



**CITY OF YPSILANTI
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING**
Wednesday, January 10, 2024 @ 7:00 PM
Council Chambers
One South Huron, Ypsilanti, MI 48197
[Launch Meeting - Zoom](#)

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. ROLL CALL

III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

- A. I pledge allegiance to the flag, of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

IV. AGENDA APPROVAL

V. PUBLIC COMMENT (3 MINUTES)

VI. CITY MANAGER CANDIDATE INTERVIEWS

- A. Press Release - Please note that Fred Ventresco removed his name from consideration.
- B. Andrew Hellenga
- C. Andrew Niedzinski
- D. Vester Davis

VII. PUBLIC COMMENT (3 MINUTES)

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Amy Cell Talent News Release

Release Date: IMMEDIATE

Contact: Amy Cell, Founder & President
(734) 657-0370

Finalists Selected for the City of Ypsilanti City Manager Search

After a thorough review of 245 applicants, 4 candidates have been selected as finalists in the search for the new City Manager for the City of Ypsilanti. The City Commission will interview the finalists on Wednesday, January 10, 2024. Residents are invited to attend the interviews which will take place at Ypsilanti City Hall, 1 S. Huron Street, Ypsilanti, MI. 48197. After the interviews, the City Commission will determine the next steps in the hiring process.

Commission Interview schedule:

6 pm - Fred Ventresco

7pm - Andrew Hellenga

8pm - Andrew Niedzinski

9pm - Vester Davis Jr.

Candidate Bios and Background

Andrew Hellenga



Andrew Hellenga is the Interim City Manager for the City of Ypsilanti. In addition to being responsible for the day-to-day management and execution of all aspects of City Government, Hellenga has extensive experience with municipal budgets, organizational theory, project management and understands all aspects and functions of government.

Prior to stepping into the Interim City Manager role, Hellenga held the positions of City Clerk, Deputy City Clerk, and Downtown Development Coordinator in the

City of Ypsilanti.

He holds a Masters degree in Public Administration and a Bachelors in Political Science from Eastern Michigan University. Andrew also has graduate certificates in public management and land-use planning.

Andrew Niedzinski



Andrew Niedzinski has been serving as the City Manager of Vassar since March 2020, managing the city's operations, a \$4.5 million budget and emphasizing efficiency and financial effectiveness. Neidzinski has experience in grant writing, financial management, policy and program development, budgeting, labor relations, strategic planning, economic development, community building, and public relations.

Prior to serving as City Manager, Niedzinski held the positions of Training and Operations Manager at the Michigan Workforce Development Institute in Lansing, MI, City Commissioner in Bay City, MI., Interim City Manager in Pinconning, MI, and was a Union Representative at UFCW Local 951 in Grand Rapids, MI.

He possesses a Master of Public Administration from Central Michigan University, a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from Saginaw Valley State University, and an Associate of Business Studies in General Management from Delta College. Niedzinski is also a Michigan Certified Assessing Officer and an OSHA Authorized Instructor in Construction Safety.

Vester Davis Jr.



Vester Davis Jr. has been serving as the City Manager for the City of Springfield since 2020. He is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the city including administering the zoning code, overseeing public safety, economic development, and city relations.

Prior to his current position, Vester served as the City Manager for the City of Stanton, was the Assistant to the City Manager for the City of Grand Haven, and was an intern to former Grand Haven City Manager, Patrick McGinnis.

Vester earned his Bachelor's degree in Public and Nonprofit Management and a Master's degree in Public Administration from Grand Valley State University's School of Public, Nonprofit and Health Management. He is a member of MME and has served on the Professional Development Committee and DEI Committee.

Fred Ventresco



Fred Ventresco currently resides in Pinetops, North Carolina, where he has served as the Town Administrator for the Town of Pinetops since March 2022. Prior to this, Ventresco served as the City Administrator for the City of Milan, MO.

