



Approved

**CITY OF YPSILANTI
SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS – ONE SOUTH HURON ST.
YPSILANTI, MI 48197
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2016
8:00 a.m.**

I. CALL TO ORDER –

The meeting was called to order at 8:07 a.m.

II. ROLL CALL –

Council Member Bashert	Present	Council Member Robb	Present
Mayor Pro-Tem Brown	Present	Council Member Vogt	(8:28) Present
Council Member Murdock	Present	Mayor Edmonds	Present
Council Member Richardson	Present		

III. INVOCATION –

Mayor Edmonds asked all to stand for a moment of silence.

IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE –

"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."

V. INTRODUCTIONS –

VI. AGENDA APPROVAL –

Council Member Murdock moved, seconded by Council Member Bashert, to approve the agenda.

On a voice vote, the motion carried, and the agenda was approved as submitted.

VII. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION –

None

VIII. REMARKS BY THE MAYOR –

None

IX. MICHIGAN MUNICIPAL LEAGUE INTRODUCTION –

Kathie Grinzing, MML, informed Council of what documents they have and explained their use. She asked not to compare the candidates to each other rather base your selection on how closely a candidate fits the profile Council developed.

Council Member Murdock asked to include the following; "given the recent election, how would you approach protecting vulnerable communities in the City". Ms. Guzzinger responded that is similar to question eighteen which highlights social equity and could be a follow-up to that question. Mr. Murdock added he wants the applicants to know only 12.4% of the City's population voted for the Republican Presidential Candidate, and Ypsilanti does not reflect the population that did. Ms. Guzzinger formed the question as "we are expecting major policy changes in the next four years and how would you protect vulnerable populations".

X. CITY MANAGER INTERVIEWS -

1. 8:30 a.m. – Darwin McClary

Why you to want to be the city manager in Ypsilanti and what particular skills, experience or talents do you possess that will make your tenure here successful?

Darwin McClary responded his husband is from the City and Ypsilanti is progressive, rich in history, and the pride the citizens of Ypsilanti take in their community. He stated he understands the City is financially stressed but he has worked in three financially stressed communities and has 20 twenty years of experience.

From your resume, it appears you have a career filled with accomplishments. Tell us about two of which you are most proud.

Mr. McClary responded while he was employed by Eastpointe he oversaw the construction of a \$5 million structure to move City Hall operation to. He said he also helped create a Human Rights Ordinance and added a leader must also discuss issues with those who disagree with your position on a topic

If offered the position of City Manager in Ypsilanti how will you go about getting to know the community?

Mr. McClary replied he would hold a town hall meeting in each Ward with the Council Members of that ward and meet with the business owners.

Have you ever been terminated, asked to resign or had a contract not renewed? Tell us about that.

Mr. McClary responded in the affirmative and explained the communities he was terminated from were financially stressed resulting from a drop in property value and had fallen into political turmoil. He said he provided difficult options and ultimately took the fall as a result.

What is the biggest error or mistake you have made in your professional life? What did you learn from that experience and how would you approach it now?

Mr. McClary responded we are all human and make mistakes and cited a time while employed by Garden City a council member was unhappy that a Middle Eastern family purchased a home in their neighborhood. He said the Council Member made the hurtful comments publically and he wished he had contacted the Council Member to persuade them to see things differently.

When we call on the folks who have worked with you over the years, what will they tell us about you? Will your employees use different words to describe you than your bosses or elected officials will?

Mr. McClary replied Councils he has worked with would describe him as a policy and procedural driven manager while past employees would describe him of having a good sense of humor, he does not see himself as above anyone, and he is very collaborative.

When hiring a new department director to join and strengthen your team, what characteristics and/or attributes are you looking for and why?

Mr. McClary replied someone that possesses the skills and knowledge to be successful. He added a Department Director would need to be innovative, able to build trust, hold a belief of diversity and inclusion, and be a supporter of continuous learning and training.

If that new team member was the Assistant or Deputy City Manager and your chief administrative partner how would the profile be altered?

Mr. McClary replied his ideal Deputy would have a well-rounded background in City Management and have more honed skills in areas that he was lacking.

Are you more of a leader or a manager? Describe for me how that descriptor informs the kind of administrator you are.

Mr. McClary responded a little of both. He said he is a leader in creating a collaborative environment built on trust however that process must be managed.

What approach do you use to get the highest level of performance excellence from your staff?

Mr. McClary responded he believes in 360 degree evaluation. He described this process by the manager evaluates the staff and the staff evaluates the manager. He said this process helps to motivate employees and let them know they are important.

Ypsilanti has pared staffing down to a lean profile. With such a roster, timely and shared communication efforts between employees; between city hall and residents and between all stakeholders and the Council could be overlooked when it is most critical. What are your strategies to ensure accurate information flows between all parties?

Mr. McClary responded he would create an environment that allows for open communication, and Council has the right to know what is happening at City Hall.

How would you create that environment?

Mr. McClary replied by living it each day and leading by example until that culture is created.

Can you describe your personal "code of values" and/or ethical standards for us? Tell us about a time when you were confronted with an ethical challenge and had to rely on those standards as a municipal executive. How did you handle the situation and what would you do differently now, if anything?

Mr. McClary replied he believes very strongly the City Manager is responsible for the public trust and integrity should never be compromised and he would expect the same from City Council.

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What will your first three months look like in Ypsilanti?

Mr. McClary responded he would meet with Council to understand what its expectations are. He said he would meet with City staff and Department Heads to assess budgetary issues and other strengths and weaknesses of the City and difficult decisions will have to be made. He said he would also speak with citizens and those in the business community. He explained establishing working relationships early will assist in setting the direction of management. He added he would institute new technology to the community and move toward improving technological systems and integrate those systems.

From what you have learned about us, what do think our two biggest challenges will be in the next three years? How would you tackle them and what processes will you follow?

Mr. McClary responded financial and personnel issues. He said it is the perception of some community members Ypsilanti is not taking a leadership role in regional issues. He added there is also a perception of division and segregation in the City and said even if it is only a perception the City must make changes necessary to improve the perception.

We are realistic about a number of issues we must face. Which concern did you uncover in your research that will cause you the most difficulty...*what are you least prepared to tackle...*and how will you increase your odds of success?

