

Benjamin J. Swayze

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October 17, 2020

Michigan Municipal League
Ms. Kathie Grinzinger
1675 Green Road
Ann Arbor, MI 48105

Dear Ms. Grinzinger,

It is with great ambition and a passion for public service that I am exploring the option of employment with East Grand Rapids as the City Manager. I feel that my extensive and progressive experience as Township Manager in the Charter Township of Cascade and City Administrator in the City of Milan, as well as my educational background, make me a highly qualified candidate for the position.

I began my current role as the Cascade Township Manager in January of 2013. In my 7+ years of service to the Cascade community we have worked to size our organization appropriately for our growing community while investing heavily in our core services and infrastructure. During my tenure we have invested over \$10 million dollars (matched by the Road Commission) in improving our roads and another \$20 million dollars in facilities, parks, infrastructure and streetscape projects. We have done all of this work while steadily reducing our tax rates by focusing on our core essential services. During my tenure the financial stability of the Township was recognized by both Moody's and Standard and Poor's who assigned the Township a AAA bond rating.

Prior to my time in Cascade Township I was employed as the City Administrator in Milan. During my time as City Administrator, the City of Milan experienced the harsh realization of the new economic times first hand, seeing a 39% reduction in tax revenues from 2008 - 2011. However, during my tenure, the City continued to maintain high quality public services, and continued to complete much needed capital improvements within the City. Additionally, during my appointment as City Administrator we were able to improve our fund balance from just over \$200,000 in 2008 to over \$1.6 million in FY 11-12 while reducing the General Fund operating millage by 1.1 mills. The Milan City Council and I were able to achieve these accomplishments during tough economic times by focusing on operational efficiencies, relying on public/private partnerships, maintaining collaborative relationships and ensuring that the budgeting process focused on the goals set by the City Council.

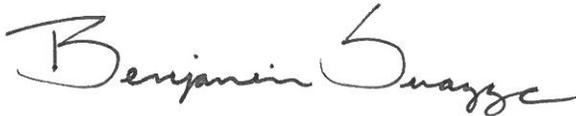
In reviewing your requirements for the next East Grand Rapids City Manager, I feel I exemplify the type of candidate you are looking for. My extensive experience in developing high-performance teams and regional collaboration will be an asset to East Grand Rapids in both maintaining the high-level services residents have come to expect and developing service

enhancements and capital improvements with an eye to the future. Additionally, my vast economic development experience on projects both large and small, as well as work to obtain Redevelopment Ready Communities status for Cascade Township, will be an asset as the City charts a path to economic prosperity. Finally, my open and collaborative management style will ensure that the East Grand Rapids administrative staff and elected officials will work hand-in-hand to ensure successful realization of the City goals.

During my tenure in Cascade Township I have had a chance to work with East Grand Rapids in several collaborative organizations, including the City of Grand Rapids Utility Advisory Board and the Grand Valley Metro Council Policy committee, and have been involved in several organizations that serve both communities including REGIS, the Right Place (Board of Directors, 2017-2018) and the Interurban Transit Partnership. Cascade Township also serves as the Building Department for East Grand Rapids. During this time, I have always been impressed with the professionalism and progressiveness of East Grand Rapids and the dedication to not only serving the best interest of the residents but the unique understanding that participation in regional efforts and collaboration benefits the entire West Michigan community.

In closing, I am very excited for the potential personal and professional opportunities that the position of East Grand Rapids Manager would afford me, and I look forward to the opportunity to meet and further explore with you the executive management expertise I will be able to offer the East Grand Rapids organization and community.

Thank you for your consideration,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Benjamin Swayze". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Benjamin Swayze

Benjamin J. Swayze

Current Address:
5055 Clear Ridge Dr. SE
Ada, MI 49301

Telephone Number:
(616) 540-9453
Email Address:
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Experience

