



MERCER GROUP ASSOCIATES

February 11, 2022

Mayor Kuzma and City Council Members
City of Ramsey
4401 Xylon Ave N.
Ramsey, MN 55428

Dear Mayor Kuzma and City Council Members:

On behalf of Mercer Group Associates, I am pleased to submit this proposal to assist the City of Ramsey in recruiting exceptionally well-qualified candidates for the position of City Administrator. This proposal presents Mercer Group Associates standard approach for a national recruitment for this type of position. We are very willing to adapt our standard process to meet Ramsey's specific needs if that is desired.

Mercer Group Associates is an interactive consortium of thirteen seasoned, senior level, consultants with decades of previous experience as practitioners in local, state, and federal government as well as institutions of higher education and state municipal leagues. We have served as city/county managers, state league directors, federal legislative development officers, upper-level strategic planners, human resource directors, government legal counselors, and finance directors.

Many Mercer Group Associates, myself included, began their consulting careers with The Mercer Group, Inc. which was founded by Jim Mercer in 1990. His firm provided clients throughout the country with outstanding consulting services until his death in 2021. We are now honored to continue his legacy and work through Mercer Group Associates. His leadership and vision in service to his clients is a model we will always strive to emulate at Mercer Group Associates. (Please see www.mercergroupassociates.com for information about our firm and about current searches that we are conducting.)

If Mercer Group Associates is selected, I will be the lead consultant overseeing this search. As such, I will be responsible for all search components listed in this proposal. I will consult with other firm members at key points in the process (e.g., identifying potential candidates they recommend be encouraged to apply, gleaning their knowledge about a particular candidate or candidates, etc.) as appropriate.

City of Ramsey, MN
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I served as City Manager in Minnetonka for 13 years and as Executive Director of the League of Minnesota Cities for 22 years. I was asked to join The Mercer Group, Inc. in 2015 and did so because it allowed me the opportunity to continue working with local governments, my professional passion for 50 years. I understand the critical importance of making the best hiring decisions and my association, first with The Mercer Group, Inc., and now with Mercer Group Associates, allows me to share my experience and insight with cities, something I find immensely rewarding.

I have been the lead consultant on recruitments for the City Manager in Shoreview, Mankato and West St. Paul, Minnesota (twice); the City Administrator in Hastings, Forest Lake and South St. Paul; the Executive Director of the League of Oregon Cities; the Executive Director of the Dakota Communications Center and the Local Government Information Systems (LOGIS) Public Safety Applications Administrator positions.

I have worked with others on recruitments for the City Administrator and Finance Commissioner positions in Poughkeepsie, NY and the Executive Directors of the California League of Cities, Vermont League of Cities and Towns, and the Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns.

The Mission of Mercer Group Associates is to serve our government partners with the highest ethical and professional efforts and to make them proud they engaged us to provide management consulting services. If selected to conduct this search, I would have no difficulty undertaking the project consistent with the timetable outlined in this proposal. I generally only conduct one recruitment at a time to ensure that the client has my full attention. I would not accept any other recruitments if selected by the City of Ramsey.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond for this important assignment. This proposal is valid for ninety (90) days from receipt by the City of Ramsey. I look forward to personally discussing this proposal with you. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely yours,

MERCER GROUP ASSOCIATES

James F. Miller
Senior Associate
Minnesota Office
jf_miller@outlook.com
612-581-9972



MERCER GROUP ASSOCIATES

City of Ramsey, Minnesota

Proposal for Executive
Search Services for

City Administrator

February 11, 2022

MERCER GROUP ASSOCIATES

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Mendota Heights, MN 55120

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I. INTRODUCTION, BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

This section presents our understanding of the City of Ramsey's likely requirements for this search, as well as the objectives and scope of the project based on the City's Request for Proposals and previous similar searches the firm has conducted. As noted in the transmittal letter, we are very open to modifying this proposal to meet the City's specific needs.

