

Village Council Special Meeting Minutes
Village Manager Meet & Greet and Interviews
July 15, 2024, 5:00 p.m.
250 S. Maple St. SE, Caledonia, MI

Meet & Greet 5:00 p.m.

Welcome by Village President Lindsey. Short introduction of candidates followed by 4 room break-out sessions

1. Call to order 6:00 pm
2. Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
3. Roll Call - Present: Erskine, Schuler, Miller, Lindsey, Soest, Hahn, Niles, Absent: None
4. Public Comment – None
5. Communications - None
6. Inquiry of Conflict of Interest – None
7. Approval of regular agenda. Moved by Schuler, supported by Niles. All Ayes, motion carried.
8. Unfinished business – None
9. New business
 - a. Interview of manager candidates
 - b. Ryan Cotton – explained the interview process and the list of questions for the candidates
 - c. Decide who will ask what questions to the candidates, time limit is discussed and set for 2 minutes per answer.
 - d. Erskine to start with first question, followed by Schuler, Miller, Lindsey, Soest, Hahn, and Niles.
 - e. Candidates:
 - i. Brian Bennett (6:15pm – 6:37pm)
Public questions:
 - **What are your thoughts on the relationship between the township and the village?** Extremely important, village offers own services but the relationship has to be really good; to benefit each other, I still have a good relationship with the township, we use each other services.
 - **What are your long-term goals?** Look at what is best for the village, downtown is important, school relationship
 - **What is your 5-year plan?** Make sure we are sound financially, project for equipment replacement schedules, building upgrades if needed
 - **What is your 5-year personal plan?** I certainly hope to be here for 5 years, make sure the village is sound, plan moving forward is to set up for the next person in line.
 - ii. Tom Grasman (6:40pm – 7:06pm)
Public questions:
 - **What are your thoughts on the relationship between the township and the village?** I have not met anyone or know anyone

on the township board, I know it can be viewed as a double-edged sword, don't know the dynamics of the relations

- **What would be your first order of business?** I want to get out and have a blueprint for 1st, 2nd & 3rd years, want to get out and meet the businesses, get a lay of the land, what can I do for you to help you thrive. Give a face to the name, open door policy.
- **Explain what village equipment you can use?** Drive any truck, snow plows, tractors. Can use all equipment.

iii. Shana Spinney (7:09pm – 7:24pm)

Public questions:

- **What would be your first steps in this position?** Understand the key players in the community, develop and guide relationships, look at policies, current open projects.
- **What are your thoughts on the relationship between the township and the village?** It's really important to have a good relationship and work alongside anyone.
- **What would be your plan for growth?** There is an existing plan that I have looked at. I would make sure from an economic standpoint there is a vision for success, beautify the downtown, make Caledonia a destination, preserve downtown village, market it to the surrounding area.

iv. Aaron Thelenwood (7:52pm – 8:17pm)

Public questions:

- **What are your thoughts on the importance of the relationship between the township and the village?** The intercommunity connections are crucial, it all starts from understanding the goals and objectives of the village. Maintaining good working relationships, sometimes contractual.
- **What is your long-term career goal?** Is to be in a leadership role as a village manager or city manager, working for a community that is a good fit.
- **How long do you see yourself in this position?** At bare minimum 5 years, all of that is contingent on the role I am serving and the trustees.
- **How did you get from a Bachelor's of Science and Film to a Master's in Public Administration?** Admittedly a film nerd, aggressive incentives for film degree, I did a lot of volunteer work with non-profit organizations and went back to my master's degree for that but after a class with Mr. Cotton I decided to get into the public administration side.
- **Do you have a pilot license?** No

10. Council discussion of candidates - Positive only comments

11. Council Vote for 1st and 2nd choice from the candidates, Results read by Jennifer Eardley

- a. Brian Bennett, received three #1 votes and zero #2 votes (Total of 3 votes)
- b. Tom Grassman, received two #1 votes and three #2 votes (Total of 5 votes)
- c. Shana Spinney, received zero #1 votes and two #2 votes (Total of 2 votes)

- d. Aaron Thelenwood, received two #1 votes and two #2 votes (Total of 4 votes)
12. More discussion on candidates
13. Each council member vote for only one candidate. Motion by Niles, support by Erskine, Results read by Jennifer Eardley
 - a. Brian Bennett, 3 votes
 - b. Tom Grassman, 3 votes
 - c. Aaron Thelenwood, 1 vote
14. Vote for either Brian Bennett or Tom Grassman, results read by Jennifer Eardley
 - a. Brian Bennett, 4 votes
 - b. Tom Grassman, 3 votes
15. Motion to authorize a conditional offer to Brian Bennett for the village manager position, Motion by Hahn, support by Niles, all Ayes
16. Motion to create an Employment Agreement Team, deadline by August 1, 2024. Motion by Soest, support by Niles, all Ayes
 - a. Team: Stephon Baird, Karen Hahn, Dan Erskine
17. Motion for alternate candidate to be Tom Grassman, motion by Niles, support by Soest, all Ayes
18. Extended Public Comments any topic (3 minutes) - None
19. Village Council member comments and announcements
 - a. Niles – Thank you everyone, candidates were awesome, thank you for your patience
 - b. Hahn – Very difficult decision; Thank you for coming everyone, appreciate it
 - c. Soest – Thank you for sticking with us
 - d. Erskine – Goodnight; Thank you
 - e. Schuler – Thank you for coming and participating in this
 - f. Miller – Thanks for being here
 - g. Lindsey – Thank you to Spike for putting in all the hours and work, and continuing to take part in this committee, it has taken a lot of time and a lot of effort for this process, I appreciate all of you and the help you provided
20. Adjournment 9:08 pm. Motion by Miller, Supported by Schuler. All Ayes

Lisa Segard

Lisa Segard
Village Clerk