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## County picks consultant for manager search

By Melissa Burnsed

MccLenny, Florida. The Board of County Commissioners decided at their meeting Monday afternoon that the job of finding a new county manager required outside expertise. They voted to hire **Colin Baenziger and Associates** to oversee the process. Mr. **Baenziger** was present during a workshop on the county manager issue and stayed for the commissioners meeting to, in his words, "See how you all play nice together, so I can tell potential candidates what kind of people you are. It is important that we find the right person to fit in here."

**Baenziger** is a leading consultant in recruiting managers for local municipalities. He came to the board highly recommended with references from more than fifty satisfied clients including Clay and Nassau Counties. In addition, **Baenziger** guaranteed his work. "For the first year after selection, if you or the selectee decide it is not working out, I will do the search all over again at no further cost to you," he said.

For a flat fee of \$18,500, his firm will coordinate a multi-staged process that should take four months to complete. First up will be individual interviews with commissioners to compile their requirements, proposed compensation package and a firm schedule. Then the company will advertise the position and cull through candidates. Commissioners will then receive a top ten recommendation list from which they will chose five finalists. Finalists will be invited, with their spouses, to meet commissioners in both a social setting and for one on one interviews, over the course of a weekend. Finally a vote to select a new manager will be held at a regular commission meeting. The consulting company will pay all costs associated with the search, including advertising and finalists travel for the interviews.

As part of the contract stipulations, commissioners narrowed the proposed advertising and search area to Florida, after Commissioner Julie Combs expressed concerns about having to pay exorbitant moving expenses.

Local candidates from within Baker County will be sought, at the urging of Commissioner Fred Raulerson who cast the lone vote in opposition to hiring the consultant. "If we do this, we are saying that we don't feel that there is anyone local who is capable of handling the position and I feel strongly that we do have those people in Baker County," he said prior to the vote.