Mr. McClary replied he would employee a generalist focus and relay on Department Head expertise in their areas. He stated he had not worked in brownfield redevelopment but does have experience with other styles of tax increment financing. He added the City is currently facing \$22 million in Water Street debt and would require each lot to produce \$2 million in tax revenue in order to pay down that debt.

Every community in Michigan has faced severe financial difficulties over the last decade. When you reviewed our budget, what did you see? And... What are you bringing to the table that will help us meet and manage the challenges we may face?

Mr. McClary stated the City is facing a structural problem and is not operating at a deficit rather a budget shortfall. He said currently the City is drawing from revenues, which is not sustainable and the City must identify possible cuts and revenue enhancements. He said if changes are not made in two to three years the City will be facing serious problems.

What experiences have you had in securing and administering alternative project funding like grants; sponsorships, or private funds? And, looking at the state and federal landscape going forward, what projects and external funding streams would you suggest pursuing here?

Mr. McClary stated he has much experience with applying for grants such as; environmental, transportation alternative program, and several others. He said he has worked closely with the Michigan Economic Development corporations but to be realistic there aren't many Community Development Block Grants available.

Finding solutions to community issues in a conflictive atmosphere can be difficult. Tell us about one of those times you lived through and walk us through the problem solving steps you used.

Mr. McClary stated in a past position a public safety millage was brought to referendum and he met with citizens and questions he was asked were insightful and some people's minds were changed. He added communication is the best tool.

Tell us about your experience with public unions and explain how you would approach negotiations to assure a solid working relationship with employees after the agreement was inked?

Mr. McClary explained he is a pro-union manager and has had a great working relationship with past unions he has worked with. He said it is important the manager sits down with employees and discuss what can and cannot be done with collective bargaining strategies. He added the goal is to avoid arbitration which can take several months to negotiate.

Experts tout the necessity of triple bottom line planning or the three legged stool of environmental protection, economic development and social equity to make local governments sustainable. What efforts in environmental sustainability or social equity have you instituted or would suggest for us to affect Ypsilanti's triple bottom line?

Mr. McClary responded a strong community would employ all three. He said at a past job he was instrumental in passing a coal tar ordinance and mentioned that Ypsilanti is on the cutting edge for solar power. He said there is still a long way to go in improving social equity but it must be ensured that all people have equal opportunities and protection.

We are expecting major policy changes in the next four years and how do you expect to protect vulnerable populations?

Mr. McClary responded he would create an environment of inclusion, which Ypsilanti already possess a strong message of inclusion. He added it is a matter of everyone having equal rights.

What intergovernmental, regional cooperation or partnership efforts have you championed in the past? While you tell us about those endeavors can you highlight how you brought people together and how you measured the success of the resultant agreement?

Mr. McClary responded communication is the key to overcoming hurdles of regional cooperation. He said while employed in Garden City he reached out to the City of Wayne and the City of Inkster to attempt to consolidate the district courts into one facility to create greater efficiency and cost effectiveness. A great deal of time was spent by stakeholders discussing the issue. Unfortunately, the attempt failed; however, he has worked with other communities to jointly provide dispatch services as well as equipment sharing.

The Rotary club would like to meet you and have you explain how the Council/Manager form of local government is supposed to work. Give us the highlights of that presentation. Include remarks about your philosophy as well as what a council should expect from a city manager and what a manager should expect from the elected officials?

Mr. McClary responded stated a City Manager monitors daily operations and ensures the departments are all moving toward the goals set by City Council.

What tools and techniques have you used to keep the community informed and engaged with what is going on in their local government? Once you have told us what has worked for you in other places, what would you recommend for us here in Ypsilanti?

Mr. McClary responded he would use social media, website, and other interactive components to make it convenient to work with City Government. He added he likes "Ypsi Connect" but the City would do a better job of responding to complaints. He stated he would have the system set up so he would receive an email each time a complaint was filed so he could follow-up with the person.

Fit between a community and manager goes both ways. What do you need to know about a community to determine whether you have found the right place to work?

Mr. McClary responded he already knows a great deal about the community and mentioned his husband is from the City but he would like to know more about the relationships with neighboring governments.

Mr. McClary asked what Council would like to see in a City Manager. Mayor Edmonds responded to find solutions for the state of the City's finances, build and unify on a strong staff team, improve both internal and external communications, encourage transparency of both good and bad happenings in the City, and successfully negotiate union contracts.

2. 10:00 a.m. – Gerald Smith

Why you to want to be the city manager in Ypsilanti and what particular skills, experience or talents do you possess that will make your tenure here successful?

Mr. Smith responded he has a set of skills that would be useful that would be beneficial to the community. He was born and raised in the Midwest and has spent his entire career in the Midwest, which makes Ypsilanti appealing to him.

From your resume, it appears you have a career filled with accomplishments. Tell us about two of which you are most proud.

If offered the position of City Manager in Ypsilanti how will you go about getting to know the community?

Mr. Smith replied he would employ an open door policy, reach out to Council as well as citizens to discuss his management style.

Have you ever been terminated, asked to resign or had a contract not renewed? Tell us about that.

Mr. Smith responded he had never been terminated however; he stepped down from a position because a Council was taking a new direction and he was advised not to move his family. He added he stepped down from another position because the community was not a good fit for his family. He added his children are now all grown and that would no longer be an issue.

What is the biggest error or mistake you have made in your professional life? What did you learn from that experience and how would you approach it now?

Mr. Smith responded his biggest error was accepting his first City Manager job in North Chicago. He stated the FBI found issue with Council and Council was told to change its form of government.

When we call on the folks who have worked with you over the years, what will they tell us about you? Will your employees use different words to describe you than your bosses or elected officials will?

Mr. Smith replied the response would be the same that he is an open, collaborative, has goals to develop and improve any organization he is a part of, and is fair.

When hiring a new department director to join and strengthen your team, what characteristics and/or attributes are you looking for and why?

Mr. Smith responded he would search for individuals who would fit into an open collaborative environment and an open communicator to ensure all information filtered up.

If that new team member was the Assistant or Deputy City Manager and your chief administrative partner how would the profile be altered?

Mr. Smith replied a Deputy would need to be able to take over certain aspects of the City Manager's office such as Human Resources and ensure the City is compliant with all State and Federal Laws.

Are you more of a leader or a manager? Describe for me how that descriptor informs the kind of administrator you are.

