

President Pro Tempore Cook called the Special meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

Roll Call:

Council Members Present: President Tempore Cook and Trustees: Dean, Cavendish, Harper and Ager.

Absent: Trustee Ruble attended via Zoom, President McCann was absent

Staff Present: Clerk Joni Scott, Treasurer Diana Simons, and Village Manager Jim Dyer

Additions/Corrections to Agenda:

President Pro Tempore Cook accepted the agenda as presented.

Public Comment:

None

A. Village Manager Candidate Interviews:

The Village Council conducted interviews for the Village Manager position, offering interviews to the following candidates: **Dorando, Green, Marske, Moskowitz, and Ottenwess.**

Village Manager Candidate Interviews:

Each candidate was asked a series of questions covering key areas, including:

- Their background, interest in the Village Manager position, and long-term career goals.
- Their understanding of the Village Manager’s role, responsibilities, and challenges specific to Northport.
- Management style, time management, and approach to working with the Village Council and staff.
- Budget development, financial management, and familiarity with Northport’s financial condition.
- Leadership qualities, collaboration with other government entities, and experience handling politically complex situations.
- Employee relations, including handling discipline, feedback, and fostering a positive work environment.
- Commitment to learning and administering village zoning regulations.
- Professional accomplishments, decision-making in challenging situations, and overall vision for Northport.

Discussion Regarding Mr. Ottenwess:

Mr. Ottenwess was asked a specific question regarding his departure from his previous role as Traverse City Manager. He stated that he was not fired but left voluntarily due to personal challenges that required him to focus on his health and family. He acknowledged the media reports but characterized them as a "snapshot of one day in my life from 10 years ago" that does not define who he is today.

He emphasized that he has since undergone multiple background investigations that verified his current lifestyle and views his journey as a "redemption story" that has made him a better person and manager. He also expressed that some media coverage was misleading, including the publication of his personal medical records, and reassured the Council that his past should not be a cause for concern.

B. Candidate Selection for Second Round Interviews:

Following the interviews, the Council used an informal method to determine which candidates would move forward to a second round. Chet Janik, serving in an advisory role, suggested that each council member write down their top two preferred candidates on a piece of paper. The results showed that four council members selected Douglas Durando and Jared Ottenwess.

Trustee Ager **Moved, Supported by** Trustee Harper, to invite Durando and Ottenwess back for a second interview. **Discussion:** Trustee Dean expressed that he did not support the motion and preferred to bring back Green and Moskovitz instead. Trustee Harper shared his observation that the candidates interviewed quite differently than expected, noting that their in-person presentations differed from how they appeared on paper. Trustee Cavendish noted that there were a lot of great candidates that applied and that it was hard to narrow it down. **Roll Call Vote:** Yeas (4) Nays (1) Trustee Dean Absent (2) Motion Carried.

The Council scheduled the second round of interviews for next Friday, March 7, 2025, at 1:00 PM. The members noted that while all candidates were highly qualified, narrowing the selection was necessary to allow for a more in-depth discussion. They emphasized that the decision was challenging, as multiple candidates had strong potential for the role.

Public Comment:

None

Council Comment:

None

Adjournment:

Trustee Harper Moved, Supported by Trustee Cavendish, to adjourn the meeting. Motion Carried.

The meeting adjourned at 4:20 pm
Several Citizen’s Attended the meeting
Joni Scott, Village of Northport Clerk