

City of South Lyon  
Special City Council Meeting  
August 23, 2018

Mayor Pelchat called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.  
Mayor Pelchat led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Present: Mayor Pelchat, Councilmembers Kennedy, Kivell, Kurtzweil, Parisien, and Richards  
Also Present: Chief Collins, Attorney Wilhelm, Fire Chief Vogel and Deputy Clerk Pieper

Mayor Pelchat stated Councilmember Walton is absent this evening.

AGENDA

CM 8-1-18 MOTION TO APPROVE AGENDA

Motion by Parisien, supported by Kennedy  
Motion to approve the agenda as presented

VOTE: MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mayor Pelchat then read the rules for the record, as they are printed on back of Agenda. Members of the public may speak at a Council meeting upon recognition by the Mayor. Public comment may only occur during periods designated on the agenda for public comment or a public hearing. A person may speak for up to two (2) minutes during each of the two public comment periods on agenda items or non-agenda items. Waivers of the time requirement may only be granted at the discretion of the Mayor, and waivers to speak at a time other than a designated comment period may only be granted by the Council. Any person wishing to make a presentation longer than two minutes or requiring audio-visual equipment is asked to contact the City Clerk requesting to appear on a future agenda. A person may only address Council from the podium. Only one person may occupy the podium at a time. All remarks are to be directed to the Mayor and Council. Speakers are not to engage in direct dialog with other meeting attendees. Any person who violates the Rules of Conduct, disturbs the peace at the meeting, and/or interferes with the meeting may be warned, ordered to be seated, removed, and/or ticketed. \*This summarizes Council Resolution 04-18. Complete Rules, including guidelines for considering waivers, are available in the Council Chambers and from the City Clerk.

NEW BUSINESS

1. City Manager Candidate Interviews

Jaymes Vettraino stated the City has gone through a long process and we are now ready for the final interviews. He stated he wanted to recognize candidate Tracey Kobylarz was involved in a severe accident and he has reached out to her family and friends. He stated he knows Council and candidate Zelenak hopes for her condition to improve and sends prayers to her and her family. He then stated he recommends Council to continue with the process with the scheduled meeting.

He stated this process began in May of this year. We provided a study of wages, followed by position description, stakeholder interviews, and a community questionnaire. He further stated 43 people applied. He then followed up with skype interviews a number of them. He brought forth the suggested candidates to Council at a closed session, who went on to interview 5 candidates. After the interviews, Council decided to again interview 3 out of the 5. They chose Tracey

Kobylarz, Thomas Skrobola and Paul Zelenak. Since that time, Thomas Skrobola has taken a position with another community. He stated there are comment cards and question cards available for people in the audience for any questions they may have.

Mayor Pelchat asked Question #1

Please outline your reasons for wanting to be the next City Manager of South Lyon?

Mr. Zelenak stated looking at career goals, you always look at additional responsibilities and he looks at South Lyon as having a lot of things that are desirable for him. It is a safe community, the historic charm, the community events. He wants to be a part of that. Also, the City is in good financial shape. He stated he can offer some beneficial things for the community.

Question #2

What do you consider as essential in the relationship between a City Manager and the City Council and how will you facilitate a productive relationship with City Council?

Mr. Zelenak explained working as a City Manager, he always has to be on the same page as Council, it is important for the relationship to be strong so the communication is always flowing between the City Council and Manager. He can then relay Council's goals to the rest of the employees.

Question #3

If there is a time when budget cuts must be implemented, please describe the process you would follow to fairly and equitably determine areas of the budget to be reduced.

Mr. Zelenak explained there would be several things to look at. You would have to look at the expenditures, and if some of them can be pushed off to another year. He stated you have to look at setting priorities for each department and to see what expenditures can be delayed. He stated you have to be on the same page with Council. He would ensure all departments would be treated fairly.

Question #4

Please describe, in detail, your approach to municipal budgeting, including the process you will use to communicate important budget objectives to the City Council.

Mr. Zelenak stated the budget process is a year-round project. He stated the capital improvement plan will outline expenditures, and if you have the proper plan in place along with a 5-year budget, everyone understands the expenditures that may be coming up, including the public. He further stated before the end of the calendar year, the City Council could have a goal setting meeting to assemble numbers based on prior years budget.