Mr. Smith replied he is both, a manager and a mentor. He said he would meet with department heads as a group weekly and individual department heads biweekly to ensure that institutional goals set by Council are completed.

Ypsilanti has pared staffing down to a lean profile. With such a roster, timely and shared communication efforts between employees; between city hall and residents and between all stakeholders and the Council could be overlooked when it is most critical. What are your strategies to ensure accurate information flows between all parties?

Mr. Smith responded he would hold Department Heads responsible to report information to him and he would report to Council. He said distribution of information would occur weekly with transparency and keeping Council informed as the goal. He added he would be available to individual Council Members as needed as long as it did not violate law.

Can you describe your personal "code of values" and/or ethical standards for us? Tell us about a time when you were confronted with an ethical challenge and had to rely on those standards as a municipal executive. How did you handle the situation and what would you do differently now, if anything?

Mr. Smith responded he holds himself to a code of conduct and would work within the confines of the City Manager position. He added he would consistently be attentive to upholding a positive image to the community.

What will your first three months look like in Ypsilanti?

Mr. Smith responded getting to know Council, working with staff and understanding what direction they wish to take, and getting to know citizens and the business community.

From what you have learned about us, what do think our two biggest challenges will be in the next three years? How would you tackle them and what processes will you follow?

Mr. Smith stated Water Street is the biggest issue facing the City and the greatest challenge is to create additional revenue and be realistic in the solutions. He said the City should have had an alternative plan in place along with the debt millage. He stated he would have presented a list of alternative plans Council could have selected. He explained staff levels are also an issue and there has been a drop from 137, in 2003, to 90.

Every community in Michigan has faced severe financial difficulties over the last decade. When you reviewed our budget, what did you see? And... What are you bringing to the table that will help us meet and manage the challenges we may face?

Mr. Smith responded solutions to solve organizational issues, manpower issues, solutions to address the City's debt.

What experiences have you had in securing and administering alternative project funding like grants; sponsorships, or private funds? And, looking at the state and federal landscape going forward, what projects and external funding streams would you suggest pursuing here?

Mr. Smith responded any and all, both state a federal. He said in a previous position he was tasked with monitoring all grants awarded to that organization. He said it will be in the City's best interest to monitor all facilities and maintain them in good order to avoid more costly rehabilitation efforts.

Finding solutions to community issues in a conflictive atmosphere can be difficult. Tell us about one of those times you lived through and walk us through the problem solving steps you used.

Mr. Smith explained while employed in Kansas City, which was a big City with a small city mentality causing a rift when expansions were needed. He said his responsibility was to maintain contracts and to ensure all jobs were completed, and build community confidence in the projects.

Community and economic development can take many forms. As you review Ypsilanti's needs, resources and personality what philosophy, strategy or approach might you suggest for us and what steps do you suggest we take first?

Mr. Smith replied there are a lot of strategies available however, not every strategy is appropriate for different situations. Mr. Smith explained while he was employed by Junction City uncontrolled growth became an issue. He stated this problem created a situation in which part of the City was subsidizing another section, this was not an equitable solution and did not create revenue for the City.

Tell us about your experience with public unions and explain how you would approach negotiations to assure a solid working relationship with employees after the agreement was inked?

Mr. Smith responded he has worked as chief negotiator in past position and in order to be effective good relationship with the collective bargaining must be maintained. He added he has fifteen years of experience in labor negotiations and understands how mutually beneficial terms can be developed.

Experts tout the necessity of triple bottom line planning or the three legged stool of environmental protection, economic development and social equity to make local governments sustainable. What efforts in environmental sustainability or social equity have you instituted or would suggest for us to affect Ypsilanti's triple bottom line?

Mr. Smith responded he would research and find any initiatives to benefit the community. He explained at a previous position accommodated electric cars by installing electric car refueling station. He said grant funds are available to fund these types of project.

We are expecting major policy changes in the next four years and how do you expect to protect vulnerable populations?

Mr. Smith replied we would look to Council for guidance and examine the possibility of sanctuary cities.

What intergovernmental, regional cooperation or partnership efforts have you championed in the past? While you tell us about those endeavors can you highlight how you brought people together and how you measured the success of the resultant agreement?

Mr. Smith responded stated a community he worked at was having an issue with staffing police dispatch. He said the dispatch personnel would be trained by his jurisdiction and then would leave to work for a more affluent community. He stated a regional partnership was formed that would be mutually beneficial for all involved.

The Rotary club would like to meet you and have you explain how the Council/Manager form of local government is supposed to work. Give us the highlights of that presentation. Include remarks about your philosophy as well as what a council should expect from a city manager and what a manager should expect from the elected officials?

Mr. Smith replied the Council/Manager form provides professional management with solid experience. He said a manager keeps council informed and acts as a point of access to the public.

Tell me a story about an employee you worked with of whom you are most proud. What happened to get him or her there?

Mr. Smith said he hired a procurement manager and the professionalism that person brought was exemplary.

What tools and techniques have you used to keep the community informed and engaged with what is going on in their local government? Once you have told us what has worked for you in other places, what would you recommend for us here in Ypsilanti?

Mr. Smith responded he uses balancing, benchmarking and performance measures and disseminates that information to the public.

Fit between a community and manager goes both ways. What do you need to know about a community to determine whether you have found the right place to work?

Mr. Smith replied whether or not the community is progressive and engaging. He added a community that appreciates the City and volunteers.

3. 11:30 a.m. – Paul Brake

Why you to want to be the city manager in Ypsilanti and what particular skills, experience or talents do you possess that will make your tenure here successful?

Mr. Brake responded he enjoys that Ypsilanti is a university town and in a transitional period. He stated he has had twenty years of experience working in government. He added while working for Grand Blanc he was able to complete a project that sat idle for eight years and while employed with Meridian Township he acted as chief negotiator through contract negotiations.

From your resume, it appears you have a career filled with accomplishments. Tell us about two of which you are most proud.

Mr. Brake responded he is most proud of the brownfield redevelopment of a former gas station. He said a developer wanted to back out of the project but he refused to take no for an answer and was able to complete the project.

If offered the position of City Manager in Ypsilanti how will you go about getting to know the community?

Mr. Brake responded he would hold "one on one" meetings. He stated he has already spoken with several stakeholders in the City and would also like to speak with the neighborhood associations to understand what they want from their City.