In addition to 17 years of work experience managing full-service local governments in a few different states, Venstesco is knowledgeable in all areas of government, especially those that are most relevant to municipal interests and managing organizations, such as finance, personnel/HR, economic-community development, and public relations.

Fred holds a Bachelor's degree in Public Management and Business from the University of Maine and a Master's degree in Public Administration (MPA) from the University of New Hampshire.

Amy Cell Talent is a full-service talent acquisition and human resources management firm located in downtown Ypsilanti, Michigan. Drawing from Michigan's deep and diverse talent pool, Amy Cell Talent is adept at helping municipalities, non-profit organizations, start-ups, and corporations find well-sourced candidates. For more information, please visit www.amycelltalent.com.

Andrew Hellenga

2411 Burns St.
Ypsilanti, MI 48197

Professional History

August 2023 to
Present

City of Ypsilanti

Interim City Manager

- Provide Supervision of all city departments.
- Ensure that all federal, state, and local ordinances are adhered to.
- Work with staff through the management of contracts, grants, and strategies to accomplish the core functions of each department.
- Engage with union members to create an environment of cohesion to achieve the mission of the city.

March 2019 to
August 2023

City of Ypsilanti

City Clerk

- Managed all Clerk Department Staff
- Acted as City Clerk to City Council, providing communication and information regarding city functions, the City Charter, and Code of Ordinances.
- Created and maintained five budgets associated with the Clerk Department, as well as sat on the Budget Committee.
- Developed strategies to create greater efficiencies throughout the election process.
- Oversaw all election management procedures and equipment.

April 2014 to
March 2019

City of Ypsilanti

Deputy City Clerk and Elections Manager

- Effectively and efficiently manage elections.
- Hired and trained all election inspectors.
- Provided excellent record retention for all city undertakings.
- Achieved interdepartmental cohesiveness through operations of the Administrative Hearings Bureau.
- Maintain website.
- August 2016 to February 2017 Interim City Clerk

January 2013
to April 2014

Ypsilanti Downtown Development Authority

Community Development Coordinator

Education

September 2009 to August 2015 **Eastern Michigan University Graduate School** Ypsilanti, Michigan

Master's in Public Administration: Acquired training in budgeting, management, and statistical analysis.

- Graduate Certificate in Land-Use Planning.
- Graduate Certificate in Local Government Management.
- G.P.A. 3.57.

September 2003 to April 2007 **Eastern Michigan University** Ypsilanti, Michigan

B.S. in Political Science Minor in History

- Member of Pi Sigma Alpha Political Science Honorary Society.

September 1999 **Schoolcraft College**

Livonia, Michigan

to April 2003

Associates Degree in Liberal Arts

Skills

Budgeting Strategy

Leadership Ability

Statistical Analysis

Program Management

Policy Development

ANDREW NIEDZINSKI

2313 S. Farragut St. Bay City, MI 48708 | [REDACTED]

November 27th 2023

City of Ypsilanti
One South Huron St.
Ypsilanti, MI 48197

I am requesting confidentiality as allowable under State law.

Honorable Mayor Brown and City Councilors:

Thank you for taking the time to review my application for the position of City Manager for Ypsilanti. I am excited about the opportunity to contribute my academic background and diverse range of work experience to this role.

My journey in public service began when I was elected as a City Commissioner in Bay City. It was during this time that I realized my passion for public administration, which led me to pursue a master's degree in public administration from Central Michigan University. After completing my degree, I had the privilege of serving as the Interim City Manager for the City of Pinconning. This experience further solidified my passion for municipal management, and I have since been serving as a City Manager for the City of Vassar. These combined experiences as a City Commissioner, student, nonprofit administrator, and City Manager have equipped me with a diverse skill set that I believe would ensure my success in this role.