A. Project Understanding

We expect that:

- The City is seeking "turn-key" executive search services and support in connection with the nation-wide recruitment of a City Administrator.
- Mercer Group Associates will undertake a search that will include: position analysis and preparation of a position profile; a comprehensive national recruitment for the position; inviting potential candidates to apply; reviewing and screening applications; recommending a list of semi-finalist candidates; coordinating semi-finalist and finalist interviews; reference and background checks of selected candidates; assistance in contract negotiation if desired; and following up.
- The City will provide limited assistance in scheduling meetings, contact information, etc.

B. Objectives

To help find the best qualified candidates for the position we will:

- Conduct a thorough assessment to identify required and desired qualifications for the new City Administrator.
- Reconcile any differences in points of view regarding qualifications for the position.
- Develop a comprehensive position profile.
- Assist the City Council in establishing a recruitment process including the timetable and interview structure for semi-finalist and finalist candidates.
- Encourage top level people (including through outreach to women and persons of color) to apply who may otherwise be reluctant to respond to an advertisement.
- Comply with appropriate personnel regulations and state laws (e.g., Data Practices, Open Meeting, EEO, Affirmative Action and ADA).

- Supply all qualified applicants with relevant information about the City, the City Administrator position, and the community.
- Independently and objectively assess the qualifications and suitability of candidates for the position based on the agreed upon required and desired qualifications.
- Recommend a pool of semi-finalist candidates.
- Coordinate semi-finalist and finalist candidate interviews and recommend the processes for those interviews.
- Respond to all candidate inquiries and produce all correspondence throughout the search as requested.
- Keep the City Council closely involved in key decisions and informed of our progress through weekly email updates.
- Assist the City Council in reaching a final decision.
- Assist in or conduct contract negotiations with the successful candidate, if desired.
- Assist the City Council in establishing criteria for evaluating the new City Administrator's performance, if desired.
- Follow-up with the City Council and the new City Administrator during the first year to determine if adjustments are necessary.

II. WORK PLAN AND SCHEDULE

This section presents the work plan and schedule we recommend for this recruitment.

A. Work Plan

1. Position Analysis

We will have extensive consultation with the City Council and any others it selects to determine the requirements of the job (not simply as stated in the position description), and to obtain information about the environment within which the position functions including ongoing or upcoming issues, priorities or goals. During this process, we will conduct individual interviews with the City Council, department directors, key staff, and others of your choice such as community leaders to identify expectations, perceptions, and concerns regarding the position. This is a critical component of the recruitment process because finding the best candidates involves more than identifying those applicants with the most experience or education; it requires identifying those who best meet the specific needs of the City of Ramsey and who possess the management style best suited to be an effective contributor to the City's leadership team.

Based on those meetings, we will prepare a draft position profile and review it with the City Council to arrive at agreement regarding the specifications for the position. The final position profile will include information about the community, major issues to be faced, the position, and the selection criteria established. Again, it is critical that the profile accurately convey the City's needs and expectations and not merely be boilerplate or a promotional document.

2. Recruitment Process

Because we have recently completed similar searches, we will first review our database to identify those candidates who may meet the City's specifications. Although this process is valuable we will also rely heavily on our own contacts and experience. In other words, through "networking", we will conduct a pro-active, nation-wide, professional search for the best qualified candidates and invite them to apply for the position. We typically directly contact at least 20 such candidates.

Based on our discussions with the City, we will place ads in professional journals, online at appropriate websites and listservs, and in various minority and women's publications to encourage applicants to apply.

3. Resume Review

We will review and analyze each applicant's background and experience against the position profile criteria. We will acknowledge all resumes received and keep candidates informed of their status in a timely manner.

4. Candidate Screening

We will be responsible for screening all applications received. The preliminary screening will be based on the required and desired candidate attributes as contained in the approved recruitment profile. They will include such items as education, technical knowledge, experience, accomplishments, management style, personal traits, etc. Screening of candidates against those criteria will be based on data contained in the resumes and other information provided by the candidates and on our knowledge of them and/or the organizations in which they work. At this stage, each must meet the minimum qualifications specified in the recruitment profile.

