



City of Ypsilanti
Office of the City Manager

News Release

For Immediate Release
November 21, 2006

Contact: Robert J. Bruner, Jr., Assistant City Manager & Human Resources Director
Office: (734) 483-7290

Ypsilanti Assistant City Manager to Vie for Top Job in Ferndale

Ferndale's search for a new City Manager will include Ypsilanti Assistant City Manager Robert Bruner. The position was vacated by Tom Barwin when he left Ferndale to become City Manager of Oak Park, IL in August. Retired Jackson City Manager Warren Renando has served as Ferndale's Interim City Manager since then and is scheduled to leave before Christmas. Ferndale's executive search firm, Bennett Yarger Associates, received about 25 applications and presented the top candidates to Council in a closed session Monday night. Bruner is one of six finalists Council selected for an interview. Interviews are tentatively scheduled to begin December 4. City Council hopes to make a decision in mid-December and have the new City Manager on the job in January.

Bruner served as Assistant to the City Manager of Oak Park, adjacent to Ferndale, from October 2001 until coming to Ypsilanti in August 2004. He lived in Ferndale from May 2002 to November 2004 and still owns a home there, though he and his wife live in Ypsilanti. While a Ferndale resident, Bruner served as the chair of the Ferndale Downtown Development Authority's Economic Restructuring Committee and worked with downtown merchants and the Ferndale Chamber of Commerce to revitalize the district. When asked about potentially returning to Ferndale, Bruner said, "My career has been guided by serendipity. When one door closed at Accenture, another opened in Oak Park. After conducting a nationwide job search and turning down a job in Arizona, I came to Ypsilanti and met my wife at a City Council meeting. Now I have the opportunity to advance my career in a community I know, love, and in which I just happen to own a home."

Since coming to Ypsilanti, Bruner has worked with the Recreation Commission and others to sustain recreation programming after elimination of the Recreation Department. He facilitated a series of seven town hall meetings to comprehensively solicit and evaluate proposals for securing the City's financial future in the fall of 2005 before taking a four week leave of absence to work with FEMA in the aftermath of hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Bruner took over human resources shortly after his return in December and has been actively involved in personnel and union negotiations since then, settling two contracts and addressing other internal issues including compensation and recruiting. He also led an innovative information technology partnership between the City and Washtenaw County that won Government Technology's 2006 Michigan Excellence Award for best IT collaboration.

Bruner would be the eighth Ypsilanti department director to leave the City in the 30 months since his predecessor Shannon Stumbo Bellers left in June 2004. When asked about the turnover, Bruner said, "I can't deny it is becoming more and more difficult to retain and recruit a highly skilled workforce while we continue to make cuts. However, the folks who have left had an average of more than ten years with the City and most left to do things they could not do here. I love living and working in Ypsilanti so I'll be happy with whatever happens."

Former Assistant City Manager Shannon Stumbo Bellers, Human Resources Director Shari Kirby, and Public Works Director Harry Hutchison left the City for jobs in the private sector while former Downtown Development Authority Director Jennifer Goulet took a job in the non-profit sector. Former Planning & Development Director Megan Gibb relocated to Portland, OR and former Police Chief George Basar retired after more than 30 years of service to the City to become Police Chief in Howell.

When asked whether or not the City's financial situation played a role in his decision to seek the Ferndale position, Bruner said, "We have a great team in Ypsilanti and I enjoy working with everyone here. I believe our new Mayor and City Council are prepared to continue making the tough decisions needed to balance the budget. I'm not motivated by fear for the City's future or of losing my position. Things are tough all over. It is my personal connection to Ferndale that makes this opportunity appealing." When asked about potentially losing Bruner, Ypsilanti City Manager Ed Koryzno said, "Bob has been instrumental in helping the City adapt to recent challenges including developing the Solvency Plan and filling the department director vacancies and his departure would create a substantial void in the administration."

Bruner's current annual salary is \$64,320. Ferndale's job posting offered the new City Manager a salary of \$100,000 or more depending on qualifications. On average, City Managers of communities similar in size to Ferndale and Ypsilanti make approximately \$95,000 annually, plus benefits.