Throughout my professional career, I have successfully written and submitted numerous grant applications, resulting in approximately \$10 million in funding. My strong communication skills have enabled me to effectively discuss complex public policies with experts while also breaking them down into understandable terms for the average citizen. My diverse work experience has shaped me into a leader who values interpersonal skills and possesses the ability to identify and resolve issues on a daily basis. The fast-paced nature and ever-changing priorities of my previous work have allowed me to develop an organized, flexible, and productive approach when faced with challenges that require strategic and creative solutions.

Serving the public is not merely a job for me; it is my true passion. The practical skills and knowledge I have gained through my professional and academic experiences have prepared me to back up that passion with tangible abilities. I am eager to discuss my qualifications and abilities in greater detail, and I look forward to the opportunity to do so.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

[REDACTED]

Andrew Niedzinski

ANDREW NIEDZINSKI

2313 S. Farragut St. Bay City, MI 48708 | [REDACTED]

Profile

As an elected official I have learned a great deal about how government operates. Due to this, I decided to work toward and completed a Master of Public Administration degree. I am committed to a career in service to others. I have a passion for serving, I strive daily to improve the lives of others.

Career Strengths

Grant writhing | Policy and program development | Budgeting | Labor relations | Strategic Planning
Economic development | Community building | Employee development | Public relations | Customer service

Experience

City Manager

City of Vassar, Vassar, MI — March 2020-Present

- Managed the day-to-day operations of the city, overseeing a \$4,500,000 budget and ensuring effective financial management.
- Planned, coordinated, and directed the operation of City departments and programs, utilizing strategic processes and techniques such as shared service arrangements to improve efficiency and effectiveness.
- Identified and evaluated organizational opportunities, issues, and problems, facilitating strategies to address them in alignment with the City Council's goals and objectives.
- Fostered a culture of cross-functional cooperation, learning, and collaboration within the organization, encouraging initiative and leadership development among staff members.
- Led the budget development process, collaborating with the City Council and department heads to address budgetary concerns and allocate resources in support of the Comprehensive and Strategic Plans. Presented the annual operating budget to the City Council for approval.
- Advised the City Council on matters related to City operations and policies, providing financial updates and recommendations to ensure informed decision-making.
- Presented policy proposals to elected officials, delivering comprehensive and concise communications that offered a range of policy options, potential solutions, and anticipated outcomes.
- Conducted regular evaluations of senior management staff performance, providing coaching and support for their professional development and performance improvement.
- Communicated effectively, both orally and in writing, with customers, the media, the general public, civic groups, and the City Council, addressing concerns, answering questions, and presenting information on programs and initiatives.
- Served as a representative of the City on designated boards, commissions, and committees, as well as a liaison between the City and various stakeholders including civic groups, residents, the media, and government agencies.
- Assumed the role of Zoning Administrator/Community Planner, responsible for implementing, enforcing, interpreting, and further developing the City's Zoning Ordinance. Provided primary administrative and professional staff support for the Plan Commission and Board of Appeals, ensuring compliance with zoning regulations.

Training and Operations Manager

Michigan Workforce Development Institute, Lansing, MI — March 2016-March 2020

- Collaborated with WDI staff to design and implement Industrial Manufacturing Apprentice programs, creating valuable on-the-job training opportunities for our business partners.
- Developed and implemented policies, procedures, and job descriptions, ensuring efficient operations and staff performance evaluation.
- Identified, researched, and composed grant proposals to secure funding from the board of directors and other funding partners.
- Demonstrated commitment to promoting and supporting MIOSHA's mission by ensuring the safety and health of Michigan's workers in manufacturing and residential care facilities through customized consultation, education, and training programs.
- Hold authorization as an OSHA Construction and General Industry Trainer, providing essential safety training to employees. Additionally, served as the recording secretary for the severance board, ensuring accurate documentation of proceedings.