Question #5

How would you describe your management and leadership style? Please identify both strengths and weakness related to your management and leadership approach.

Mr. Zelenak stated he is a hands-on manager. He gets involved with the employees and getting to know them. He stated he has spoken with dispatchers, rode along with Police Officers, and sat with the Deputy Fire Chief, and that all helped him bond with the employees and understand what goes on more with the different departments. It is important to get to know the employees and the more you work with them the better. Even helping answer the phones if needed, he is part of

what it's all about. His employees know they can come to him and he is a straight shooter and trustworthy.

#### Question #6

Please give us an example of a time you faced an ethical dilemma, how you handled it and what you learned from it?

Mr. Zelenak stated every day he deals with ethics such as when he gets questions or needs from the community, such as a longtime business owner asks for favors over other businesses, such as plowing snow in front of their business before other businesses, and he has to explain that he can't do that. Same for Councilmembers that may ask him to do something he sees as unethical because he doesn't want to alter City operations based on a particular need a Councilmember sees as more pressing than other issues we are dealing with. He doesn't want to be put in a situation where someone asks him to take people off of particular job to deal with an issue that is happening on their street. Unfortunately, he cannot do that and he will not do that.

#### Question #7

How do you hold direct reports accountable for projects and/or issues you've delegated to them?

Mr. Zelenak stated when working with employees, his management philosophy, there are certain employees that need to be treated with kid gloves, some that you can let go and you know they will get the job done, as well as others that you need to remind them. He further stated when employees are working on certain things for him, he has to ensure they are getting done. He stated if employees can't get things done, they need to discuss it with him so we can work out the details to make sure things are done in a timely matter.

#### Question #8

Please identify a best practice that you have observed from another local government, non-profit or the private sector and describe how it could be implemented at South Lyon to improve its service to the community?

Mr. Zelenak stated when he worked in Rochester Hills, they had the most comprehensive Capital Improvement Plan he has seen. He has based his Capital Improvement Plans at his other communities on a lesser scale. He further stated it is innovation for how we can move forward in our community and everything you do in the future. It sets your budgets, your plans and your departments. Everyone knows where the City needs to go. From City Council to the employees, to the public. He stated some communities have websites where they can convey not only some of the things that are happening in their communities, but fillable forms, and they can submit and people are much more interested in working with the City when they can get forms online.

#### Question #9

Please describe how you would encourage all members of the public, regardless of background, viewpoints and experiences, to participate in City government?

Mr. Zelenak stated one of the most important things is getting it out to the public that we need people on boards and commissions. You need to get the word out through local media, websites and social media. He further stated when you get people involved on the boards and commissions, these are the people that start to train for perhaps other boards and commissions. That is the training to get people involved. You have to convey what the boards and commissions are and what they do is helpful.

#### Question #10

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Please describe a situation you've handled where the community faced a contentious issue with strong, diverging opinions and what did you learn from this experience?

Mr. Zelenak stated he worked in a community that owned a historic building. He had a historic architect come in and do an analysis for what would be needed for the next 10 years. The first thing people wanted was painting. Yes, aesthetically yes, it is important, but we need to address the foundation, the safety issues were more important. Some residents were upset that they were spending money on the inside of the building instead of the outside. He further stated he had to ensure the fire suppression was working, the electrical was working and up to date. He stated before we painted, we needed to make sure there was proper handling within the heating and air system and it was using outside air. He stated the building wasn't breathing as it was originally design. Mr. Zelenak further stated the public wanted the building painted, but he had to get people to understand why the interior had to be done first. It wasn't a huge issue, but it was contentious.

That is one of the things he dealt with recently to get the residents to understand.

#### Question #11

Please describe a situation when you've disagreed with your governing board. How did you approach that difference of opinion and explain the final result of the situation?