Have you ever been terminated, asked to resign or had a contract not renewed? Tell us about that.

Mr. Brake responded he had not been fired from any position but while working for a private company his position was eliminated.

What is the biggest error or mistake you have made in your professional life? What did you learn from that experience and how would you approach it now?

Mr. Brake responded there was a data error on a spreadsheet for an important project but he was able to identify the error before any harm was done.

When we call on the folks who have worked with you over the years, what will they tell us about you? Will your employees use different words to describe you than your bosses or elected officials will?

Mr. Brake responded past employees would say that he had a consistent message; he was respectful, loyal, calm, open-minded, and imaginative.

When hiring a new department director to join and strengthen your team, what characteristics and/or attributes are you looking for and why?

Mr. Brake responded he would search for an individual that has passion, drive, and determination. He said he would want that person to work well in a group with excellent communication skills, and willing to take measured risks. He would want someone who contrasts himself and challenge him.

Are you more of a leader or a manager? Describe for me how that descriptor informs the kind of administrator you are.

Mr. Brake responded he is a servant leader and would enable his department heads to thrive and find answers on their own.

Ypsilanti has pared staffing down to a lean profile. With such a roster, timely and shared communication efforts between employees; between city hall and residents and between all stakeholders and the Council could be overlooked when it is most critical. What are your strategies to ensure accurate information flows between all parties?

Mr. Brake responded there can never be too much communication, and he would provide detail explanation to all involved until they are comfortable with the decision.

Can you describe your personal "code of values" and/or ethical standards for us? Tell us about a time when you were confronted with an ethical challenge and had to rely on those standards as a municipal executive. How did you handle the situation and what would you do differently now, if anything?

Mr. Brake responded he belongs to the International Council of Manager, which follow a certain code of ethics. He added it is important to be impartial and provide good info to those needing to make the decisions.

What will your first three months look like in Ypsilanti?

Mr. Brake responded he would get to know Council as well as other internal and external stakeholders. He said he would also begin to understand the personnel on staff and understanding the City's financials and upcoming contracts.

From what you have learned about us, what do think our two biggest challenges will be in the next three years? How would you tackle them and what processes will you follow?

Mr. Brake responded financial issues and sustainability. He said he would examine all potential revenues and strengthen dialogue with the community.

What experiences have you had in securing and administering alternative project funding like grants; sponsorships, or private funds? And, looking at the state and federal landscape going forward, what projects and external funding streams would you suggest pursuing here?

Mr. Brake stated he has written several grant applications securing \$1.8 million in alternate funding which had the ability to leverage further partnerships. He added other creative ideas should be researched and look outside traditional avenues.

Finding solutions to community issues in a conflictive atmosphere can be difficult. Tell us about one of those times you lived through and walk us through the problem solving steps you used.

Mr. Brake responded legacy costs involving pensions was not sustainable in a community he worked. He said it was a difficult process to navigate through, however, at the end those in the system were able to stay whole.

Community and economic development can take many forms. As you review Ypsilanti's needs, resources and personality what philosophy, strategy or approach might you suggest for us and what steps do you suggest we take first?

Mr. Brake responded the City would need to maximize its resources and relationships with stakeholders. He said the City would need to leverage funds from the County, the Eastern Leaders Group (ELG). He added the City would also need to tap the Convention and Visitors Bureau and the business community.

Tell us about your experience with public unions and explain how you would approach negotiations to assure a solid working relationship with employees after the agreement was inked?

Mr. Brake responded he has worked with eight bargaining units and the most valuable tool is trust. He said it has always been his goal to have contracts complete before the current ones expire. He added it is important to be honest and open with employees during that difficult process.

Experts tout the necessity of triple bottom line planning or the three legged stool of environmental protection, economic development and social equity to make local governments sustainable. What efforts in environmental sustainability or social equity have you instituted or would suggest for us to affect Ypsilanti's triple bottom line?

Mr. Brake responded he is attuned to respect the environment and strategies of sustainability. Concerning social justice it is important to be respectful and dignified to all people.

We are expecting major policy changes in the next four years and how do you expect to protect vulnerable populations?

Mr. Brake responded to be a leader and take the high road. Have community dialogue and make certain people understand their rights. He mentioned smart policing and creating higher confidence in the city.

Mr. Brake replied the answer is to be a leader and take the high road. He said it is important to keep an open dialogue with the community and be certain people are aware of their rights. He added having smart policing and be able to identify issues and go above and beyond to create greater confidence.

The Rotary club would like to meet you and have you explain how the Council/Manager form of local government is supposed to work. Give us the highlights of that presentation. Include remarks about your philosophy as well as what a council should expect from a city manager and what a manager should expect from the elected officials?

Mr. Brake responded he would explain the dichotomy and administration between the two and describe what the Council can expect from a manager.

What tools or techniques do you use to ensure the Council is always well-prepared to make the best possible decisions?

Mr. Brake replied individuals receive information differently and he would want sufficient time to prepare, however, make that timeframe reasonable.

Tell me a story about an employee you worked with of whom you are most proud. What happened to get him or her there?

Mr. Brake responded in a past position he employed a Deputy Manager who was to grow into a position of higher responsibility. He said he encouraged her and she is now currently the City manager in that community.

What tools and techniques have you used to keep the community informed and engaged with what is going on in their local government? Once you have told us what has worked for you in other places, what would you recommend for us here in Ypsilanti?

Mr. Brake replied he would use social media to help keep the community informed and try to stay ahead of any rumors that might spread. He said he would provide as much information to the public to cultivate a relationship of trust.

Fit between a community and manager goes both ways. What do you need to know about a community to determine whether you have found the right place to work?

Mr. Brake replied the individuals he spoke with in the community provided insight into the community. He asked Council what has motivated them to be leaders in the community.

Mayor Edmonds responded she is passionate about Ypsilanti as an underdog community that has so much to offer. She would like to help the City develop economically and build upon the diversity present in the City. Council Member Richardson said she does not see the City as an underdog and her tagline for the City is "Ypsilanti is the best kept secret in Southeast Michigan".

2. 1:00 p.m. – Council Break

3. 1:30 p.m. – Daniel Elsass

Why you to want to be the city manager in Ypsilanti and what particular skills, experience or talents do you possess that will make your tenure here successful?