City Commissioner

Bay City, Bay City, MI — November 2013-March 2020

As Commission President, provided effective leadership to a nine-member board, overseeing a wide range of responsibilities and initiatives, including:

- Led the formulation of a strategic plan, ensuring alignment with the long-term goals and vision of the city.
- Played a key role in developing a non-discrimination ordinance, promoting inclusivity and equality within the community.
- Actively participated in the budget development process, collaborating with stakeholders to allocate resources effectively and efficiently.
- Played a crucial role in the establishment of medical and recreational marijuana ordinances, addressing regulatory and legal considerations.
- Conducted interviews and made hiring decisions for two city managers, ensuring the selection of qualified professionals to lead the administration.
- Established and communicated clear goals and objectives for city staff, fostering a results-oriented work environment.
- Demonstrated a commitment to addressing employment and housing issues, advocating for initiatives to enhance opportunities and accessibility.
- Acted as a liaison to the Brownfield Development Authority, Police and Fire Retirement Board, Columbus Avenue Management Board, and Columbus Avenue Citizens District Council, facilitating collaboration and communication between the city and these entities.
- Served as a valued board member of the Bay County Land Bank, contributing to efforts aimed at revitalizing and repurposing vacant or blighted properties.

Interim City Manager

City of Pinconning, Pinconning, MI — July 2017-November 2017

- As the overseer of Pinconning City government's day-to-day operations, I have achieved notable accomplishments including:
- Successfully negotiating two Union Contracts, ensuring fair and mutually beneficial agreements for both employees and the City.

- Led and supervised a comprehensive \$2 million improvement project at the Wastewater Treatment Plant, enhancing its efficiency and functionality.
- Developed and implemented policies and procedures that encompassed essential aspects such as succession planning, job descriptions, evaluations, and training, promoting organizational effectiveness and employee growth.
- Conducted negotiations for a new healthcare plan, resulting in substantial cost savings for the City while maintaining high-quality coverage for employees.

Union Representative

UFCW Local 951, Grand Rapids, MI — July 2014-March 2016

- Demonstrated a strong commitment to developing and maintaining effective worksite leadership by implementing strategies for the recruitment, training, and support of Stewards.
- Collaborated with company leadership to address and resolve issues on behalf of the union membership, fostering a cooperative and productive working environment.
- Possessed a comprehensive understanding of collective bargaining agreements, as well as other pertinent laws, codes, regulations, policies, and practices, and effectively communicated and interpreted these to union members to ensure their rights were protected and understood.
- Provided guidance and support to union members, helping in navigating and understanding their rights within the established frameworks of labor agreements and applicable regulations.

Education

Central Michigan University, Mt. Pleasant, MI — Master of Public Administration, 2017

Saginaw Valley State University, University Center, MI — Bachelor of Arts in Political Science, 2012

Delta College, University Center, MI — Associate of Business Studies General Management, 2009

Michigan State Tax Commission — Michigan Certified Assessing Officer, 2023

Northern Illinois University — OSHA Authorized Instructor Construction Safety, 2016

Organizations

Vassar Rotary Club	March 2020-Present
Vassar Rotary Club President	July 2022-June 2023
Bay County Land Bank Recording Secretary	November 2017-March 2020
Pi Alpha Alpha (Public Administration Honors)	August 2017-Present
MIFACE Advisory Board Member	March 2016-March 2020
Graduate of the Henry Marsh Institute for Public Policy	November 2014
Pi Sigma Alpha (Political Science Honors)	December 2012

Skills

Macintosh Operation Systems | Windows Operating Systems; MS Word, Excel, Access, PowerPoint, Publisher | Michigan VAN, LAN | BS&A | OSHA Authorized Construction Trainer | MCAO

REFERENCES

Professional:

Brian Chapman, City Manager, Sault Ste. Marie

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Missy Guth-Beach, Chief Executive Officer, Workforce Development Institute; Retired

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Jesse Dockett, Information Technology Teacher, Bay Arenac ISD

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Christopher Girard, City Commission President, Bay City

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Jason Brazeau, Mayor City of Pinconning

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

VESTER DAVIS JR.