Cascade Charter Township
Township Manager

Cascade, MI
Jan. 13 – Present

Key Responsibilities

- Appointed as the Chief Administrative Officer of the West Michigan municipality, encompassing 35.3 square miles and serving 19,245 residents.
- Oversee 70+ full and permanent part-time staff in the day-to-day operations for the Township including administrative services, financial services, human resources, assessing, community development, economic development, buildings and grounds maintenance, building inspections and fire and emergency services.
- Develop and implement the General and Special Funds budgets of the Township totaling \$12+ million dollars across 12 funds.
- Develop and maintain healthy and productive professional relationships with other governmental agencies responsible for providing services to the residents of Cascade including:
 - Kent County Road Commission (street maintenance)
 - Kent County Sheriff's Department (police coverage including additional contracted patrols)
 - Kent District Library (operation of Cascade library)
 - City of Grand Rapids (public water and sewer)
- Oversee public policy analysis process and assist the Township Board with policy research prior to consideration and adoption.
- Responsible for the development and implementation of the long-term planning documents of the Township including the Comprehensive Master Plan, Parks and Recreation Plan, Downtown Development Authority Plan and 6-year Capital Improvement Plan.
- Serve as the Township representative on various collaborative boards and committees including the Grand Rapids Utility Advisory Board and the Grand Valley Metro Council Policy Committee.
- Responsible for high-level human resource functions including the recruitment, hiring, training and supervision of all Department Heads.
- Oversee contractual services of the Township including legal services, transportation (The Rapid) and communications (Sabo PR)

Major Accomplishments

- During tenure the Township received a AAA bond rating and stable outlook from Standard and Poor's and Moody's.
- Developed and implemented a multi-year road improvement program that resulted in 30 miles of Township roads being resurfaced over a period of 3 years without raising taxes.
- Designed and implemented a new organization chart that focused on succession planning, operational continuity and cross-training.
- Oversaw successful millage campaigns for fire and emergency services, police services, library facilities and pedestrian pathway construction and maintenance.
- Worked with the Right Place and the Michigan Economic Development Corporation on several large economic development projects in the Township including ADAC corporate

headquarters, MEDBIO corporate headquarters and manufacturing facilities, California Closets and several large-scale call-centers

- Developed the Township's first Commercial Rehabilitation Tax Abatement program and DDA Development Incentive program.
- Oversaw several large-scale capital improvement programs including the Recreation Park enhancements (\$1.4 million) the Village area streetscape (\$1.8 million) 30th Street Cemetery expansion (\$1 million) and new Township Hall purchase and renovation (\$2.6 million)
- Oversaw expansion of public utilities in several areas of the Township to increase essential access and encourage economic development.
- Led efforts to develop a long-term Township facilities plan culminating in the purchase and renovation of a new Township Hall and planning for the replacement of the obsolete Township Fire Station.
- Engaged the Township in the MEDC Redevelopment Ready Communities process and are currently in the certification process.
- Developed and implemented the first Township communications plan
- Negotiated and implemented the expansion of Rapid transportation services along 28th Street on a contractual basis to increase essential access

City of Milan
City Administrator

Milan, MI
Oct. 08 – Jan. 13

Key Responsibilities

- Serve as the Chief Administrative Officer for a Southeast Michigan municipality of 5,876 residents, encompassing 2.2 square miles.
- Responsible for administering day-to-day operations including Police, Public Works, Economic Development, Building/Zoning, Parks and Recreation, Information Technology, Clerk/Treasurer and a Water/Sewer Utility, as well as participation in a multi-jurisdictional Fire Department.
- Assist the City Council in developing yearly goals and strategic planning documents.
- Responsible for the development, implementation and administration of the \$11 million City budget.
- Serve as the chief policy analyst on long- and short-term issues, projects, legislation and programs.
- Responsible for the development of public policy documentation, analysis and research to present for City Council consideration.
- Serve as economic development specialist for the City.
- Serve as the chief negotiator for the City in union negotiations with 3 unions (POLC – Officers, POLC – Command, AFSCME).
- Oversee various contractors to the City, including legal services, assessment services, senior services, park maintenance and water/wastewater treatment plant operations.
- Serve as Street Administrator, responsible for the oversight and maintenance of 26 miles of publically dedicated roads
- Serve as the liaison for the City to other governmental agencies and non-profit organizations, including the schools and counties of Monroe and Washtenaw.
- Continue to serve as the Director of Parks and Recreation and co-Director of Public Works

Major Accomplishments

- Successfully maintained high-quality City services despite a reduction in tax revenues of nearly 39% over a four-year span.
- Increased City general fund balance from \$200,000 in 2008 to \$1.6 million in FY 11-12, despite reduction in revenues of nearly 39%.

- Oversaw \$6 million in capital improvements, including street reconstruction, water/sewer utility improvements, and building projects.
- Researched, analyzed and implemented dramatic employee health benefits changes that saved the City \$175,000 in the first year alone, representing a 30% yearly health benefit savings.
- Negotiated a 3-year POLC –Officer contract that generated an anticipated \$650,000 in savings and streamlined operations for a minimum staffing department.
- Negotiated a 10-year utility contract with the United States Government that produces \$950,000 in annual revenue.
- Successfully wrote and received grants from numerous local and regional foundations and state agencies totaling over \$600,000.