By careful analysis of resumes and other available information, we will identify the applicants with the strongest apparent qualifications consistent with the desired qualifications and characteristics. We will conduct preliminary interviews with each of these candidates to further assess their fit for the City of Ramsey and prepare a written summary on each covering, but not be limited to: 1) present position, 2) total years' experience, 3) salary requirements, 4) education, 5) previous positions held, 6) notable projects, 7) management style, 8) skills and abilities, 9) interests, and 10) professional goals and accomplishments.

This information will be presented to the City Council in a detailed written report which will also include summary information about all other candidates with the goal to identify eight to twelve semi-finalists (depending on the candidate pool). Interviews by a City Council subcommittee, likely by video conference, are recommended; other options exist. Because of Data Practices and Open Meeting Law implications, an interview process should be discussed and agreed on at the recruitment outset. Based on these interviews, the City Council will select up to five finalists.

We will then request that all finalists provide substantial information about their accomplishments and their management style and philosophy. This information will be verified with references. We also recommend finalists be interviewed and complete a leadership evaluation customized to the Ramsey recruitment. We have worked with Martin-McAllister, a consulting psychologist firm in Minneapolis, with very good results and would recommend their services.

5. Background Investigations

We make detailed and extensive reference checks. In conducting these, it is our practice to speak directly to at least six references that are now or have previously been in a position to evaluate the candidate's job performance. We then attempt to network these references to other persons who know the candidate. In this way, we thoroughly evaluate each candidate.

These references and evaluations are combined to provide frank and objective appraisals of the top candidates. We also identify past employment difficulties, if any, including reasonable due diligence on any legal action filed by or against current or former employers.

As part of our evaluation process, we verify undergraduate and graduate college degrees. We arrange for credit and criminal background checks, and, as mentioned, as an additional option can arrange for psychological (or similar) testing of the candidates if desired.

6. Finalist Interview Process

We will provide the City Council with our recommendations relative to timing, sequencing, location, setting, format, and conduct of interviews with the finalists. We generally recommend a two-day process that includes candidate tours of the city and facilities, interaction with department directors and other key staff, an open house or public forum for the community where candidates make presentations about themselves with an opportunity for questions, an informal social event for the City Council and candidates on the first day, followed by formal interviews and City Council deliberation on the second day. We will assist as requested to arrange schedules for finalist interviews with the City Council and will coordinate the process.

7. Negotiation and Follow-up

If desired, we will undertake or assist in the negotiation process relative to salary, benefits and other conditions of employment as part of our fee. If an agreement cannot be reached, we will work with the City Council to select an alternate candidate.

We will properly handle any and all media relations as requested. Unless otherwise directed, it is our standard practice to tell all media that we are working on the city's behalf and that any public statement should come directly from the person(s) designated by the city. We will maintain confidentiality of candidate information, to the degree possible, under Minnesota law.

Finally, we will notify all unsuccessful candidates who were not recommended for interview when the final decision is reached. We suggest, however, that it is more proper for the Mayor to notify all unsuccessful finalists of the City's decision.

Once the new City Administrator has been on board for 30 days or so, if desired, we will conduct a session with the City Council and City Administrator to establish mutual performance criteria and goals for the position. We will follow-up periodically during the first year in order to make any adjustments that may be necessary.

We will keep the City Council closely informed and involved in decisions concerning the search process at all times. We will send weekly e-mail updates and a formal progress report at the mid-point of the search. These reports will discuss progress on the recruitment and specific steps to be taken to meet the City's deadlines.

B. Schedule

This schedule could be altered depending on the City's needs.

RECRUITMENT PROCESS TIMELINE	
City Council Approval	February 22, 2022
Kickoff meeting and interviews with City Council and others to be interviewed	February 23 – February 25, 2022
Draft recruitment profile to City Council for review	March 4 for March 8, 2022 Council Meeting
Final recruitment profile including all graphics to City Council for review and approval	March 18 for March 22, 2022 Council Meeting
Ad placement and recruitment profile/invitation letter sent to selected candidates	March 23, 2022
Follow-up telephone calls and receipt of applications	March 23 – April 20, 2022
Cutoff date for receipt of applications	April 20, 2022
City Council selects semi-finalists	April 26, 2022 Council Meeting
Interviews with semi-finalists	April 28 – 29, 2022
City Council selects three to five finalists	May 3, 2022 Special Council Meeting
Reference and background checks on finalists and comprehensive report to City Council	May 4 – May 18, 2022
City Council interviews top candidates	June 3 – 4, 2022
City Council makes selection	June 4 or 7, 2022 Special Council Meeting
Agreement negotiated	June 6 – 10, 2022
City Council makes appointment	June 14, 2022
Selected candidate starts	July 11, 2022

