughout the nation.

Ms. Sims added that Waters and Company creates a brochure that features information about the job position and community. They also discuss the issues a candidate would face upon being hired into a position. The firm researches information ahead of time, but also would like to speak to the HR Board Committee and others in the organization to determine what factors would earn a candidate success and what would cause a candidate to be unsuccessful. They advertise the position in professional journals, conducts a national direct mailing, and makes direct marketing calls.

Ms. Sims said that Waters and Company closely examines the candidates that apply for the position to ensure that they fit the skillset that LTD requires. She said that the benefit of conducting recruitments in communities with a strong college presence is that the community generally is progressive, interested in doing new and interesting things, and being very engaged in the process.

Waters and Company also gathers a list of management skills that are unique to the organization and requires that candidates complete an assessment. The firm will conduct a gap analysis to determine which candidates best meet the organizations skills and which may have developmental needs. Waters and Company also inspects the candidates' professional accomplishments; verifies credentials; and conducts reference checks, which includes professional references and media checks.

Mr. Gillespie asked Ms. Sims of her availability to work with internal staff and the Board members. Ms. Sims responded that she makes herself available in every way possible. She said that she is skilled in managing multiple projects and making organizations feel as though they are their one and only client. She added that when an organization is her client, she checks in with local newspapers on a regular basis so that she may understand local issues and be aware of any potential crises in the area. She will produce a timetable that will work for both parties and will adjust it to fit schedules as much as possible; her intent is to complete the recruitment in a maximum of two to three months. She asks that there be a staff person assigned as her single point of contact in order to streamline communications.

Mr. Gillespie asked Ms. Sims of her initial assessment of the community in which Lane Transit District resides and some of the challenges that she expects to encounter during the process. Ms. Sims responded that it seems LTD has progressed well on many of its projects over the last few years, and that there have been recent leadership changes. She said that whomever fills the general manager position will need to build relationships and identify himself or herself as a strong leader with the Board, leadership team, employees, and community. She added that in university towns, changes at the university can also affect the community; and it is important to understand current issues at both Lane Community College and the University of Oregon.

Mr. Gillespie asked Ms. Sims how she planned to engage the broader community's input into the process of selecting a general manager. Ms. Sims responded that for an engaged community, there are a couple of ways to include the community in providing input on the attributes for the next general manager: typically, Waters and Company would seek input from the HR Committee, the LTD Board of Directors, and the leadership team. She can conduct a written or electronic survey to gather information on the expectations of the

community for the next general manager, from which the information gathered will be factored into the brochure that Waters and Company will use to sell the position. She also can conduct a public forum for community members to ask questions and provide input. She said that it is generally helpful to provide final candidates with the opportunity to have a meet-and-greet with the community.

Mr. Gillespie asked Ms. Sims who she would customarily include in the needs analysis. Ms. Sims responded that she would include the Board and the agency's leadership team. She said that she tries not to include individuals who are candidates to prevent any unfair advantages. She also includes the head of the union and any other community groups that should be heard. The main goal is to determine the current issues that the new general manager will encounter upon entering the organization.

Mr. Gillespie asked how Ms. Sims planned to screen the candidates prior to those she forwarded to the Board for review. Ms. Sims replied that Waters and Company asks candidates to upload a cover letter and resume; she screens 100 percent of the candidates and sends them a questionnaire to complete. The questionnaire asks about experience and also asks due diligence questions. When Waters and Company presents semi-finalist candidates to the Board, the Board will be provided with the candidates' responses to the questionnaire. Ms. Sims conducts a short telephone interview with the candidates prior to selecting the semi-finalists and compiles a list of pros and cons for each candidate that she will review with the Board. Prior to the candidates arriving for on-site interviews, the Board will have an opportunity to see the candidates' responses to key questions on video. She added that Waters and Company conducts a thorough background check and media check; and she also conducts reference checks, referencing both individuals for whom candidates have worked and individuals who have worked for them, as well as their peers in the industry.

Mr. Gillespie asked if there was any difference in how Ms. Sims would handle an internal candidate. Ms. Sims responded that the main difference with an internal candidate is that she most likely would not check references if the candidate had spent most of his or her career with the organization, because it is typically uncomfortable for everyone involved.