29 N LaVista Blvd., Battle Creek, Michigan 49015

Cell: [REDACTED]

E-mail: [REDACTED]

Accomplished professional with a demonstrated ability to deliver efficient and effective results. Formally trained in managing non-profit and public agencies, I am highly skilled at facilitating and working collaboratively with local, regional and state officials to evoke positive outcomes. Vester is a team player with strong management and communication skills, including: verbal, written, interpersonal and presentations. Below is an overview of the skill sets that I possess:

- *Project management*
- *Consensus building*
- *Organization and self direction*
- *Life-long learner*
- *Skilled at building partnerships*
- *Adaptive leadership skills with a lead by example and community engagement approach*
- *Creative and innovative problem solver.*
- *Grant management skills.*

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

CITY MANAGER, 2020-PRESENT

City of Springfield, Springfield, Michigan

As City Manager, I ensure all city services are delivered effectively, efficiently, and equitable. I work collaboratively with elected and appointed officials, local non-profit and for-profit agencies, and manages resources to fulfill the desires of the elected body.

Accomplishments:

- Facilitate the planning, organizing, coordinating, and administration of public services.
- Leading the implementation of an equitable spending plan of the city's \$540,000 American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding allocation.
- Implement the city's updated zoning ordinance.
- Guided the policy process for adopting ordinances to regulate adult use marihuana establishments within city limits.
- Leverage the city's annual Calhoun County park millage funds to renew, refresh, and reinvigorate park amenities.

CITY MANAGER, 2018-2020

City of Stanton, Stanton, Michigan

In this role I managed the day-to-day operations of all city services and resources to fulfill the wishes of the elected body.

Accomplishments:

- Manage several roles for the agency including human resources, finance, zoning and planning, and street administration.
- Revised and implemented a new personnel manual, updated the city website including the addition of revamped forms and community information.
- Obtained a \$30,000 grant award from Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) to rehabilitate homes and enhance local parks.
- Obtained a \$300,000 grant award from the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF) for the Veterans Memorial Park Development Project.
- Earned a Michigan State University Extension Citizen Planner Certificate for planning and zoning administration.

- Initiated a new approach to the city's blight elimination program.

ASSISTANT TO THE CITY MANAGER, 2014-2018

City of Grand Haven, Grand Haven, Michigan

The Assistant to the City Manager is a member of the executive staff for this full-service city. As such, the Assistant to the City Manager supports the City Manager and other departments in the daily functions of all city services. In the manager's absence, assumed all responsibilities of that office.

Accomplishments:

- Assigned the role of grant management specialist. To date, I have secured and managed more than \$ 3.5 million in federal, state and local grant funds for infrastructure and recreation improvements.
- Provided property management for all city-owned properties (20) on lease or license agreements.
- Implemented an employee recognition program for all city employees.
- Led the City through the Michigan Economic Development Corporation's Redevelopment Ready Communities Program®.
- Served as Community Development Manager and Zoning Administrator.
- Prepared meeting minutes, staff reports and made recommendations to various Boards and Commissions.

EDUCATION

Master of Public Administration, Grand Valley State University (GVSU), School of Public, Nonprofit and Health Management

- Dean's List recognition
- Served on the Young Alumni Council
- Annual GVSU Community Outreach Volunteer

Bachelor of Science, Grand Valley State University, School of Public, Nonprofit and Health Management

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS AND ASSOCIATIONS

- International City/County Management Association (ICMA), 2012 – Present
- Michigan Municipal Executives, 2014 (MME) – Present
- Michigan Municipal league – Professional Development Committee, Committee Member, 2016-2022
- Michigan Municipal League – Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee, Committee Member, 2022-Present
- Stanton Rotary member, 2018-2020
- Michigan Infrastructure Commission (MIC), Participant
- City of Battle Creek Airport Board, Board Member, 2022-Present
- Calhoun County Economic Development Corporation, Board Member, 2022-Present