**CITY OF FERNDALE
CANDIDATES TO BE INTERVIEWED FOR CITY MANAGER POSITION
11/21/2006**

ROBERT J. BRUNER, JR.

**Assistant City Manager
Ypsilanti, Michigan**

Has Bachelor's Degree, A Master's Degree in public administration, and experience leading comparable organizations. As Assistant City Manager has worked closely with City Council members and staff to maintain high levels of service in the face of increasing costs and decreasing revenues. Understands the need for vision and throughout his career has worked with a variety of active citizen volunteer committees providing policy, advisory and regulatory services. His economic development experience has focused on redevelopment in built out metro-Detroit communities and allowed him to build relationships with business and community stakeholders.

ANN K. CAPELA

**Town Manager
Minturn, Colorado**

Has a B.A., Political Science with an M.P.A. Major in Political Personnel Management and Minor in Public Budgeting and Policy. Minturn is a full service home rule town with its own water plant operation, belongs to waste water treatment district and contracts out its solid waste collection. Project accomplishments include: development and hiring of Economic Development Director, Planner position, police officers office technician; public works maintenance person and water operator positions. Negotiated maintenance contract and funds for new sidewalk project, worked with community groups and received \$200K Great Outdoors Colorado for a park, received funding for Fishing is Fun. Renovated Town Hall for additional office space. Negotiated five-year contract with private corporation for lease that included \$100K funds for sidewalks. Completed negotiations with private entity to build a \$20M wastewater treatment plant.

D. WAYNE O'NEAL

**Former City Manager
Eastpointe, Michigan
May 2000 – July 2006**

Masters of Public Administration, Bachelor of Arts and Associate of Arts. City of Eastpointe is a full-service City governed by an elected Mayor and four Councilmembers. As City Manager of Eastpointe, served as the City Clerk and Personnel Director. Was the lead negotiator for all labor contracts and agreements; prepared and administered the annual budget; served as Chairman of the Eastpointe Building Authority and Secretary to Eastpointe Employees Pension Board. Succeeded in passing a voter approved five-year seven mil tax increase for public safety.

GREGORY PARRISH**Manager I – Planning
Detroit, Michigan**

Master in Public Administration, Doctoral Program in Public Administration, B.A., 1989. Served in a variety of roles moving over time from project management of development projects to data and information services to long-range planning. Currently responsible for management of staff working on Detroit Master Plan of Policies, Revised Master Plan, Capital Agenda, Community Planning for three clusters, Greenways Master Plan Supplement, website, GIS files, building permit analysis and housing unit counts, etc.

THOMAS THOMAS**Assistant County Administrator
County of Dougherty, Georgia**

Master in Public Administration, BA in Political Science. Currently supervises department directors managing the activities of the Dougherty County government. Departments include: Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization, Finance, Public Works, Emergency Medical Services, Jail, Court Services, Tax and Tag, Solid Waste Disposal, Library, Human Resources, Facilities Management and Police. Provides professional support to implementation of a 10-year \$210-million downtown master plan creating a new mix of commercial, institutional and residential activities. Provides oversight to developing/implementing the 20-year Comprehensive Land Use Plan and Zoning Ordinance. Provides oversight to the Rural Transit System to provide efficient transportation service for residents living in the unincorporated areas of the County. Represents Dougherty County on the Convention and visitors Bureau Committee to promote community awareness and support for tourism and convention efforts.

FREDERICK E. ZORN**Director of Economic Development
Taylor, Michigan**

Bachelor of Arts in Political Science, completed course towards a Master of Science in urban Planning-Economic Development. Responsibilities include administrative activities for following areas: Tax Increment Finance Authority (TIFA), Taylor Community Development Corporation, Taylor Downtown Development Authority, Taylor Brownfield Redevelopment Authority and Taylor Housing Commission. In 1998-99, as Director of Taylor's TIFA, combined and amended the City's six individual districts into one district containing six square miles in area. Recent TIFA and projects in progress include: joint venture with MDOT to facilitate reconstruction of all six miles of Telegraph with new water mains, decorative lighting, buried utility lines and landscaped road medians; renovation and expansion of the Ford Senior Center; expanded Telegraph-Metro Industrial Park....