

PALMER LAKE (Cont. from 1)

Law firms interviewed

At a workshop on March 12, the board heard presentations from JVAM and Wyatt, Hamilton, Findlay (WHF). Zuckerman Legal was invited but chose not to attend.

Kent Whitmer, a partner at JVAM, told the board most of his firm's clients were on the Western Slope, but the firm intended to expand to the Front Range. Whitmer said he grew up in Denver, went to law school at Denver University, and had an MBA. He first practiced law in Wyoming but came back to Colorado. He had experience with title law, estate planning, and water law and served as Fraser's town attorney.

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Daniel Findlay, a partner at WHF, said it was a small family firm. He studied law in North Carolina and represented the Town of Florence. Findlay emphasized his responsiveness and his work with towns and communities.

Board selects WHF

At the March 12 board meeting following the workshop, Mayor Dennis Stern said he preferred JVAM.

Resident Amy Hutson, who served on the Planning Commission and, briefly, on the Board of Trustees, said that Trustee Roger Moseley had contacted the applicants outside of the board's process and had communicated with the Town of Florence using his personal email. Hutson said an open records request to the Town of Florence showed an email from Moseley's personal email. Hutson faulted Moseley for not using his town-issued email address for town business. Trustee Beth Harris was copied on the email. Harris said she did not ask to be copied on the message and did not actively participate in the exchange between Moseley and the Town of Florence.

Moseley said he would not recuse himself from votes to select an attorney, and his communication was an attempt to find legal referrals as requested by Palmer Lake town staff. He said he had deleted the email to the Town of Florence from his personal email account to save space.

After some additional discussion, the board voted on Stern's recommendation to move forward with JVAM. The motion failed, with Trustees Mike Beeson, Tony Beltran, and Stern voting in favor and Trustees Harris, John Marble, Moseley, and Atis Jurka voting no. Ultimately, the board asked staff to pursue an agreement with WHF.

Concerns raised with WHF

At a special meeting on March 25, Smith said attorney Daniel Findlay had not disclosed his conversations with Moseley in December and January by text and videoconference regarding the position of town attorney even though the request for proposal (RFP) said that "any prior contact" should be disclosed by the applicant. Smith argued this was not fair to the other applicants for the position and not a good way to start the relationship with a new attorney. Smith recommended terminating the agreement with WHF.

In his defense, Moseley said he had disclosed his contact with one of the applicants at the Jan. 8 Board of Trustees meeting. He said his contact took place before the RFP was made public. Smith said his issue was with Findlay's lack of disclosure as required by the RFP.

Resident Laura McGuire read a transcript from a previous meeting of Moseley's claim that he had "never met this lawyer before," labeling that statement as false.

Resident Shana Ball, who held a seat on the board until she was recalled, said the board's actions were putting the town in danger of losing its insurance coverage as well as legal representation.

Resident Susan Miner said the language of the RFP said any contact should be disclosed and did not set any timeframe for when the contact occurred.

Mark Waller faulted Moseley and the board for lacking integrity and pointed out the board could be sued by other applicants who could argue the decision process involved "inside knowledge."

Trustee Beeson said the requirement to disclose prior contacts was listed in the RFP among items the proposal "should include," rather than the "required submittals," and questioned whether WHF was truly non-compliant.

Moseley explained that his outreach to WHF

was done on the advice of the Colorado Municipal League general counsel to encourage firms to apply because they "might be reluctant to come to a place in turmoil."

Instead of immediately terminating the negotiation with WHF as Smith suggested, the board reached a consensus to invite the lead attorney from WHF to attend the regular board meeting scheduled for the following day.

WHF withdraws its proposal

At the regular board meeting on March 26, Smith passed on to the board a letter from Whitt Wyatt, a principal at WHF, withdrawing its proposal to provide legal services to the town. Wyatt said the decision was made after a review of the special meeting the day before and in response to Smith's memo recommending that the town withdraw from the negotiation. Wyatt added that WHF had disclosed all contacts with Moseley immediately when asked by Smith, and it interpreted the RFP disclosure requirements differently than Smith did.

In response to a comment from Beeson, Smith said he had called WHF to ask them to attend the board meeting but had gotten no response until he received the letter withdrawing its proposal. Town Clerk Erica Romero said she had been calling WHF since Friday with no response.

