



**CITY OF HART  
407 S. STATE ST.  
HART, MI 49420  
COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS  
MAY 24<sup>th</sup> 2021 SPECIAL MEETING  
MINUTES – Approved**

**PRESENT:** Mayor Vicki Platt, Councilors: Catalina Burillo, Jim Evans, Fred Rybarz, Mike Powers, and Kris Trygstad.  
**VIA ZOOM:**

**ABSENT:** Dean Hodges

**OTHERS PRESENT:** City Clerk – Karla Swihart, Nichole Steel (HEART), Sharon Hallack, and Gayle Forner

Mayor Platt called the meeting to order; following the roll call, the Mayor led the Council in the pledge of allegiance.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA:** J. Evans motioned to approve the agenda and was supported by F. Rybarz.

- Ayes: 6 Nays: 0 Absent: 1

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:** None

**ACTION ITEMS:** Authorize Mayor and legal council to extend employment offer and into contract negotiation with City Manager.

- J. Evans, after reviewing the applications for City Manager, thought we came up with two very well qualified candidates "Mr. Erickson from Ontonagon virtually knows City Management inside and out; he knows the governments, knows the agencies, knows the grants, and knows how to get things done. I think the City's superintendents, the guys who make the City function, really like Mr. Erickson and his ability to step in and keep the City going. Mr. Splane, He's just an all-around great guy who would be around for the next 20 years. So instead of choosing just one, why don't we hire them both? Let's offer the job to Mr. Ericksons; based on his experience, he is ready to go, but then we can still have Rob; as Rob is a Hart guy, he's not going anywhere; he is very dedicated to the City I'm sure there is a position where he will be helpful to us (the City)."
- Mayor V. Platt asked Mr. Evans if he did any type of background check on Mr. Erickson; Mr. Evans stated, "No! as I didn't know I was supposed to". Mayor Platt said there are many things Mr. Erickson did not tell the Council upon his interview. Mr. Evans asked if there was something the Council should know. Mayor Platt stated there had been a significant number of emails, phone calls from Bessemer, Ontonagon, Pentwater, etc., sharing some details about Mr. Erickson that Mr. Erickson did not disclose, "I do not go by hear-say, but when you get that many phone calls and emails and everyone is wondering why we didn't get those answers from Mr. Erickson himself. I don't understand, but I will have to say no to having both of them as Managers". Mr. Evans stated he meant the City of Hart could benefit from both of their talents, Mr. Erickson as the City Manager, and could find some position for Mr. Splane. Mr. Evans asked Mayor Platt if she was willing to say what these hear-say comments are? Mayor Platt said I do not have to as they are published.
- C. Burillo, "Mayor Platt, and fellow councilors at today's special open meeting, I would like to make it noted for the record that I wish to devoid myself from the City Manager interview subgroup that was formed for the current City Manager search. I have given this discussion a great deal of time and thought, and after much deliberation and consternation, I have reached the decision. I tell you this today due to family obligations; I am unable to be present at tomorrow evening's regular council meeting, where a final vote for the City Manager will take place. Mayor V. Platt corrected and said, it is tonight. C. Burillo said, "ok tonight; I mean no offense to Mr. Erickson or Mr. Splane; both are great candidates but know that I will be abstaining from the vote as I am uncomfortable with the inconsistencies in the process."
- Mr. Rybarz feels Mr. Splane has been in the area a long time; he's worked with Cities. In the public eye, and I know he will do an excellent job for the City and "be here for 20 years as he is local and loves the area; plus, I'm sure he can do the job. Mr. Splane is my pick which was not an easy pick as Mr. Erickson has a pretty impressive resume."

F. Rybaz motioned to appoint Robert Splane as City Manager, voting Yes, Jim Evans voted No, Catalina Burillo abstained, Mike Powers voted Yes, Kris Trygstad voted Yes, and Mayor Vicki Platt voted Yes.

Mayor V Platt stated, "that means resolution 2021-41 did not pass with a 2/3 majority there for the entire Council will have to be gathered to do the whole process together."

In speaking with the lawyer, resolution 2021-41 did pass due to not needing a 2/3 majority

▪ Resolution 2021-41 – Appointment of City Manager

The City Manager position became vacant effective May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2021, and pursuant to section 7.6(b) of the City Charter, the City Council shall fill any vacancies in appointive offices within 120 days after such vacancy occurs and the City Council has solicited and received resumes from several candidates to fill the office of City Manager, and the City Council has had the opportunity to review the qualifications and fitness for office of the applications and conduct interviews of several candidates for the position, and the City Council wishes to appoint Robert Splane, to the office of City Manager NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED as follow

1. Robert Splane is hereby appointed and confirmed as City Manager for the City of Hart.
2. This appointment is subjected to a satisfactory background check and the execution of an **Employment agreement drafted by the City’s attorney and approved by the City Council.**
3. The City Clerk is hereby authorized and directed to provide Robert Splane with notice of the appointment in writing pursuant to Section 8.11 of the City Charter.
4. Before entering upon the duties of [his/hers] office, shall take, subscribe and file with the Clerk [his/hers] oath of office pursuant to Sections 8.11 and 8.12 of the City Charter.
5. All resolutions and parts of resolutions in conflict herewith shall be, and the same are hereby rescinded.
  - Moved by F. Rybarz and supported by Kris Trygstad, and thereafter adopted by the Hart City Council at a regularly scheduled meeting held on May 24<sup>th</sup>, 2021
    - Ayes: 4 Nays: 1 Absent: 1

**DISCUSSION ITEMS:** None

**COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL:**

- Mayor V. Platt wanted on record that Catalina, I have called you. The phone works both ways. Jim, you have not picked up the phone several times that I have called, so your surprises tonight are very disappointing to me.

**ADJOURN:**

- There being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting adjourned at 6:16 pm upon a motion by F. Rybarz and supported by J. Evans. The next regularly scheduled meeting will be held on May 25<sup>th</sup>, 2021, at 7:30 pm.

Respectfully Submitted



Karla Swihart  
City Clerk