

Jonathan C. Seyferth

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October 18, 2020

Mayor Katie Favale
City of East Grand Rapids
750 Lakeside Drive SE
East Grand Rapids, MI 49503

Re: East Grand Rapids, City Manager Opening – **confidentiality is respectfully requested**

Dear Mayor Favale and Members of the City Commission,

Please accept my application for the position of City Manager with the City of East Grand Rapids. As a municipal administrator with more than a decade of experience, I believe my skills, demeanor, and experiences align well with the Ideal Candidate Profile for this position.

During my career, I have had the opportunity to work in federal, state, and local government. At the local level, I have worked for communities of various sizes and complexities. In all my positions, I have overseen major legacy projects which have left significant positive and lasting impacts on those communities. I am enthusiastic about leveraging these experiences for East Grand Rapids and continuing the legacy of excellent and accessible public management that the community expects.

In my current role as the City Manager of Coopersville, Michigan I have overseen many initiatives that have laid the groundwork for successful future growth in the City. This is inclusive of the planning, financing, and construction of expansions to the City's water system and wastewater plant. These expansions will accommodate community growth for many years and was accomplished through the implementation of the City's first successful Master Planning process since the mid-1990s.

Prior to Coopersville, I served as Downtown Director for the City of Muskegon a civically active and culturally diverse community with broad needs and interests. In this role, I was tasked with redevelopment initiatives for Downtown Muskegon – including assisting with RRC certification, the reorganization of the downtown development office, and community engagement to ensure redevelopment initiatives considered all stakeholder feedback.

A proud accomplishment was jumpstarting the redevelopment of approximately 10 square blocks of downtown Muskegon left vacant following the deconstruction of a 1970s-era indoor mall. The catalyst project was the construction of a new Farmers Market reimagined as an active community space and downtown anchor.

The market's success and the foresight of local entrepreneurs resulted in more than \$100 million in local development to date, with further developments planned. Today, downtown Muskegon has become a thriving and dynamic community center with pre-COVID visitor numbers of more than 800,000 annually.

Before my time with Downtown Muskegon, I began my public service career as a federal caseworker, which shaped my ability to navigate bureaucracy and fostered a skillset which

allows me to effectively work with diverse audiences and handle a range of personalities and emotions.

In all my positions, I have been tasked with meeting rapidly changing needs through proactive engagement, problem solving, and balancing complex issues. I am confident these experiences will serve my and the East Grand Rapids community well as its City Manager.

I want to note, East Grand Rapids is a community my extended family has a long history with. As a child we would visit family who lived in East Grand Rapids. My great aunt would take us to Reeds Lake and tell us about the “trouble” my great grandfather would get into in his youth along its shores. I am sure there were many embellishments to those stories, but it helped to instill in me an almost mythical view of East GR from a young age. These family connections also provide me with an appreciation for how engaged the East Grand Rapids community is and the deep passion residents of East GR have for their City and its unique place in our greater West Michigan community.

It would be a great privilege to serve the East Grand Rapids community as its City Manager, I will never take the privilege for granted. I look forward to hearing from the selection committee soon to discuss how I can help East Grand Rapids meet its goals and objectives with this highly visible and critical position.

Sincerely,



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Contact

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Key Skills

Budget & CIP Planning
Project Management
Emotional Intelligence
Customer Focused
Collaborative

Education

University of Colorado Denver
Master of Public Administration

Central Michigan University
Master of Science in
International Administration

Central Michigan University
Bachelor of Science

Executive Summary

A results-focused public servant with more than 15-years of public sector experience and a significant background in community engagement, community development, and organizational leadership. A leader committed to supporting and empowering team members to achieve their fullest potential. Strategic long-term thinker driven to meet the goals and objectives of the organization and its stakeholders. Proven record of transparent management, quantifiable results, and measurable increased efficiencies.