Mr. Zelenak stated they were working on a 10-year paving project. We tried to identify the road conditions based upon the surface and sub-surface of the road. We originally set their sites on working on the worst conditions that needed to be done. He stated they started making their priorities and they changed that at times based upon the millage and the bond payment that occurred every year. He further stated there is a cost analysis that has to be worked out to ensure you have the proper funding not only from Act 51 but also from the money from the bonds for certain roads. He then stated you have to set priorities not only on condition, but the cost as well.

#### Question #12

One of the great strengths of South Lyon is its traditional community feel and access to major metropolitan area. How has your professional experience prepared you to build on this City strength and what would you do to further this positive aspect of the community?

Mr. Zelenak stated South Lyon has a lot of the things that bring people to the community, based on things that are going on in the community and the care people take of their property. He further stated his job is to ensure that they continue to want to come back. That has to do with the master plan, the DDA plan and parks and recreation plan. He further stated when someone is driving through your town, you want to make sure they get the best impression and the City is already doing those things. He further stated when you get the buy in the city and the employees and committees and you know the improvements you are making are going to make the community more desirable and make everyone proud.

#### Question #13

By this stage in the process, we assume you have done significant research of South Lyon, what do you believe are the most important opportunities and challenges for the City in the near term and how would you approach these?

Mr. Zelenak stated there are several things he was able to look at. One of the things he has seen from watching meetings is the need to get the community to work together. He stated putting staff in place will allow the employees to focus on things they need to do without always having to put out fires. He further stated the businesses, Council, staff, the Manager and the residents have to work together. He then stated everyone has to be on the same page. You may have

disagreements, but everyone has to be on the same page. He stated everyone comes from different ways of looking at things, and not one way is wrong. It is important for everyone to agree and move forward. It is the betterment of all of us collectively.

Question #14

If selected as the City Manager, please tell us how you would approach building trust and respect of the employees and the community?

Mr. Zelenak stated he mentioned previously it is important for him to see and be seen. Every community he has worked at, knows he is part of the community. It will begin by being at the football teams this fall. He stated people want to know the Manager or the people making the decisions are involved. He further stated whether he lives here or not, he will be a part of the community. He understands the distance that needs to be between employees and the Manager. He knows when he should and shouldn't be there. He stated he knows when he is really involved with his employees, is when he knows their family. It isn't just to get them to know I am the Manager it is because he wants to be a part of the team.

Question #15

Please describe your level of interest and excitement in the City Manager position.

Mr. Zelenak stated the excitement has been building it began when he first saw the posting. There are things going through his head of things he may have said right or wrong. He further stated they excitement continues to build and he hopes he will always have that excitement.

Councilmember Kennedy stated relating to question #7, it deals with holding people responsible for various projects they were delegated to them. Do you have any project management tools such as Gantt charts, action item lists, so when the project is moving forward, you know if the project will be completed on schedule?

Mr. Zelenak stated he has used Gantt charts for longer term projects. Somethings he has done is as little as programming things of when things need to be done on their phone, staff meetings work as well. Working with other members as a team is always important. He further stated working with employees and their area of expertise and how they get things done, that could differ from employee to employee. He then stated as some of the things project and move forward, it is important for him to communicate with them as to how and why things need to be completed. Mr. Zelenak stated there is always training that people can attend as well that has been helpful.

Councilmember Parisien asked for more substance to his answer on question #11. She wants to know he can handle it if Council provides push back.

Mr. Zelenak stated if he is conveying something different than what Council wants, he needs to provide them based on professional experience or knowledge on why it should be done differently. It could be something ethically, or fiduciary. He stated there are things you can talk about during a meeting, or sometimes it needs to be discussed individually. He may need assistance from another department if he doesn't have all the information at that particular time. Mr. Zelenak stated it isn't to say Councilmembers opinion isn't right, they could be. Sometimes Council will need to make decisions based on things he isn't aware of. He stated he thinks understanding the importance of where he is coming from and why he is making that decision is going to be based on sound and reason. He stated it may take a vote of 4 on Council to make that change, it can't be just 1 individual on Council to make those decisions. It is important when expressing something, it is based on decisions that were made prior to Council meetings.