Mr. Elsass responded he has family ties to Ypsilanti. He said he has eighteen years of experience at the municipal and county level and has vast human resource skills. He said he has worked in communities from 10,000 to 25,000 in population.

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From your resume, it appears you have a career filled with accomplishments. Tell us about two of which you are most proud.

Mr. Elsass responded a two year project studying best practices of local government regional service mergers such as police, fire, waste and water treatment, libraries, and other services. When he worked for Chippewa Falls he was able to finance expansion of technological infrastructure to assist small business to access internet.

If offered the position of City Manager in Ypsilanti how will you go about getting to know the community?

Mr. Elsass stated he would join various organizations in the community such as the Rotary Club, attend social forums, church events. He added he would make his phone number available to the public and always hold an open door policy.

Have you ever been terminated, asked to resign or had a contract not renewed? Tell us about that.

Mr. Elsass responded he once had a contract not renewed. He explained he was operating on a two year contract and there was a major change in Council and that Council decided to not renew his contract.

What is the biggest error or mistake you have made in your professional life? What did you learn from that experience and how would you approach it now?

Mr. Elsass responded he advocated for the installation of sidewalks for collector streets in a rural area and Council did not agree with his stance. He said he would have not done anything differently and would still advocate for the installation of sidewalks in that area today. He added he also pushed to have a library in a rural area and that failed by 85% in a vote by the public.

When we call on the folks who have worked with you over the years, what will they tell us about you? Will your employees use different words to describe you than your bosses or elected officials will?

Mr. Elsass stated he is fair and even handed and he has always had a good relationship with employees. He added he has always pushed for wellness and safety but in order to be successful it requires employee buy-in. When hiring a new department director to join and strengthen your team, what characteristics and/or attributes are you looking for and why?

Mr. Elsass replied at a past job he had to build a staff from scratch so he has extensive experience in recruitment. He hired a younger person to act as the head of public works and engineering and that person has stayed for twenty years at that position. He added he stresses the importance of employee retention.

Are you more of a leader or a manager? Describe for me how that descriptor informs the kind of administrator you are.

Mr. Elsass responded he views the question as steering versus rowing. He said he believes the heavy lifting should come from the department heads and the manager should "steer" so that all have the same overall goal. He added he does not believe in micro-managing as an effective management style.

Ypsilanti has pared staffing down to a lean profile. With such a roster, timely and shared communication efforts between employees; between city hall and residents and between all stakeholders and the Council could be overlooked when it is most critical. What are your strategies to ensure accurate information flows between all parties?

Mr. Elsass responded Council relations and public relations are essential to the success of a city manager. He added he would employ several methods of disseminating information; City website, newsletters, and text alerts, and he would provide a manager's report at each Council meeting.

Can you describe your personal "code of values" and/or ethical standards for us? Tell us about a time when you were confronted with an ethical challenge and had to rely on those standards as a municipal executive. How did you handle the situation and what would you do differently now, if anything?

Mr. Elsass responded he is a Methodist and his religious views act as his code of ethics. He added he is also a member of the Society of Human Resources Managers which also follows a code of ethics.

What will your first three months look like in Ypsilanti?

Mr. Elsass replied the first three months will contain a portion of learning and listening. He stated he would tour all of the City's facilities and begin to understand staff and fiscal issues.

From what you have learned about us, what do think our two biggest challenges will be in the next three years? How would you tackle them and what processes will you follow?

Mr. Elsass responded the City is having financial issues with an operational fund of around \$15 million which now is the time to hold the line and keeping that from decreasing further. He said the Water Street development needs to begin creating revenue. He stated further testing needs to be completed and remediation completed to make the site shovel ready.

What experiences have you had in securing and administering alternative project funding like grants; sponsorships, or private funds? And, looking at the state and federal landscape going forward, what projects and external funding streams would you suggest pursuing here?

Mr. Elsass stated he has experience with EPA grants and other superfund possibilities.

Finding solutions to community issues in a conflictive atmosphere can be difficult. Tell us about one of those times you lived through and walk us through the problem solving steps you used.

Mr. Elsass responded he has had experience in conflict with issues such as creating group homes, installation of sidewalks, and garbage pick-up. He said it is important to work positively with the state and local officials.

Tell us about your experience with public unions and explain how you would approach negotiations to assure a solid working relationship with employees after the agreement was inked?

Mr. Elsass responded he has worked as a chief negotiator and with labor attorneys in the past. He said he feels it is important to remove the mayor from negotiations and take the final decision to council for approval. He added it is important to have negotiations complete before the current contract expires.

Experts tout the necessity of triple bottom line planning or the three legged stool of environmental protection, economic development and social equity to make local governments sustainable. What efforts in environmental sustainability or social equity have you instituted or would suggest for us to affect Ypsilanti's triple bottom line?

Mr. Elsass responded sustainability can be both fiscal and environmental. He has assisted in the formation of the first curbside recycling program and was instrumental in using recycled plastic for high density park benches in previous positions. He helped to increase retention and detention ponds and has used finding to have rain barrels retrofitted to city facilities. He supports social investment and has been an advocate for needs of senior citizens, the arts, and homeless issues.

We are expecting major policy changes in the next four years and how do you expect to protect vulnerable populations?

Mr. Elsass responded he would promote equal access to all residents, however, he believes it would be more the duty of the Mayor and Council to make resolutions to protect citizens throughout the community.

What intergovernmental, regional cooperation or partnership efforts have you championed in the past? While you tell us about those endeavors can you highlight how you brought people together and how you measured the success of the resultant agreement?

Mr. Elsass replied since state aid has been cut regionalization has been the salvation of local governments. He said it is important to work with Ann Arbor, the townships, and Eastern Michigan University and negotiate mutually beneficial agreements. He added the City should tap all local universities for the possibility of interns from the Public Administration Department.

What tools and techniques have you used to keep the community informed and engaged with what is going on in their local government? Once you have told us what has worked for you in other places, what would you recommend for us here in Ypsilanti?

Mr. Elsass replied the use of the City website, newsletter, emergency text, and cable television.

Fit between a community and manager goes both ways. What do you need to know about a community to determine whether you have found the right place to work?

Mr. Elsass responded he is interested in the diversity of the community and the challenges currently facing the City would allow him to be creative in search for solutions.

Mr. Elsass asked where the City receives its water.

