

# WOODLEY TAKES CITY HELM AGAIN

By GREG GILES NEWS EDITOR VENICE GONDOLIER

With the resignation of Isaac Turner on Tuesday, Assistant City Manager Nancy Woodley again steps in as acting city manager.

She held the position in 2008, when Marty Black left, while the city conducted a nationwide search that resulted in Turner's employment.

She received high marks for running city hall, and former Mayor Ed Martin even remarked he would have considered her permanently for the position had she been interested at that time.

City council will meet next week to consider its next step. Already the city learned it will get some outside professional help in the search without spending a dime. The council has been critical of hiring consultants, but it hadn't planned on losing both its city manager and chief of police at the same time.

Under the contract between the city and Slavin Management Consultants, which secured Turner, the consultant is obligated to help fulfill another search if its candidate leaves within two years. Turner resigned Tuesday, two days shy of the two-year mark.

Mayor John Holic said he won't rely solely on Slavin's two-year guarantee. He also hopes council and professional in-house staff can identify additional qualified candidates.

"We attracted 300 candidates for the police chief position without a recruiter," Holic said. "After narrowing down the field, if we can get a dozen (candidates) from the recruiter and another half dozen on our own" the city will be in good shape, Holic said.

Holic said he intends to take a closer look at the city manager's contract, saying the current salary is "a lot of money."

"I don't know if that's standard," Holic said. "Mr. Turner's complaint was he wasn't getting enough."

Holic and others may also consider tightening contract language so it doesn't, for example, allow exiting city managers to receive severance pay even after they've found new employment. Turner's severance package calls for a lump-sum payment equal to nine months pay at \$148,500 annually, although the city may pay that out in monthly installments, plus nine months of leave and health-care and life insurance coverage.

Holic said he's confident of Woodley's ability, and is viewing the change as an opportunity.

"Nancy (Woodley) is a highly qualified person," he said. "We talked, and I believe this will move us forward (with city priority projects) by about six months. One of our goals was to stop micromanaging. I think Nancy will be good at implementing greater departmental responsibility, instead of department heads running to the city manager for everything.

"It's a whole new ball game. We can start fresh."

"The last time I was in this position I was a big believer in department leaders doing their thing," Woodley said. "They all stepped up to the plate and made my tenure as acting city manager tenable. That gave me the comfort level that we can get through this again."

Woodley began working for the city in 1997 as city engineer, according to the city Web site. In 2007 she was named general manager of development services, and later

in the year stepped in as interim city manager for nine months while a city manager search was conducted.

In 2009, she was promoted to assistant city manager and has served in that position since.

Before moving to Venice in 1997, Woodley served the city of Louisville and Jefferson County Regional Planning Commission in 1968-69. The following year she moved to Tuscaloosa, Ala., where she worked as the principal planner and later project manager for the Regional Planning Commission. There she worked on a project in conjunction with the Environmental Protection Agency, developing a wastewater treatment management plan for the urban area. She was one of four women in the nation working on such a project at the time.

After receiving her Ph.D. from the University of Alabama Tuscaloosa School of Engineering, she helped corporations get federal and state permits for discharging water and designed wastewater treatment facilities, according to the city Web site.

While serving the citizens of Venice she has headed several major improvement projects, such as the renovation of the Venice Community Center, facilitating the relocation of underground infrastructure during the state's widening of U.S. 41 Business, reconstructing the Venice Fishing Pier and negotiating the city's partnership with Sarasota County School Board staff for the state-of-the-art performing arts center to be completed in 2014 on the Venice High campus.