III. COST PROPOSAL

Our fee for the services outlined is \$17,500 plus not-to-exceed expenses of \$4,000. Items typical of a similar search with their associated costs are broken down as follows:

Full Search:

Position Analysis and Recruitment Profile Interviews	\$3,000
Recruitment Profile Development	2,500
Outreach Campaign	3,500
Resume Review	3,000
Candidate Screening	4,000
Interview Process	<u>1,500</u>

TOTAL FEE **\$17,500**

Not-to-exceed expenses of \$4,000 are for: recruitment profile design and preparation, advertising, reference and background investigation, etc. Because we will be conducting this recruitment from our Minnesota office, expenses should be considerably less than budgeted (approximately \$2,000 for the recently completed Shoreview recruitment). Costs for leadership assessments as recommended earlier herein are additional – approximately \$1,300 per assessment.

The cost for final candidates to travel to interview with the City is not included. Such costs are typically paid by the client on a reimbursement basis directly to the candidates. These costs are difficult to estimate because they depend on where the candidates are located.

We will submit regular invoices for fees and expenses. It is our practice to bill one-half after ad placement and one-half upon recruitment completion. Each invoice is due and payable upon receipt for professional services.

We will comply with all applicable laws, rules and regulations of federal, state and local government entities.

We will, to the degree possible, preserve the confidential nature of any information received from you or developed during the work in accordance with our professional standards and Minnesota law.

Our recommendations and any written material provided by us will represent our best judgment based on the information available to us. Our liability, if any, will not be greater than the amount paid to us for the services rendered. This proposal constitutes the agreement between us. It cannot be modified except in writing by both parties. Our agreement will be interpreted according to the laws of the State of Minnesota.

IV. FIRM QUALIFICATIONS AND STAFFING

This section presents our qualifications to conduct projects of this type and describes the staff to be assigned to the search.

A. Firm Qualifications

Mercer Group Associates is an independent management consulting consortium operating nationwide and providing exceptionally high-quality management consulting services to state and local governments, “joint powers” entities, state municipal leagues and special districts. Specialty practice areas include: executive recruitment, organization and operations analysis, productivity improvement, strategic planning, management systems, compensation/classification studies, government consolidation, organization development, privatization, budget evaluation, training, and general management consulting. Our key consultants have conducted successful searches and studies for hundreds of public sector organizations nationally and we can offer numerous references as testimony of our work. (Please see www.mercergroupassociates.com for more information about our firm.)

B. Resume of Lead Associate

Jim Miller, Senior Associate - Minnesota Office

Mr. Miller will undertake and be responsible for all aspects of this recruitment.

He retired in July, 2015 after 22 years as the Executive Director of the League of Minnesota Cities. The League represents over 850 cities providing training for elected and appointed officials, legislative representation, research, insurance, and investment pooling among other services. It has over 100 employees, with a \$20 million operating budget and combined assets of about \$1 billion including its insurance and investment programs.

Previously, Mr. Miller was City Manager of Minnetonka, Minnesota for thirteen years. He has over forty-five years of local government experience and has worked in seven cities in five states, including: Eau Claire, Brown Deer, and Janesville, Wisconsin; Phoenix, Arizona; Monroeville, Pennsylvania; and Des Moines, Iowa.

He has served on numerous Boards of Directors including the National League of Cities and as chair of its Risk Information Sharing Consortium, a membership association of state league sponsored risk sharing pools in 34 states and two Canadian provinces. He is also a Past President of the League of Minnesota Cities. In 1991, then Governor Carlson appointed him to the Minnesota Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations.