Mayor Edmonds responded water and sewer comes from the Ypsilanti Communities Utilities Authority which flows from Lake St. Clair. Council Member Murdock stated the City's water is provided by an authority servicing Ypsilanti and the Township.

Mr. Elsass asked about the bus system.

Mayor Edmonds responded the Ann Arbor Area Transit Authority based in Ann Arbor and the City pays into the program as well as other communities for the service.

Mr. Elsass asked about the City's relationship with the County and Ann Arbor.

Mayor Edmonds responded there are 28 units of local government in the County and a few between the City and Ann Arbor. Much of her role is sitting on County bodies and Council takes turns sitting on those boards. She added there is not much logistical overlap with Ann Arbor more shared countywide leadership.

4. 3:00 p.m. – Louis Starks

Why you to want to be the city manager in Ypsilanti and what particular skills, experience or talents do you possess that will make your tenure here successful?

Mr. Starks responded Ypsilanti has tremendous potential with the university providing a very strong asset. He is a strong generalist with a broad based background in economic development. He added effective communication and team building skills.

From your resume, it appears you have a career filled with accomplishments. Tell us about two of which you are most proud.

Mr. Starks replied during his tenure at the Detroit Land Bank he was able to create positive change in the landscape and real estate of Detroit. He was able to secure EPA clean-up grant for a brownfield redevelopment in Waterloo.

If offered the position of City Manager in Ypsilanti how will you go about getting to know the community?

Mr. Starks responded get out in the community because it is extremely important for the City Manager to be visible. He would keep an open door policy with a humble yet confident approach.

Have you ever been terminated, asked to resign or had a contract not renewed? Tell us about that.

Mr. Starks responded he has never been terminated from a position and has always been blessed with opportunity.

What is the biggest error or mistake you have made in your professional life? What did you learn from that experience and how would you approach it now?

Mr. Starks replied he believes in humility, accountability, and ownership. He once said things he regrets working with a project philanthropist who wished to upgrade a library and a recreation center. He miscalculated how people would perceive outsiders and should have taken a grass roots approach.

When we call on the folks who have worked with you over the years, what will they tell us about you? Will your employees use different words to describe you than your bosses or elected officials will?

Mr. Starks responded people would describe him as smart, hardworking, inspirational, and tactful.

When hiring a new department director to join and strengthen your team, what characteristics and/or attributes are you looking for and why?

Mr. Starks responded people who are confident and capable but not to a degree that might be off-putting to the public, or other employees.

If that new team member was the Assistant or Deputy City Manager and your chief administrative partner how would the profile be altered?

Mr. Starks replied that person would need to have a strong technological understanding, expertise in economic development, and effective in the collective bargaining.

Are you more of a leader or a manager? Describe for me how that descriptor informs the kind of administrator you are.

Mr. Starks responded a leader you uses intellectual competency to empower those around him.

Ypsilanti has pared staffing down to a lean profile. With such a roster, timely and shared communication efforts between employees; between city hall and residents and between all stakeholders and the Council could be overlooked when it is most critical. What are your strategies to ensure accurate information flows between all parties?

Mr. Starks replied active engagement in the community and an open door policy.

Can you describe your personal "code of values" and/or ethical standards for us? Tell us about a time when you were confronted with an ethical challenge and had to rely on those standards as a municipal executive. How did you handle the situation and what would you do differently now, if anything?

Mr. Starks responded a strong work ethic and be as transparent as possible so the community is aware of his ethical standards.

What will your first three months look like in Ypsilanti?

Mr. Starks replied focusing on the downtown, business and brownfield development, grant possibilities, engaging in the community, learn as much as possible about the collective bargaining units in the City, and get to know the leadership.

From what you have learned about us, what do think our two biggest challenges will be in the next three years? How would you tackle them and what processes will you follow?

Mr. Starks responded brownfield development. The City might have to work regionally, possibly filing joint grant applications with surrounding jurisdictions. He said business attraction is another issue and the City will need a consistent message to build its image.

Every community in Michigan has faced severe financial difficulties over the last decade. When you reviewed our budget, what did you see? And... What are you bringing to the table that will help us meet and manage the challenges we may face?

Mr. Starks replied an erosion of tax base and the perception of Ypsilanti affecting development. The City will need to attract residents and possible use underutilized buildings as incubators.

What experiences have you had in securing and administering alternative project funding like grants; sponsorships, or private funds? And, looking at the state and federal landscape going forward, what projects and external funding streams would you suggest pursuing here?

Mr. Starks responded he has experience leveraging funding from the EPA, HUD, and the Department of Commerce. He was once employed as a contracts and grants coordinator.

Finding solutions to community issues in a conflictive atmosphere can be difficult. Tell us about one of those times you lived through and walk us through the problem solving steps you used.

Mr. Starks responded having a sense of humor and thick skin and being an excellent listener.

Community and economic development can take many forms. As you review Ypsilanti's needs, resources and personality what philosophy, strategy or approach might you suggest for us and what steps do you suggest we take first?

Mr. Starks replied examining possible Economic Development Corporations exist in the area.

Mayor Edmonds stated there is not currently an Economic Development Corporation in the area. Mr. Starks replied there should be.

Tell us about your experience with public unions and explain how you would approach negotiations to assure a solid working relationship with employees after the agreement was inked?

Mr. Starks responded he was somewhat responsible for personnel while he was employed as an assistant administrator.

Experts tout the necessity of triple bottom line planning or the three legged stool of environmental protection, economic development and social equity to make local governments sustainable. What efforts in environmental sustainability or social equity have you instituted or would suggest for us to affect Ypsilanti's triple bottom line?

Mr. Starks replied he would work with HUD to provide funding. He believes in a municipality being as green as possible and there is money to be made in green business.

We are expecting major policy changes in the next four years and how do you expect to protect vulnerable populations?

Mr. Starks replied people will need to organize nationally and the possibility that privatization expands is very real under the next administration. He said the City could create empowerment zones.

The Rotary club would like to meet you and have you explain how the Council/Manager form of local government is supposed to work. Give us the highlights of that presentation. Include remarks about your philosophy as well as what a council should expect from a city manager and what a manager should expect from the elected officials?

Mr. Starks explained a manager makes business decisions while a council makes political decisions.

What tools or techniques do you use to ensure the Council is always well-prepared to make the best possible decisions?

