

Nearly 80 apply to be South Lake Tahoe city manager



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By Kathryn Reed

About 80 people are interested in being the next city manager of South Lake Tahoe.

The deadline to apply was May 17, though resumes will be accepted by consultant Bob Murray and Associates if they are postmarked by that date.

Bob Murray would not say how many people he intends to refer to the City Council to interview.

"The only comment I'm going to have for the press is the number of candidates and I should have the accurate count (Wednesday)," he told *Lake Tahoe News* on Tuesday.

In the extremely brief and somewhat terse conversation, Murray said as of Sunday he had 64 applications. "I will not identify if there are local candidates. That is privileged information," the consultant quipped.

"Privileged" is an interesting response considering his fee comes from taxpayer money and the person to be hired will be working for the taxpayers at their expense.

This isn't the first time Murray has concealed information

from the public in relation to hiring a city manager. In 2002, he was hired as the headhunter when Dave Childs resigned.

Members of the community were chosen by city officials to interview a few of the candidates in what amounted to a closed session. When Dave Jinkens was chosen these people knew before the name was released to the public. What influence they may have had in the decision and who exactly they were remains a well kept secret.

Murray was also the consultant paid with taxpayer money after Kerry Miller resigned. He found Childs.

Transparency has been an often-used word at City Hall this year. With the history of this consultant, the view is already murky.

In April the council voted 3-2 to hire Murray again, this time for no more than \$15,000.

Mayor Kathay Lovell said she expects Murray to whittle the list to a dozen or so candidates. She said the final applicant number Murray told her is likely to be near 80.

On the other end of the spectrum is Councilman Jerry Birdwell who would like to look over all the resumes.

Lovell voted for Murray, Birdwell did not.

Lovell said a community panel would be assembled to give input into the process. How that will work has not been determined.

Current City Manager Jinkens told the council early this year he would be leaving when his contract expires in August. He started with the city in 2002.

Susan Wood contributed to this story.