He holds a BA degree (University of Wisconsin - Eau Claire) two MPA degrees (University of Pittsburgh and Nova Southeastern University) and a DPA degree (Nova Southeastern University) and was awarded a Bush fellowship to attend the Program for Senior Executives in State and Local Government at Harvard University.

He has served as adjunct and assistant professor at Hamline University where he taught graduate courses in public administration and in leadership and management. He held a similar position at Drake University.

In 1995 he was awarded the Lloyd Short Award for Outstanding Contributions to the Field of Public Administration presented by the Minnesota Chapter of the American Society for Public Administration. Hamline University has created an endowed scholarship for graduate students interested in a career in local government in his name. Upon his retirement, the League Board of Directors renamed its annual leadership award which recognizes outstanding career contributions by a local government practitioner, as the James F. Miller Leadership Award.

V. MERCER GROUP ASSOCIATES GUARANTEES

The ten guarantees for our search work are explained below:

- 1. Client Organization:** The client is defined as the entire entity, including all departments, divisions, sections and groups. This assures that all of our guarantees apply to the entire client organization.
- 2. Two-Year Off Limits:** We will not recruit candidates from a client organization for two years after completion of a search assignment without the full agreement of the client.
- 3. Placement Off Limits Forever:** We will never recruit a candidate whom we have placed in a client organization as long as he/she is employed by that organization without the full agreement of the client
- 4. Search Continuation:** If, for any reason, the client does not feel comfortable selecting a candidate from our original recommended group of candidates, we will continue the search until the client can make a selection. The only caveat is that we may need to charge additional out-of-pocket expenses for this additional work.
- 5. Replacement of Successful Candidate:** If the candidate we place with the client leaves the client organization for any reason during the 18-month period following the date of placement, we will undertake a new recruitment only for the out-of-pocket expenses incurred for this new placement.
- 6. Parallel Candidate Presentation:** We will not present a candidate simultaneously to more than one client. This permits our firm to represent one client organization without any conflicts of interest.
- 7. Code of Ethics:** We hold ourselves and our firm to the highest professional and ethical standards and will always adhere to the Code of Ethics of the International City/County Management Association.
- 8. Deceptive/Misleading Search Techniques:** We commit to our clients and to our prospective candidates that we will not use any search techniques which may be considered as deceptive or misleading.
- 9. Resume Floating:** We will not float resumes to organizations in the hopes that we can collect a fee if that individual is hired.
- 10. Not Represent Individuals:** We assure our clients and individuals who may become candidates that we will not collect a fee from candidates whom we may recommend for a position.

APPENDIX A: DRAFT AGREEMENT

AGREEMENT

This AGREEMENT, made as of this ___ day of _____, 2022, by and between MERCER GROUP ASSOCIATES and THE CITY OF RAMSEY, MINNESOTA.

WITNESSETH:

WHEREAS, The City of Ramsey, Minnesota, (hereinafter referred to as "City") has made a request for proposals to hire an executive recruiter to conduct a search for a City Administrator, and

WHEREAS, Mercer Group Associates (hereinafter referred to as "MGA") has submitted a proposal in response to City's request; and

WHEREAS, City has selected MGA's proposal as the proposal which best meets its needs and City desires to hire MGA to conduct City's search for a new City Administrator, and

NOW THEREFORE, in consideration of the following mutual covenants and other good and valuable consideration, the receipt and adequacy of which is hereby acknowledged by all parties hereto, MGA and City hereby agree as follows:

1. MGA agrees to conduct this recruitment in accordance with scope of services outlined in its Proposal to City dated February 11, 2022 in response to City's request for proposal. MGA's proposal is incorporated by reference and thus made a part of this Agreement.
2. City agrees to compensate MGA for its services in the amount of \$17,500 for professional services and not-to-exceed \$4,000 in expenses to conduct a full search for City Administrator. Payments to MGA are to be made as outlined on page 7 of MGA's proposal to City. City and MGA both agree that this Agreement shall be governed by the laws of the State of Minnesota.
3. City and MGA both agree that in the event that any dispute arises between the parties, the complaining party shall promptly notify the other of the dispute in writing. Each party shall respond to the other party in writing within ten (10) working days of receipt of such notice.
4. City and MGA both agree that any amendments to this Agreement shall be made in writing, and executed by both parties. No proposed amendment which is not in writing and executed by both parties shall affect the terms of this Agreement.