Mr. Starks responded technology involved in order to be more collaborative. He added it is important to be certain everyone is on the same page.

Tell me a story about an employee you worked with of whom you are most proud. What happened to get him or her there?

Mr. Starks responded an employee he once worked with became more and more confident and improved their skillset and now have received a job in Royal Oak.

Getting agreement around the whole "vision thing" can be tough. Often times there are significant resistance to change; other times people have very different opinions on how to get there. Walk us through a time when you faced a challenge of building consensus around a set of Council's goals. What strategies did you use to get to the best possible solution?

Mr. Starks responded it is important to be a good listener, take ownership for your actions and being transparent, the use of technology, and understanding a solution.

What tools and techniques have you used to keep the community informed and engaged with what is going on in their local government? Once you have told us what has worked for you in other places, what would you recommend for us here in Ypsilanti?

Mr. Starks replied he would use public hearings, community meetings, and work closely with neighborhood associations.

Fit between a community and manager goes both ways. What do you need to know about a community to determine whether you have found the right place to work?

Mr. Starks responded he would want to work in a "close-knit" community, a community that is open-minded, and a community that is there for every citizen.

Mr. Stark asked what challenges are currently facing Ypsilanti. Mayor Edmonds responded the City is facing fiscal issues as a result of Water Street, a failing school system, and none existent revenue sharing.

5. 4:30 p.m. – Council Break

X. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION –

None

XII. REMARKS BY THE MAYOR –

None

XIII. COUNCIL DELIBERATION –

— 5:00 P.M.

Kathie Grinzinger, MML, reminded Council to examine their profile notes before they begin deliberation. She explained the point of the deliberation is to produce two motions; the first is direct MML to extend a conditional offer of employment to a candidate and conduct a background check. The second motion is to direct the City Attorney's Office to begin conducting contract negotiations.

Council Member Murdock asked if there will be further background investigation. Ms. Grinzinger responded in the affirmative. Mr. Murdock asked if there will be further interviewing of the selected candidates employers. Ms. Grinzinger responded if Council wishes to conduct further reference reviews it may do so. Ms. Grinzinger suggested avoiding speaking negatively about a candidate.

Mayor Edmonds asked Council to provide their overall opinion of the candidates.

Council Member Robb responded Council has received over 100 answers from questions today, and he would prefer to wait to vote allowing Council time to digest information. He was shocked how many of the candidates did not shake hands and many of the candidates did not mention EMU. He has narrowed down to three candidates and could select a City Manager from this group. His top three candidates are; Paul Brake, but his concern is he currently has multiple job offers. Darwin McClary, but he listed his biggest accomplishment as building a building which is not necessarily in line with the issues of Ypsilanti. Daniel Elsass would be his third selection who provided solid answers. He would eliminate Mr. Starks, although he loved his interview he specializes in economic development and the City already has an economic developer and he has zero labor experience.

Council Member Vogt stated Mr. Brake and Mr. McClary are a "toss up" for him. Mr. Brake came across as in command with complete confidence. Mr. McClary was slightly more quite but the same characteristics still were present. There was a bit of a drop off for the next three applicants. He said he would eliminate Mr. Starks as a candidate.

Mayor Pro-Tem Brown stated she liked Mr. Brake saying he came across very confident and answered many of the questions before they were asked, and liked his comments regarding rumors and perception. Darwin McClary had a good interview and he is a strong in community engagement and on building community trust in the City. She said she would eliminate Mr. Elsass as a potential candidate.

Mayor Edmonds asked where Mr. Brake currently has offers. Council Member Robb responded he was not certain. Ms. Grinzinger responded Mr. Brake was in the interview stage for two other jobs however he has not received an offer.

Council Member Bashert stated she is in consensus with Brake and McClary, but she prefers McClary to Brake. She said the difference is McClary would better fit this community. Brake would be more professional and less personable, but when asked he could not think of an instance that he made an error, or a spot that could be improved. Mayor Pro-Tem Brown agreed but thought it could have been a result of his interview style, and said the question regarding a Deputy Manager he said he would want a person that contrasts his strengths. Ms. Bashert stated she would eliminate Mr. Elsass from contention, she liked Mr. Starks but his background does not fit the job, and Mr. Smith did not impress one way or the other.

Council Member Murdock agreed, and said this is the wrong job for Mr. Starks, Mr. Elsass's presentation did not impress him, and Mr. Smith did not seem to have done much research on the issues facing Ypsilanti. Mr. Murdock stated Mr.

Brake's had one of the best resumes and McClary struck him as having all the skills needed to be successful in this community. Mr. Murdock stated McClary would be his first choice, although Mr. Brake could be successful.

Council Member Richardson stated before the interviews Mr. Brake would have been her first choice, but after the interview she would rate him number four, or five. She felt Mr. Brake would not resonate with this community. She said Mr. Elsass would be her last choice. She liked Mr. Starks's presentation and felt he would be able to communicate with this community and that he would be willing to learn. She said some skills can transfer to other job classifications and doesn't see his background would keep him from being a successful Manager. She said her top three candidates, in no specific order are McClary, Smith, and Starks.

Mayor Edmonds stated McClary and Brake are at the top for most of Council, with the exception of Council Member Richardson. She said Mr. Smith was highly impressive but the wrong fit for this City. She felt Mr. Elsass has a fine person with fine experience and really enjoyed Mr. Starks but does not have the experience as a City Manager. She said Mr. Starks is a solid third and her top two are McClary and Brake, but McClary would be her first choice.

Ms. Grinzinger stated from this first discussion there are two candidates at the top; Mr. McClary and Mr. Brake.

Mr. Robb stated Mr. McClary did not mention EMU in his interview, which was very surprising. He said Mr. McClary mentioned "Ypsi Connect", but also said all messages would go to him. Mr. Robb said that is a small town mentality. Mayor Edmonds responded she did not view the comment in the same manner. Council Member Bashert replied if a car is returned to a dealership within the first 90 days after being purchased the general manager of the factory that built it would be notified. Ms. Bashert added she did not view the comment as "small town" mentality. Mr. Robb responded Mr. McClary was referencing he would be the individual that would delegate an employee to resolve the issue. Council Member Murdock stated the impression he received was Mr. McClary looked at the system and noticed flaws. Mr. Robb stated Mr. Brake interviewed well and should not be punished because his interview seemed too polished. Mr. Robb added if there are real reasons to not hire Mr. Brake then fine, but he should not be eliminated because his interview was too refined.

