

Muskegon County
Board of Commissioners
United Way Building, 31 E. Clay Avenue
Muskegon, MI 49442

Benjamin E. Cross
Marvin Engle
Susie Hughes
Kenneth Mahoney, Chair
Charles Nash

Terry Sabo
Robert Scolnik
Rillastine R. Wilkins, Vice Chair
District 7 - Vacant

Board Minutes may be found on the web at <http://co.muskegon.mi.us/clerk>

Special Meeting

Saturday, November 1, 2014
8:30 a.m.

Chairman Mahoney, Presiding

The Full Board of Commissioners was called to order by Chairman Mahoney at 8:46 a.m.

Roll Call

Present: Marvin Engle, Susie Hughes, Kenneth Mahoney, Charles Nash, Terry Sabo, Robert Scolnik, Rillastine Wilkins

Also Present: James Elwell, Interim County Administrator,
Nancy A. Waters, County Clerk,
Jeanne Pezet, Deputy County Clerk,
Deborah Groeneveld, Human Resources Director
Gerald (Jerry) Richards, President GovHR USA

Benjamin Cross arrived at 8:51 a.m.

Chairman Mahoney addressed the audience to explain that each candidate would be asked the same questions. The Chairman would ask the first question, then each Commissioner would ask their question in the following sequence: Commissioner Scolnik, Commissioner Sabo, Commissioner Engle, Vice Chair Wilkins, Commissioner Hughes, Commissioner Cross, Commissioner Nash, then starting over with the Chairman until all questions were asked. Following are the questions that were asked each candidate:

1. Welcome. We have your background materials in front of us, but would you please begin by briefly reviewing your professional career path and career goals? In your summary, please elaborate on the circumstances and reasons for leaving old positions and accepting new ones.
2. Why is the Muskegon County Administrator position of interest to you at this point in your career? What qualities or challenges specifically attract you to Muskegon County?
3. We in Muskegon County, like many local governments, have faced extremely challenging times. What are your skills in financial management and prioritization . . . what process do you follow in developing the annual budget?
 - a. What role do Department Heads/staff take in your budgeting approach?
 - b. Have you managed in both "good" as well as "tough" financial times? Give us an example of each if possible. Please provide some insights into how your leadership has been adjusted according to the circumstances.

4. What do you consider as essential relationships that should exist between the County Administrator and County Commissioners?
 - a. What do you see as your role with elected officials, both individually and collectively?
 - b. Have you had experience working with elected department heads? How would you go about building rapport with the County's elected, department heads?
5. Tell us about a recent accomplishment you are proud of and the role you played in it's coming about.
6. What is the toughest management problem or situation you have ever faced in your career?
7. How would you describe your management and leadership style? Does it vary with different people or circumstances?
8. What is your opinion of the importance of regional cooperation within the County and with neighboring County Governments? Give us an example of a regional project or program you have initiated.
9. Describe your experiences in human resource management.
 - a. How would you rate your overall success in meeting principles of Affirmative Action and Equal Employment Opportunity . . . providing opportunities for women and minorities . . . and all employees?
10. What skills and abilities do you have in consensus building, strategic planning and community visioning? Do you feel comfortable in facilitating dialogue, discussions and input in an effort to find consensus?
11. What experience have you had in building a "teamwork" approach among staff and employees working together with elected officials in addressing issues and opportunities facing the County?
 - a. How do you foster creative thinking and innovation among staff and professionals?
12. Have you had the opportunity to develop long-term infrastructure expansion and repair strategies?
 - a. What steps did you follow?
 - b. Do you have experience with infrastructure maintenance and expansion or similar activities?
13. What experience have you had personally with labor unions and employee relations activities?
 - a. How do you ensure that all municipal employees and staff are represented and dealt with fairly?
14. How strongly do you support your recommendations to the Board and stand by your professional convictions and staff recommendations?
 - a. What if the Board does not follow your recommendations and directs another course of action?

15. How do you approach working with citizen groups, neighborhood associations or other groups that have an interest in local government policies and services, but may have a harder time getting their message across?
16. What is your philosophy and approach toward community diversity (economic, ethnic, racial)? How can we embrace and build on our diversity here in Muskegon County?
 - a. Please give examples of approaches you have followed in the past and their results.
17. What experiences have you had with economic development activities while being sensitive to community concerns and goals?
 - a. Give us an example of successes . . . any disappointments?
 - b. What expertise can you bring to help our community in this area?
18. What is your experience in applying technology to government practices and programs . . . how have you used computer and information technology in your organization? Give us some examples.
 - a. How do you make decisions on recommending new technologies for programs and services?
19. How do you evaluate the performance of your Department Heads and the activities for which they have responsibility?
 - a. How do you make sure both supervisors and employees are working effectively and productively?
20. Please give us a couple examples of productivity improvements or cost savings that you have proposed or implemented.
21. We have an active news media here and expect them to independently inquire into your background . . . are there **any events** in your professional or personal life which would be *awkward* or *embarrassing* to us, or you, if reported upon in the media?
22. We've asked you questions for a good time now; what questions do you have of us?
23. Do you have any final comments you wish to make?

The questions ended with Chairman Mahoney thanking the applicant and letting them know that "Our consultant will advise you of our selection decisions and further steps in the process."

Mark Eisenbarth was interviewed beginning at 8:55 a.m.

Eric Stevens was interviewed beginning at 10:17 a.m.

Vincent Pastue was interviewed beginning at 11:55 a.m.

Lunch recess was taken at 12:55 p.m.

Peter Olson was interviewed at 1:35 p.m.

Richard Houtteman was interviewed at 2:30 p.m.

Recessed at 3:22 p.m.

Reconvened at 3:30 p.m.

Chairman Mahoney asked that each Commissioner list their top two or three choices. When polled Commissioners voted as follows for their top picks:

8 votes for Mark Eisenbarth
6 votes for Eric Stevens
2 votes for Vincent Pastue
zero votes Peter Olson
4 votes for Richard Houtteman

This process then reduced the number to two: Eric Stevens and Mark Eisenbarth. Much discussion ensued for both of these individuals.

2014-430 **BEGIN NEGOTIATIONS WITH MARK EISENBARTH TO BE THE NEXT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR**

Moved by Commissioner Sabo, seconded by Commissioner Hughes, to begin negotiations with Mark Eisenbarth to be the next County Administrator.

Roll Call

Yes: Commissioner Hughes, Commissioner Nash, Commissioner Sabo, Commissioner Scolnik, Commissioner Wilkins, Commissioner Cross, Commissioner Engle, Chairman Mahoney

No: None

Motion Carried

PUBLIC COMMENT

Members of the public voiced favor with the final choice and commended Commissioners for the hard work done in arriving at their decision.

2014-431 **MOVED TO ADJOURN AT 4:24 P.M.**

Moved by Commissioner Hughes, seconded by Commissioner Cross, to adjourn at 4:24 p.m.

Voice vote

Motion Carried

Meeting adjourned at 4:24 p.m.

Nancy A. Waters, County Clerk

NAW/jmp

Preliminary Minutes
To be approved at the Full Board Meeting on Thursday, November 6, 2014