Following additional discussion and comments from the public, Stern moved to direct Smith to reopen a negotiation with JVAM. Beeson said he would second if JVAM would make a substantial cut to its fees; otherwise, he thought the town should look elsewhere. Beeson, Harris, Marble, and Stern voted in favor. Moseley voted no. Beltran and Jurka were excused from the meeting.

Buc-ee's annexation withdrawal request closer to completion

Smith updated the board on the work of Dietze and Davis, the law firm hired by the town to complete its acceptance of Buc-ee's request to withdraw its application for annexation. Attorney Karl Kumli would meet with representatives of Buc-ee's in April, Smith said, adding he expected the loose ends of the annexation to be resolved soon.

Three vacancies on Planning Commission go unfilled

At the March 26 board meeting, Romero told the board that there were three applicants for the three open seats on the Planning Commission: Shana Ball, Kent Hutson, and Susan Miner. Ball's application emphasized her terms on the Board of Trustees and the Planning Commission. She also served as fire chief and contributed to the town's Master Plan. Miner served on the board, on the Planning Commission, and worked on Master Plans for the town and the Elephant Rock property. Hutson chaired the Master Plan Advisory Team in 2022.

Stern said he would like to hear from each of the applicants, all of whom were present.

Moseley said he and other trustees had asked for a workshop to consider the details of all workshops and commissions. Since that workshop had not been held, he said it was inappropriate to proceed with any appointments. He said Jurka, who was excused, had messaged him to ask the board to postpone any appointments until Jurka was present to vote.

Stern disagreed, arguing that the Planning Commission had cancelled work due to a lack of quorum. He wanted to proceed with the appointments. Romero said she was directed by the board to advertise the vacancies, had not been asked to stop seeking potential appointees, and mentioned the board had made two appointments to the Parks and Trails Commission at recent meet-

Noria Lea Gerig

1942 - 2026

Noria Lea Gerig (née Stidham), 83, of Colorado Springs, Colorado, passed away peacefully on February 27, 2026, surrounded by family.

Noria was born in Roxana, Kentucky, in 1942 to Eddie Glenn Stidham and Hazel Marie Raleigh. She spent most of her childhood on a small farm in Eastern Kentucky and moved with her family to Baltimore, Maryland when she was 13 years old. Noria graduated from Patterson Park High School in 1960, worked for a few years as a secretary at a law firm and in 1964 joined United Airlines as a stewardess.

In 1969, Noria caught the eye of Warren Gerig, Jr., who was working as a gate agent for United Airlines. Their romance grew and fittingly they were married in the JFK International Airport's Protestant Chapel on May 30, 1970. Over the next 35 years they first moved to airports across the United States and then to airports in Southeast Asia. Noria flew both domestic and international routes and in 2022, after 38 years, she retired from United Airlines as one of their most senior flight attendants.

Noria had deep roots in this country and was proud of her American heritage. Her earliest Stidham ancestor, Tymen Stidham, was a member of the Swedish colony that arrived in 1638 and founded

the town of Wilmington, Delaware. She also had ancestors who fought in the American Revolution and became a member of the Daughters of the American Revolution in 1998.

Both Noria and Warren loved to travel together and explore the world. They travelled extensively in Europe and in Asia they toured Japan, the Philippines, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, China, Nepal, and India. In Africa they went on photo safaris to Kenya, Tanzania, and South Africa.

In 2005, after Warren retired from United Airlines they settled in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Noria and Warren joined the First Presbyterian Church in Colorado Springs in 2005, where she was active in her church community and was honored to serve as a Deacon and communion server. She was inducted into the Zebulon Pike Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution in Colorado Springs, in September 2006, and was a very active member of this organization.

She is survived by her loving husband of 56 years, Warren Charles Gerig, Jr., and her sisters Margie Alice Green or Sykesville, Maryland, and Lyla Ruth Van Rompaey, of Seattle, Washington. She was preceded in death by her son Darren Marshall Gerig, her brother Carlos Edward Stidham, and her parents Eddie Glenn Stidham and Hazel Marie Raleigh.

A funeral service will be held on April 9, 2026, at 1 pm at the First Presbyterian Church, 219 E Bijou St, Colorado Springs, Colorado.