Council Member Bashert stated both McClary and Brake mentioned good reasons to come to Ypsilanti, but one reason she liked McClary more is because of his familial connection to Ypsilanti. She stated her daughter and grandson both live in this community which makes her very committed to the City's success. Council Member Richardson responded Mr. Brake mentioned he has a sister who is a dean at EMU. Ms. Bashert replied that does not necessarily mean she lives in the City. Council Member Robb replied living in the City opposed to the township does not make a large difference to him.

Mayor Edmonds appreciated Mr. Brake discussing his specific skills in management and that he took the time to speak with members of the community to form a bigger picture of the community and form different perspectives. She added she isn't sure how diverse the community members were he spoke to, but they were major stakeholders.

Mayor Pro-Tem Brown liked Mr. Brake mentioned he walked the Water Street development area.

Council Member Bashert liked Mr. Brake's comments regarding servant leadership. Mayor Pro-Tem Brown said it might be Mr. Brake knows how to prepare for interviews but he did do these things which should not be overlooked.

Mayor Edmonds stated Mr. Brake has had the longest tenure with his current position among the candidates.

Council Member Richardson did not like the way Mr. Brake referred to staff as subordinates, rather than staff. Mayor Edmonds added Mr. Smith used the same term.

Council Member Vogt was impressed that Council is focused on small details between these two candidates, which means it is a very difficult decision.

Mayor Edmonds asked staff what their impressions were regarding the candidates.

Interim City Manager Frances McMullan had Mr. Brake and Mr. McClary as the top candidates and leaned more toward Mr. McClary because he was more inclusive and strong collective bargaining experience. Economic Development

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Director Beth Ernat echoed the comments that Mr. Brake and Mr. McClary would be the top two candidates. She said Mr. McClary mentioned a lot of "hot spots" the City is facing and looked to be enthusiastic. Interim Clerk Andrew Hellenga stated both candidates are excellent but would select Mr. Brake.

Mayor Pro-Tem Brown stated Mr. McClary mentioned he was instrumental in adopting a human rights ordinance in a previous position in Lake Orion. Ms. Ernat added the passage of a human rights ordinance in that community could have been difficult. Mayor Edmonds stated Mr. McClary mentioned as a part of that process it was important to engage with community members with opposing viewpoints.

Council Member Bashert stated every other candidate when asked about ethics leaned on ICMA's ethical standards and McClary said civil servants are in a position of public trust. She said in illustrating his ethical standard he provided a specific circumstance, which no other candidate did. Council Member Robb asked how important would Council Member Bashert rank that specific question. Mr. Robb expects all candidates to follow a strong code of ethics. Mayor Pro-Tem Brown ranked that question very high out of the 25 asked. Ms. Bashert wants a Manager who possesses both a strong skillset and must be a person who can work with Council easily and comfortably, and ethics is extremely important. Ms. Grinzinger explained some questions are designed so a candidate can discuss situations that are relatable to this Community.

Council Member Vogt stated Ypsilanti has a Task Force working on police and community relations because of a background in this community. He asked what Council thinks about which of these two candidates would be best for the community regarding that issue. Council Member Richardson felt McClary would be better suited to address those issues. Mayor Edmonds responded Mr. McClary because of his own passion and values around those issues he would be better suited to represent Council to the community. Mayor Pro-Tem Brown stated Mr. McClary appears to have a passion for social justice while Mr. Brake discussed respect and dignity but seemed he would be more by "the book". Ms. Brown added both candidates could effectively manage these situations but they are stylistically different. Ms. Richardson liked that Mr. McClary said both the manager and Council need to be above reproach.

Council Member Vogt asked Council which of these two gentlemen would be best suited to help the City with its financial and economic issues. Council Member Robb responded when Council created the City profile ethics and social justice was not mentioned and there was great stress put on finding solutions to the City's financial issues. Mr. Robb said Mr. Brake two top issues facing the City were its finances and Water Street and Mr. McClary said financial situations and personnel cost. Mr. Robb added he feels ethics are important but does not believe it should be the deciding factor.

Council Member Richardson didn't like that Mr. Brake focused on fees, fines, and other revenue sources and the budget cannot be balanced off of fees and fines. That would be attempting to balance the budget on the backs of the citizens. Council Member Robb replied that is an issue for Goal Setting, and he disagrees with the sentiment.

Council Member Murdock stated nothing new was mentioned by any of the candidates regarding economic development. He liked what Mr. McClary said about his management style and how it would fit in this community.

Council Member Bashert stated she would be happy to work with either of the candidates, but Council Member Richardson feels very strongly against Mr. Brake. She said a consensus could be reached for one of the applicants, which might not be the case for the other.

Council Member Murdock moved, seconded by Council Member Richardson to move to extend a conditional offer of employment to Darwin McClary and direct the MML to complete a background investigation and conduct further reference review.

On a roll call, the vote to approve the extension of a conditional offer to Darwin McClary was as follows:

Council Member Brown	Yes	Council Member Robb	Yes
Council Member Murdock	Yes	Mayor Edmonds	Yes
Council Member Richardson	Yes	Council Member Vogt	Yes
Council Member Bashert	Yes		

VOTE:

YES: 7 NO: 0 ABSENT: 0 VOTE: Carried

Mayor Pro-Tem Brown moved, seconded by Council Member Bashert to authorize the City Attorney to initiate discussions with Darwin McClary on terms of a mutually acceptable employment agreement. Such contract will be presented to the entire Council for approval prior to signature and execution.

On a roll call, the vote to approve authorizing the City Attorney to initiate contract discussions with Darwin McClary was as follows:

Council Member Brown	Yes	Council Member Robb	Yes
Council Member Murdock	Yes	Mayor Edmonds	Yes
Council Member Richardson	Yes	Council Member Vogt	Yes
Council Member Bashert	Yes		

VOTE:

YES: 7 NO: 0 ABSENT: 0 VOTE: Carried

XIV. ADJOURNMENT –

Council Member Robb moved, seconded by Council Member Vogt, to adjourn the meeting.

On a voice vote, the motion carried, and the meeting adjourned at 4:49 p.m.