Related Experience

City of Coopersville

November 2015 – Current

Coopersville, MI (population 4,300)

City Manager (July 2018 – Current)

- Chief Administrative Officer of a full-service city that employs 28 in six departments
- Administer a \$12 million annual budget (\$3 million general fund)
- Reorganized the City's 10-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) to be reevaluated annually, aligning future project timelines based on budgets, projected revenues, and infrastructure metrics
- Successfully resolved a long-standing administrative and legal dispute between the City and its two largest public utility customers
- Established strong working relationships with key industrial stakeholders creating a multi-year public utility development plan to accommodate projected industrial, commercial, and residential growth within the City
- Successfully lead the planning, financing, and construction of more than \$12 million in public infrastructure projects
- Oversaw a \$6 million expansion/update to the City's water system which was partially funded (\$2.1 million) with a federal EDA grant
- Renegotiated a shared water service agreement between the City and neighboring municipalities
- Developed enhanced partnerships with Coopersville Area Public Schools related to shared resources, public spaces, and public trails
- Worked with the City Council to establish the City's first fund balance policy

Assistant City Manager (Nov. 2015 – June 2018)

- Served as the City's Planning Director
- Supervised the Departments of Public Works and Public Utilities
- Staff coordinator for residential and commercial development projects
- Developed an in-depth financial analysis tool to track the City's multi-year fiscal performance in key areas
- Coordinated the complete rewrite of the city's master plan establishing a community vision for development and growth through 2035
- Established and maintained intergovernmental relations with local, state, and federal agencies

Professional Memberships

International City/County Management Association (ICMA)

Engaging Local Government Leaders (ELGL)

Michigan Municipal Executives (MME)

West Michigan Municipal Executives

Continuing Education

Michigan State University
Certified Zoning Administrator

Michigan State Univ.- Extension
Citizen Master Planner

Western Michigan University
Economic Dev. Basic Course

Recognitions

Finalist, 2015 Newsmaker of the Year – Economic Development: Grand Rapids Business Journal

Muskegon Future 15,
Class of 2014

Muskegon County 40 under 40

Educational Excellence Award:
Laramie County Community College

Order of the Lion:
Sigma Alpha Epsilon Fraternity

Muskegon Area First (Countywide EDC) **October 2011 - November 2015**
Muskegon, MI (City population 38,000/County population 174,000)

Executive Director, Downtown Muskegon Now (Sept. 2013 – Oct. 2015)
(a division of Muskegon Area First)

- Downtown Development Director for the City of Muskegon
- Agency's Chief Administrative and Financial Officer reporting to a 15-member board
- Coordinated numerous public and private development projects accelerating the transformation of downtown Muskegon into an active community space
- Successfully established a Business Improvement District in downtown Muskegon, creating a reliable revenue stream to support downtown initiatives
- Assisted the City in becoming a Redevelopment Read Community
- Partnered with City departments to establish a form-based zoning code in the downtown, resulting in clearer development standards and a simplified planning review process

Business Development Manager (Oct. 2011 - Sept. 2013)

- Interim director duties for Downtown Muskegon Now
- Developed and implemented a proactive countywide business attraction marketing strategy based on Muskegon's unique water assets to attract new investment to the community
- Served as the agency's communications manager
- City of Muskegon representative to the Michigan Port Collaborative

Other Experience

Laramie County Community College **August 2010 - October 2011**
Cheyenne, WY

Academic Advisor

- Analyzed advising walk-in and appointment trends, implementing changes to improve practices and staffing
- Established a new advising process allowing for better communication between the Advising Center and faculty advisors
- Chaired the committee charged with rewriting the school's Academic Probation and Suspension policy

U.S. House of Representatives **January 2006 - August 2010**
Muskegon, MI

District Representative

- Managed casework for a half-dozen federal departments, including the Department of Defense, Veterans Affairs, and the Social Security Administration, managing more than 750 cases annually
- Managed day-to-day operations of the Muskegon District Office
- Represented the office in local coalition building initiatives

Central Michigan University **August 2005 - January 2006**
Mount Pleasant, MI

Constituent Relations Writer

- General writing staff for the Office of the President, Alumni Relations, and University Marketing

Michigan House of Representatives **April 2004 - August 2005**
Lansing, MI

General Communications Staff (various titles)