Mr. Gillespie asked Ms. Sims to share her experience and methods for determining the best general manager fit to meet an organization's goals in relation to its bargaining unit. Ms. Sims responded that a desirable person will be a good communicator with the bargaining unit and will have an open dialogue while taking into account the fiscal health of the organization. A candidate that ensures that employees are safe, secure, and treated fairly would be a good fit for the organization. Ms. Sims added that she asks questions about candidates' ongoing relationships with unions and how they communicate.

Mr. Gillespie asked Ms. Sims who can access the video-taping and questionnaire information on Waters and Company's website. Ms. Sims replied that only the Board members and the appointed decision makers can access information; it is not information that Waters and Company would like to have public. She added that per Oregon law, if such information did need to be public, candidates would need to be aware of it beforehand.

Ms. Sims expressed her desire to share with the HR Committee the type of feedback she and Waters and Company receive from their clients. She stated that Waters and Company is respectful and very customer-centric, and their goal is to provide such high-quality candidates that the Board has a difficult time choosing between them. She added that she wants to ensure that the process is humane and everyone is treated fairly while opening up a dialogue between client, firm, and candidate.

Mr. Hoskins asked Ms. Sims if she could host a public forum for the position's profile assessment. Ms. Sims responded in the affirmative and added that such a forum is common when recruiting for positions that are under a large amount of scrutiny.

The Committee ended the Skype call with Ms. Sims. Mr. Wildish stated that he was impressed with Ms. Sims intent to provide the Board with such a high caliber of candidates that they would struggle to choose between them. Ms. Grossman said that she liked the fact that Waters and Company has a large amount of experience recruiting in the public sector.

Mr. called Celia Kupersmith, Tony Kouneski, and Al Schlimm via Skype. The staff from KL2 Connects began their presentation. Mr. Kouneski said that he and Jack Leary, his recently retired colleague, founded KL2 Connects eight years ago. They both are from the transit industry and have approximately 40 years of service in the transit industry as chief executive officers. Mr. Kouneski also spent 12 years as the vice president for member services at the American Public Transportation Association (APTA). Mr. Kouneski and Mr. Leary created KL2 Connects because they had assisted recruiting agencies several times throughout their careers, recommending candidates for positions. They have experience recruiting for several different positions in transit agencies, including positions in departments such as Operations, Maintenance, and Marketing.

Mr. Kouneski added that KL2 has been very successful in recruiting CEOs and deputy CEOs. None of the candidates KL2 has placed have left their positions prematurely, though some have been recruited by other executive search firms. In the last year and a half, Al Schlimm joined KL2 Connects as a principal, and Celia Kupersmith also recently joined as a principal.

Ms. Kupersmith will be the lead in the general manager recruitment for LTD. Ms. Kupersmith is located on the west coast, while Mr. Schlimm and Mr. Kouneski are located on the east coast. Ms. Kupersmith has more than 30 years of experience in the public transportation industry. She spent her last 12 years as the CEO of Golden Gate Bridge Highway and Transportation District and deputy CEO of Sound Transit in Seattle. The majority of her experience is on the west coast, and she served as the chair of APTA for several years while she was at Golden Gate Bridge.

Mr. Schlimm has experience in the medical industry, marketing, and promotion. His specialty is market research, and he has more than 20 years of experience conducting qualitative and quantitative research among executives, including international executive interviews.

Mr. Gillespie asked KL2 staff to share their availability to work with internal staff and/or Board members. Ms. Kupersmith replied that she is on the west coast and currently located in Reno, Nevada, which puts her in a better position to communicate due to less of a time difference. Ms. Kupersmith also will conduct a couple of site visits to LTD; and if there were more visits required, it would be covered under the General Services Administration travel rate. Ms. Kupersmith stated that her goal is to make herself available as often and in whatever manner needed so that she may provide support. Mr. Kouneski added that the most important thing is to create a line of communication and have an internal staff person designated as the lead person with whom KL2 will communicate. KL2 also will work with the Board over the course of the recruitment to keep the Board completely informed. When Ms. Kupersmith and Mr. Schlimm visit LTD for the initial assessment, they will want to meet the staff and receive input in the type of skills, leadership, and experience desired in the next general manager.

