

SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING

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Mayor Nelson called the meeting to order and asked the Clerk to call the roll:

PRESENT: Mayor Nelson, Councillors Ashley, Hosmer,
Mitchell, Morley, Skamperle and Stevenson

ABSENT: None

Mayor Nelson introduced Nick Mazza from Bonadio & Co., Inc. and thanked him for meeting with Council.

Mr. Mazza provided Council with his background and qualifications, citing his experience in local government. Mr. Mazza said his objective is to get the best City Manager for the City.

Mr. Mazza reminded Council that if anyone wished to speak directly about current City Manager John Pinkerton, his evaluations or any specific candidates for the City Manager position, Council should move to executive session.

Mr. Mazza asked Council what type of technical skills the new City Manager should possess. Councillor Morley suggested a City Manager with not only business experience but also government experience, noting both are required to do a good job. Councillor Skamperle agreed and said we need someone who can promote economic development, jobs and the waterfront. Councillor Stevenson suggested someone with a proven track record for saving money and meeting the budgetary needs of local government. Mayor Nelson said the City has a lot of pending projects and we need an individual with strong delegation skills who can pull employees together as a team. Mr. Mazza said the City has a seasoned group of department heads. Councillor Morley said some department heads are young, and Mayor Nelson added that some are nearing retirement. Mayor Nelson said we need someone with government experience who can think outside the box but who also brings a business background. Councillor Mitchell suggested someone with new ideas.

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Mayor Nelson said we need someone who will stay a minimum of three to five years. Councillor Stevenson said there will be a new Council and Mayor as well as new department heads. Councillor Stevenson explained this would be a good time to look at other avenues to save money such as the shifting and/or consolidation of services as well as the restructuring of departments. Mr. Mazza said City Manager John Pinkerton provided him with a 7 page list of pending projects that look challenging.

Mr. Mazza said he believes that the Council and staff are looking for an inspirational leader. Councillor Mitchell suggested someone who visits the employees in the field and is available to the community. Councillor Morley said we need someone who will join our local clubs and be involved in the community, similar to our past City Managers.

Mr. Mazza said Mr. Pinkerton has been with the City for three years and has agreed to assist with the transition of the new City Manager. Mayor Nelson asked if an impending new Council and Mayor will deter candidates from applying. Mr. Mazza suggested Council give candidates as much information as possible and show the good and bad sides of the City. Mr. Mazza explained we need to show candidates what it is like to live in Ogdensburg, what the community is like and what challenges you are facing.

Mr. Mazza asked if the City has a new Councillor orientation program. Mayor Nelson said new Councillors attend NYCOM training sessions in Syracuse. Mr. Mazza stressed the importance of a local orientation program designed by the City Manager or City staff. Mr. Mazza explained new Councillors should visit all facilities; learn the different roles and responsibilities of all departments as well as Council members; and, get comfortable in their position. Mayor Nelson said now would be a good time to implement new policies and procedures. Mr. Mazza explained new Council members should know Council's role, how to handle different situations and who to call when there is a problem. Councillor Stevenson said the City should implement this program. Mr. Mazza said he will suggest Mr. Pinkerton establish the program, especially with the level of change ahead.

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Mr. Mazza asked Council for a list of goals for the City. Councillor Skamperle said we need more jobs. Councillor Morley stated we need to increase the tax base. Mayor Nelson said we need to develop our waterfront sites. Mr. Mazza asked if the waterfront property is commercial. Mayor Nelson explained it is mixed zoning, some commercial and some residential. Councillor Stevenson said shifting, restructuring and expansion may save money and make the City departments more efficient. Councillor Hosmer said retirement is a good time to consolidate positions. Councillor Hosmer suggested the City look at its use of technology. Mr. Mazza asked if the City participates in shared services. Councillor Stevenson said yes. Mayor Nelson said absent an increase in the tax base or a financial windfall, the City needs to streamline. Mr. Mazza said all cities are facing the same challenges. Councillor Stevenson said we need innovative ideas, but we also need to continue completing projects in house when possible. Councillor Ashley said the City has a lot of skilled workers, and Mayor Nelson agreed. Mr. Mazza asked if the City has unfunded liabilities. Mayor Nelson said healthcare costs and pensions have skyrocketed. Mr. Mazza asked if an evaluation has been done regarding retirees' healthcare, and Mayor Nelson said yes. Mayor Nelson explained the Cadillac tax will cost the City money, and the large amounts of tax funds to be written off for abandoned properties will hurt. Mr. Mazza asked how unpaid school taxes are dealt with. Mayor Nelson said the City is required to make the school whole. Mr. Mazza asked if the City is self-insured, and Mayor Nelson said yes. Councillor Mitchell said the City needs to do a better job with labor relationships and contracts. Mr. Mazza asked who represents the City for labor contract negotiations. Mayor Nelson said the City Manager and City Comptroller. Mr. Mazza asked if we have a labor attorney and Mayor Nelson said no. Councillor Hosmer suggested Council look at this process, noting we need someone with experience who can negotiate better. Mr. Mazza asked for the status of our labor contracts. Mayor Nelson asked City Clerk Kathleen Bouchard to provide Mr. Mazza with a list of current contracts.

Mr. Mazza said the consensus seems to be the pursuit of economic development, an increase in the tax base and job growth. Mr. Mazza said it appears the City's operating departments are doing well, and Mr. Pinkerton's management style is

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working. Councillor Stevenson said morale is much better. Mayor Nelson and Councillor Hosmer agreed.

Councillor Stevenson said she is hopeful for a candidate to have City Manager form of government experience. Mayor Nelson said he would like to interview candidates with a track record of good relationships with staff and Council. Councillor Ashley added he would like to interview candidates willing to give a 4 to 5 year commitment and not use Ogdensburg as a stepping stone. Councillor Hosmer suggested a younger ambitious candidate.

Mr. Mazza said he was a little disappointed in some of the candidates interviewed last time. Councillor Hosmer said the City is in a better position now and we have good things going on. Mayor Nelson said departments are running well now. Council members advised Mr. Mazza of the City's awards and accomplishments. Mr. Mazza asked City Clerk Kathleen Bouchard for a list of awards and accomplishments for the past three years. Mr. Mazza said Council needs to talk about the good stuff and sell the City when doing interviews.

Mr. Mazza distributed a report of the salary ranges for cities similar to Ogdensburg and noted Mr. Pinkerton's salary is the lowest on the chart. After some discussion, there was a consensus of Council to advertise the salary range of the City Manager at \$90,000 to \$115,000. Councillor Stevenson suggested we discuss the cost of living in Ogdensburg, as well as the average cost of property during interviews. Mr. Mazza said we should also promote the education system in Ogdensburg and the lower than average crime rate. Mr. Mazza asked about the benefits package, and Mayor Nelson said it will remain the same. City Clerk Kathleen Bouchard said she will provide Mr. Mazza with a copy of Mr. Pinkerton's current contract.

Mr. Mazza said the hiring process will be similar to the last search for a City Manager. Mr. Mazza explained he will do the preliminary interviews and provide Council with an A list, B list and C list. Councillor Hosmer requested Council receive the information on the candidates ahead of time for review. Mr. Mazza asked if Council had any objections to candidates with military experience.

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Council members agreed those with a military background would not be excluded.

After much discussion, there was a consensus of Council on the following timeline for the recruitment of a new City Manager:

- September 1st – advertising complete
- September 25th – deadline to apply
- October 18th – Mr. Mazza's recommendations to Council
- October 22nd & 23rd – interviews with top candidates

On a motion duly made and seconded, the meeting was adjourned.