

**SPECIAL MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NOVI
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2014 AT 7:00 P.M.
COUNCIL CHAMBERS – NOVI CIVIC CENTER – 45175 TEN MILE ROAD**

Mayor Gatt called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL: Mayor Gatt, Mayor Pro Tem Staudt, Council Members Casey, Fischer, Markham, Mutch, Wrobel

ALSO PRESENT: Victor Cardenas, Interim City Manager
Thomas Schultz, City Attorney

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

CM 14-09-143 Moved by Wrobel, seconded by Casey; CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY:

To approve the Agenda as presented.

Roll call vote on CM 14-09-143 **Yeas: Staudt, Casey, Fischer, Markham,
Mutch, Wrobel, Gatt**
Nays: None

AUDIENCE COMMENT – None

MATTERS FOR COUNCIL ACTION

1. Discussion and/or vote on City Manager search

Mayor Gatt explained that Council was elected by the people of Novi and promised to do their very best while doing their tasks. Most of what Council does can be mundane or routine. Although, sometimes an exciting project comes along that they get to weigh in on, but for the most part, they help move along the wishes of the department heads led by the City Manager. Council approves warrants as required in the City Charter and the Council sets policy. Once a year they review and approve a budget. Spending almost thirty million dollars of taxpayer's money is not something any of us take lightly. However, the vast majority of that money goes for fixed costs, including staffing with very little discretionary costs to debate about. It is a great responsibility approving the budget, but normally Council doesn't make a lot of changes to what the City Manager proposes. Novi's government is set up as so many suburban communities are with a weak Mayor - Council form of government. The Mayor and Council are part-time employees elected by the voters of Novi charged with overseeing the City government on a limited basis. The real powerhouse is the City Manager. That person is responsible for creating a budget for Council to look at and approve. The City Manager is responsible for hiring and firing the staff. They are responsible that there are enough police and fire fighters available to keep us all safe, that there are enough

snow plows ready to clear our roads, that the Parks and Recreation Department is serving our needs and that the City is being run efficiently and effectively. The City of Novi has been very fortunate over the years to have great City Managers. Former City Manager Ed Kriewall brought Novi all the way from being a farming community to becoming a large suburban city with some of the region's major malls inside of its boundaries. Former City Manager Rick Helwig over saw a City that was mired down in a lawsuit that would have bankrupt Novi. Through his efforts, staff, City Council, and City Attorney, we were all saved from that catastrophic event ever becoming a reality. Former City Manager Clay Pearson led this City through the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression. Today, because of Clay's leadership and bold moves by City Council, Novi is the envy of the region and bouncing back from the economic woes of not too long ago. Clay was recruited to run a much larger city in Pearland, Texas. Over the past several months the City has been without a City Manager. Victor Cardenas was chosen to be the Interim City Manager and Mayor Gatt wanted to publically thank him for his all of his work, efforts, time and talents handling duties since Clay left. We advertised for the vacant City Manager position and many different people responded. Council narrowed the field down to four people. Those four were interviewed. He thought if it was allowed, all four should be hired. All four interviews were outstanding. They are tops in their field with years of experience managing people and cities. They exhibited characteristics of a City Manager for Novi. It is the most difficult task as a Council member. He is prepared to vote for one. The reason he made the decision he did was the totality of the circumstances. Based on everything he knows about this person, he asked himself what person would be best for the City of Novi, residents, business owners, and visitors. What one person would be best for our City staff? What one person is going to be able to push this community to the heights and help develop some of our prolific property that still stands vacant? What one person would be able to bring more and better economic development to Novi? He supports Mr. Peter Auger to be our City Manager. He hopes there will be a consensus of City Council.

Mayor Pro Tem Staudt echoed everything the Mayor said. He thanked Mr. Cardenas for a job well done. It was longer than he anticipated. There were four excellent candidates and it was a difficult decision to weigh their qualifications, experience and their interviews. He thought they were four good choices. He completely agrees with the Mayor's assessment.

CM 14-09-144 Moved by Staudt, seconded by Wrobel; MOTION CARRIED: 6-1

To approve the hiring of Mr. Peter Auger as the City Manager of the City of Novi Michigan and instruct the City Attorney and Mayor to negotiate an employment agreement with him and this will be contingent on a successful contract negotiation.

Member Wrobel thanked Mr. Cardenas for filling in so admirably. He will be a great City Manager in the future. He noted they had four good candidates. After hearing the interviews and reviewing all there information, two of the four candidates stood out to

him. He decided to support Mr. Auger for this position because he felt his experience in Auburn Hills mostly mirrors the type of community that Novi is and the way we want to go in the future. He believed he was the one to lead us in the future.

Member Casey echoed the thanks to Mr. Cardenas for the wonderful service he has done to the entire City of Novi over the last several months. She echoed the points that the Mayor made in his speech. She thanked the candidates. After reviewing the information, she concurred that Mr. Peter Auger rose to the top and would support the motion on the table.

Member Fischer also thanked Mr. Cardenas. He saw where the vote was going. He presented his logic. Looking at the qualifications of the four candidates they seemed to have similar backgrounds and deserved an opportunity. His tests are 1). who will represent the values of the residents most and, 2). who exhibited the most people skills. Who could work with Council the best, City staff the best, and who would be in the public under pressure dealing with the public in the best manner. Based on the interview process, he would support Mr. Pastue for the position. He thought his answers elevated him to the cream of crop of the candidates. He thought Mr. Pastue would be the best choice at this juncture to lead us forward. It is a tough process because it is in the public. He would not support the motion.

Member Markham thanked Mr. Cardenas and appreciated the professionalism by which he approached the position as Interim City Manager. She is a strong supporter of Mr. Auger for the position after reviewing the quality candidates. Mr. Auger brought Auburn Hills to a level that she would not have expected. She feels Novi is in a very good position to be pivotal to the area as we grow. She thought Mr. Auger brings leadership and vision to the position.

Member Mutch echoed the appreciation of Mr. Cardenas as Interim City Manager. Initially being chosen as Interim City Manager, Member Mutch asked him to keep moving the City forward and not view this as a status quo. He felt he has done that. We were fortunate to have excellent candidates to interview. All of them brought different qualities before Council. After the interview process, it was clear to him that there were two candidates that rose to the top. It was difficult to choose because both had talents and ability that he thought would serve the City well. For the same reasons others have stated, he will support Mr. Auger's appointment to the City Manager's position. He knows Mr. Auger is going to challenge this City Council to work harder to think again about how we manage and approach things in the City of Novi. As a Council, we will challenge Mr. Auger to not only do as well as he did in Auburn Hills, but to elevate his game to be an even better City Manager for the City of Novi. He is looking forward to that opportunity. He knows this Council is up for the challenge and welcomed Mr. Auger. We will provide the kind of guidance any City Manager would expect where we would want the City to go and work collaboratively with him and staff to move the City forward to an even better and greater place.

Roll call vote on CM 14-09-144

**Yeas: Casey, Markham, Mutch, Wrobel, Gatt,
Staudt**

Nays: Fischer

ADJOURNMENT – There being no further business to come before Council, the meeting was adjourned at 7:17 P.M.

Robert J. Gatt, Mayor

Maryanne Cornelius, City Clerk

Transcribed by Jane Keller

Date approved: September 22, 2014