City of Milan
Public Works co-Director

Milan, MI
July 07 – Jan. 13

Key Responsibilities and Accomplishments

- Lead a team of 6 full-time employees in the day-to-day operation of the Public Works department, responsible for snow plowing, leaf pick-up, maintenance of all city buildings, street repair, forestry services, street sweeping, and water distribution system repair.
- Oversee various public/private partnership contracts, including solid waste management (\$450,000 per year) and water/wastewater treatment plant operations (\$750,000 per year)
- Responsible for the maintenance program of all city vehicles.
- Responsible for leading the processes of developing the rolling 5-year capital improvement plan for streets and water/sewer infrastructure.
- Assisted in the privatization of the Waste Water Treatment Plan and Water Treatment Plant operations, a public/private partnership that saved the City nearly \$300,000 per year.

City of Milan
Parks and Recreation Director

Milan, MI
Sept. 05 – Jan. 13

Key Responsibilities and Accomplishments

- Manage a team of regular and contract employees in the operation of a full-service municipal recreation department.
- Responsible for the hiring, training and termination of all department employees to ensure the optimal operating efficiency and growth of the department.
- Responsible for the maintenance of 200 acres of developed and natural parklands including; 9 baseball/softball fields, 7 multipurpose fields, a horse arena, model airplane flying field, 4 playgrounds, 2 picnic pavilions, a tennis court, 5+ miles of natural trails and paved pathways, and a 16-acre man-made lake.
- Oversee the “Concerts in the Park” series that serves as a premier special event in Milan during July and August.
- Serve as the City staff liaison for privately run special events in the City of Milan including the Milan Fair and Fireworks, Milan Christmas Parade and Relay For Life.
- Serve as the City liaison for other community-oriented groups including, Milan Area Schools, Chamber of Commerce, and the Raisin River Watershed Council.
- Completed a 5-year comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan to meet Michigan Department of Natural Resources requirements.
- Serve as the Vice-Chair of the Saline River Greenway Alliance, a multi-jurisdictional coalition dedicated to the preservation of the Saline River Corridor.

North Jeffco Park and Recreation District

Arvada, CO

Key Responsibilities and Accomplishments

- Managed a team of 4 full-time and 20 part-time staff in operating the guest services programs for a park and recreation district that includes 9 facilities and serves over a 3 million participants and spectators a year.
- Managed the district call center operations and trained all employees in the areas of district knowledge, telephone etiquette, policies and procedures, and use of the Rec Trac software program.
- Served as the first-line manager for a team of 125 employees in the daily operations of a 168,500 Sq. Ft. recreation center that includes an indoor aquatics park, 2 NHL regulation ice rinks, 2 gymnasiums, a full fitness area, climbing wall, indoor playground, concessions stand, and a variety of rental amenities.
- Developed and maintained a 1.5 million dollar budget that accounted for the Apex Center admissions, annual pass and pro-shop sales, and software administration.
- Developed and implemented the Apex Center Guest Services policies and procedures manual and contributed to the development of the Recreation District P&P manual.

Education

Central Michigan University

Masters of Public Administration (with Honors)

Mt. Pleasant, MI

Graduation: August 2011

Relevant Coursework:

Intergovernmental Relations
Public Budgeting
Public Policy Making

Strategic Leadership
Public Personnel Administration
Strategic Planning

University of Michigan

Bachelor of Arts (with Honors)

Ann Arbor, MI

Graduated: December 2001

Relevant Coursework:

Marketing Management
Communications
Consumer Behavior

Economics
Accounting
Organizational Studies

**Professional/
Civic
Affiliations**

The Right Place – Board of Directors – 2017 – 2018

West Michigan Economic Partnership – 2013 – 2017

Chair – 2015 - 2017

International City and County Management Association – 2009 to present

Michigan Local Government Management Association – 2009 to present

Professional Development Committee – 2010-2013; 2018 to present

Continuing Education Committee – 2014 -2017

West Michigan Municipal Executives – 2013 to present

Southeastern Michigan City Managers Group – 2008-2013

Michigan Parks and Recreation Association – 2006 - 2013

Rotary Club of Milan – Secretary - 2009 - 2013

**Additional
Skills**

Proficient in BSA Software Suite, MS Word, Excel, Access, PowerPoint.