Mr. Gillespie asked for more information on KL2 Connects' two site visits. Ms. Kupersmith responded that she would visit early on in the process to meet with Board members and staff so that she can get a good understanding of the organization. She also would like to learn what has been a success in the past, what Board members would like the new general manager to carry forward, what challenges lie ahead, and what skill sets Board members are looking for in the next general manager.

Ms. Kupersmith and Mr. Schlimm would conduct another site visit at the end of the process during the final interviews. She said that they are available to visit more if needed. The purpose of the visits would be to provide LTD with the expertise and support through the final interviewing phase where the Board is meeting with the candidates.

Mr. Hoskins asked if each visit would last one day, or more than one day. Ms. Kupersmith answered that they were anticipating each trip to last a couple of days; the first and second visit would be a couple of nights and two and a half days.

Mr. Gillespie asked for KL2 Connects' initial assessment of the community and some of the challenges they expect to incur. Ms. Kupersmith responded that Eugene, Oregon, is a wonderful community with colleges and amazing geography. She said that although Eugene gets quite a bit of rain, she believes that the water is part of what makes Eugene such a beautiful location. It's a very attractively sized and located community; Lane Transit District is a well-regarded mid-sized transit system in the industry. She stated that LTD will be an attractive property. It has a history and a reputation of being innovative, especially with regards to bus rapid transit. The agency is well-known and respected around the country, and is regarded to be well run, stable, and capable of tackling hard issues and finding solutions, which are strong selling points for CEO candidates.

She said that there are challenges that occur in almost any CEO search; one of those is confidentiality in as far as the process allows. Keeping the names of candidates confidential for as long as possible in the process will most likely ensure a pool of stronger candidates. It also is important to be as clear as possible to establish a parameter of the compensation for the position early on in the process. Ms. Kupersmith said that relocation is another

challenge. It is her goal to establish a commitment with candidates early in the process that if they were to be offered the position, they would be willing to relocate.

Mr. Schlimm added that a big emphasis in KL2 Connects' recruitment model is to spend a great amount of time up front with the candidates in determining skill set, experience, and other components that accompany aspects of leadership. He said that clear communication is key in increasing chances of a successful recruitment.

Mr. Gillespie asked how KL2 Connects is planning to engage the broad community's input into the hiring process. Ms. Kupersmith responded that every community is different, and she would be looking to LTD as the expert on the community to provide direction. Some communities have open houses for the general public where community members are given the opportunity to provide input, while others conduct surveys with the general public and the organizations' employee base. Mr. Kouneski added that some communities prefer that the consultants meet with key leaders, elected officials, minority communities, and the business community to gather input.

Mr. Gillespie asked who KL2 Connects typically includes in the needs analysis. Ms. Kupersmith answered that they work with the Board members. She said that many times the Board has an interest in also involving staff and key communities in the needs assessment. KL2 Connects gathers the feedback and produces a report for the Board to review.

In response to a question from Mr. Gillespie, Ms. Kupersmith said that KL2 Connects is willing to adapt its approach to meet the needs of the Eugene-Springfield community; stating that every community is different, and working with the Eugene-Springfield community and Lane Transit District will be different than conducting the same work in another community. Mr. Schlimm added that one of the deliverables that KL2 Connects furnishes to candidates is a position brochure that provides information about the community. It also includes a number of elements, including the position description, information about LTD's system, and information about the community.

Mr. Gillespie asked how KL2 Connects will locate potential candidates who are most suitable for the position after developing the candidate profile. Ms. Kupersmith said that they advertise in major transit-related publications and reach out to specific outreach groups, such as the Conference for Minority Transportation Officials (COMTO) and the Women's Transportation Seminar (WTS). She added that they will also personally call individuals in the industry whom they believe will be good candidates based on the candidate profile. There also may be internal candidates who apply for the position; internal candidates will go through the process like every other candidate. Individuals who are local but are not in transit also may apply. Ms. Kupersmith stated that the needs assessment is especially important so that individuals may know what skills and attributes are desired in the next general manager.