5. The parties shall have the right at either party's convenience to terminate this Agreement following ten (10) days' written notice to the other party. Should either party terminate this Agreement, City shall only be obligated to pay MGA for those services already provided.

**CITY OF RAMSEY,
MINNESOTA**

BY:

**Reddish Executive Search Associates, LLC
DBA: MERCER GROUP ASSOCIATES**

BY:

James F. Miller
Senior Associate

APPENDIX B: PREVIOUS AND CURRENT SEARCHES

Examples of our relevant executive search experience follow:

City of Shoreview, Minnesota – City Manager

City of Mankato, MN – City Manager

City of Hastings, MN – City Administrator

City of Forest Lake, MN – City Administrator

City of South St. Paul, MN – City Administrator

City of West St. Paul, MN (twice) – City Manager

Local Government Information Systems – Public Safety Applications Administrator

Dakota Communications Center – Executive Director

League of Minnesota Cities – Executive Director

League of Oregon Cities – Executive Director

League of California Cities – Executive Director

League of Rhode Island Cities and Towns – Executive Director

City of Poughkeepsie, NY – City Administrator

APPENDIX C: REFERENCES

You may contact any of the following clients and placements for references on the executive search work of Mr. Miller:

Ms. Sandy Martin, Mayor
City of Shoreview, Mn
4600 Victoria Street N
Shoreview, MN 55126
651-335-6228
smartin@shoreviewmn.gov
City Manager recruitment

Ms. Sue Denkinger
Council Member
City of Shoreview, MN
651-260-1940
sdenkinger@shoreviewmn.org
City Manager recruitment

Mr. Dave Napier, Mayor
City of West St. Paul, MN
1616 Humboldt Ave.
West St. Paul, MN 55118
612-562-9773
dnapier@wspmn.gov
City Manager recruitment

Ms. Wendy Berry
Council Member
City of West St. Paul, MN
1616 Humboldt Ave.
West St. Paul, MN 55118
612-414-2749
wberry@wspmn.gov
City Manager recruitment

Ms. Najwa Massad, Mayor
City of Mankato, MN
10 Civic Center Plaza
Mankato, MN 56001
507-387-8693
nmassad@mankatomn.gov
City Manager recruitment

Mr. Mike Lavin
City Council President
City of Mankato, MN
10 Civic Center Plaza
Mankato, MN 56001
507 720-8674
mlavin@mankatomn.gov
City Manager recruitment

Ms. Mary Fasbender, Mayor
City of Hastings, MN
101 4th St. East
Hastings, MN 55033
651-480-2350
MayorMary@hastingsmn.gov
City Administrator recruitment

Ms. Julie Flaten, Administrative Services Director
City of Hastings, MN
101 4th St. East
651-480-2355
jflaten@hastingsmn.gov
City Administrator recruitment

Ms. Mara Bain, Mayor
City of Forest Lake, MN
1408 Lake St. S
Forest Lake, MN 55025
651-464-3550
Mara.Bain@ci.forest-lake.mn.us
City Administrator recruitment

Ms. Bridget McCauley Nason, City Attorney
City of Forest Lake, MN
Levander, Gillen & Miller, P.A.
633 Concord Street S. #400201 4th St. SE
South St. Paul, MN 55075
651-451-1831
BNason@levander.com
City Administrator recruitment

Mr. James Francis, Mayor
City of South St. Paul, MN
125 3rd Ave. North
South St. Paul, MN 55075
651-554-3284
jfrancis@sspmn.org
City Administrator recruitment

Ms. Korine Land, City Attorney
Cities of South & West St. Paul
Levander, Gillen & Miller, P.A.
633 Concord Street S. #400201 4th St. SE
South St. Paul, MN 55075
651-451-1831
KLand@levander.com
City Administrator and City Manager recruitments, respectively