Mr. Gillespie asked how KL2 Connects planned to screen candidates prior to forwarding candidates to the Board for review. Mr. Schlimm responded that in the early stages of the process, KL2 Connects will work with LTD on the general manager job description; they will

then develop evaluation tools. As a part of developing the profile, they attempt to consolidate the description down to approximately 20 key points. They create their process based on that profile, which means that all candidates are asked the same questions and respond to the same points. Mr. Schlimm, Ms. Kupersmith, and Mr. Kouneski all work together on screening the applicants and debrief after each interview, upon which they attempt to come to a consensus regarding each applicant. They then develop a ranking of the candidates. After screening, KL2 Connects produces an interview briefing book, which is submitted to the Board prior to any interviews; it contains reports with summaries and biographies of each candidate, resumes, a list of prospective interview questions, reference reports, and an ethics assessment. When the list is narrowed to a single candidate, KL2 Connects will partner with an external party to conduct a thorough background check.

Mr. Gillespie asked that KL2 Connects share their experience and methods for determining the best general manager fit to meet an organization's goals in relation to its bargaining unit. Ms. Kupersmith responded that they work with the Board of Directors and staff to understand the current labor relations climate. She said that they will follow the Board's direction in whether or not to speak to union leadership as a part of the needs assessment. Through the screening process, KL2 Connects will look at a candidate's background and experience working with labor unions and also will determine a candidate's philosophy and approach in working with unions. Mr. Kouneski added that as part of the screening process, he and Ms. Kupersmith check with contacts from various labor unions regarding a candidate's work experience.

Mr. Gillespie asked how KL2 assessed a candidate's interpersonal relations skills or emotional intelligence. Ms. Kupersmith answered that they are able to evaluate such skills through personal knowledge of the individual and through the actual screening process, which is often done through Skype. KL2 has found that bringing in a candidate to meet with the Board in an interview set-up is going to be the opportunity for the Board to determine the candidate's personality and communication style. Mr. Kouneski added that KL2 Connects has hired hundreds of personnel; and the consultants are well-versed in interviewing, which has served them well in determining potential issues and fit.

Mr. Gillespie asked if KL2 works to understand how the candidates flex their styles to communicate with staff, community members, agency and/or political leaders. Ms. Kupersmith responded that they approach this aspect in two ways. First, in the initial screening interviews with the candidates, KL2 extensively explores such communication attributes because it is such a credible component of a successful general manager candidate. Second, in addition to speaking directly to the candidate, when KL2 Connects conducts reference checks, they explore how candidates respond in certain situations.

Mr. Gillespie asked KL2 staff to share more about their experiences including communities of color to develop a diverse pool of applicants. Ms. Kupersmith stated that KL2 Connects has a long history of success with developing diverse applicant pools and placing women and minority candidates in CEO positions. She said that the strategy is to place advertisements in areas that reach out, such as COMTO or WTS. It also involves reaching out to individuals and working closely with APTA's Diversity Council.

Mr. Gillespie asked if there was anything that KL2 would like to add before the interview ends. Ms. Kupersmith said that they are excited about the recruitment and would love to have the opportunity to work with Lane Transit District. The Committee ended the call with KL2 Connects.

Mr. Gillespie stated that he enjoyed KL2's response to the labor relations question as it emphasized that the consultants would take their direction from the Board of Directors. He added that that he was impressed that KL2 spoke about qualified candidates that the Board may not necessarily seek, such as a candidate who is highly qualified and organizationally savvy but may not have transit experience.

Mr. Wildish said that he appreciated that KL2 Connects' on-site visits would be at least a few days in length each and that they seemed to understand how important the candidates' communication skills were with communities. He added that both Mr. Kouneski and Ms. Kupersmith have both been decision makers in hiring employees before, which he believes could give them a different perspective than merely being consultants.

Mr. Hoskins said that determining which firm with whom the Committee feels more comfortable will help with its decision. Waters and Company seems to have broader public experience, while KL2 Connects is more industry specific. Ms. Grossman said that first she had some concerns about KL2 Connects being too transit specific; but after the interview, she believes that it is not an issue. She stated that she liked that KL2 seems to work as a team and that after they interview candidates for the first time, they debrief and come to a consensus before presenting information to the Board.

The Committee came to a consensus that KL2 Connects was the firm that would best fit Lane Transit District's needs and will recommend KL2 Connects to the full Board of Directors at the next Board meeting.

**NEXT MEETING:** The next meeting will be scheduled as needed.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:12 a.m.

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Recording Secretary