Councilmember Kurtzweil asked about his background on fundraising. She stated the City has not been good at competing with surrounding communities in terms of fundraising for things we need in the community. She stated we have a park and it hasn't been developed as much as it could be. She stated there is a neighbor that is very involved with fundraising for their park. She then asked him to speak about his experience and his thoughts on reaching out to different corporations that may be in southeastern Michigan and if they would be interested in developing the park in South Lyon.

Mr. Zelenak stated it is difficult for him as a City Manager to do fundraising. It is difficult because they could consider it as strong-arm tactics to get them to donate to the City. He then stated as being a DDA Director in the past, setting committees to do some of those activities on behalf of the parks would work. Whether it is a need to setup a tax-exempt organization as part of that, we have a fundraising group working right now on trying to preserve this particular building. They are having a luncheon, and the money they raise will help with grants. He stated an advisory board or a commission can do so as well. He can convey some things working with the boosters in the schools, and giving them suggestions. He further stated the most successful communities are the ones that don't have a TIFA, they have people that donate to the downtown. He further stated it is a worthwhile effort.

Councilmember Kurtzweil asked his personal opinion on tax abatements.

Mr. Zelenak stated he is currently working on a tax abatement that is given on a property where they are given the exemption for 10-12 years. That construction site will be able to pay half on their property taxes. He stated that is helping a doctor's office development. He stated it has been a long time coming, but they believe it is beneficial to the community, that building burned down over 10 years ago. It was also contaminated. He stated it is better to get half the value of the property than just land only taxes. He further stated they had industrial tax abatements in Rochester Hills which eliminated all taxes for 10 years. If the abatements were not given, the businesses would have built in other communities.

Councilmember Richards stated South Lyon occupies 4.6 miles and there isn't much expansion. He asked if Mr. Zelenak prefers residential developments, versus industrial.

Mr. Zelenak stated he wouldn't be able to make a generalized answer without looking at the master plan. He stated they are both needed in the community, but as a whole it would be what a community wants moving forward.

Councilmember Kivell stated it looks primarily like he has worked with smaller populations. He asked Mr. Zelenak if he is comfortable with the City of South Lyon's population.

Mr. Zelenak stated he is comfortable with it. He stated there are a lot of issues to deal with. He learned a lot about a growing community when working with Rochester Hills and he thinks that he seen what works, and what doesn't work.

Councilmember Kivell stated we have entertained discussions about the 210 and 255 abatements, and he asked if he has any bench marks of values of improvements that would need to be met before discussing abatements. He stated in the past, we have had a more comprehensive scale on how much relief we would afford to someone.

Mr. Zelenak stated you have to have guidelines established and he has tried to use a 1, 3 and 5-million-dollar investment. He further stated the 10-12-year abatement is about right. He then stated a one-million-dollar investment he would look at a 1-2-year abatements. He would have to look at if it will lead to more development. He further stated each one is very specific based on the area. If someone is brand new and everyone is afraid to develop that property, it will help to offer an abatement. He further stated you have to bring jobs, investments and it needs to be a game changer.

Councilmember Kennedy stated Mr. Zelenak has discussed some communities, where he was involved with capital improvement plans. He then asked what is his experience with infrastructure other than the bigger tickets that he discussed, what is your experience such as culverts and sidewalks, so he knows what is lying ahead for the 5-year plan to be pro-active.

Mr. Zelenak stated he doesn't get down to culverts, but he has been a part of a sidewalk improvement plans. He stated if your talking about a pathway system, it has to be part of the capital improvement plan. He further stated you have to try to show the benefit and the means for what the results will be. When you work with your departments, for not only capital improvements and purchases, you have to set limits on cost. He further stated conveying or expanding on each community has been different. He stated the one he is currently working on is 75 pages. They go through it each year to decide which is the most important purchase. He stated when you get on a bigger scale, they talk about the needs. Mr. Zelenak stated he needs to have a general understanding of what is needed. It is important but it is different for each community. If you don't have one, you will never know what is coming down the pipe. He isn't saying it can't be done, but you need to know how much money you need to have.

Councilmember Kurtzweil asked how he would sell a capital improvement plan, we don't have one. She stated she thinks what has happened in the City, the capital improvement plan was part of the budget.

Mr. Zelenak stated he doesn't think it is a separate document. He thinks of it as part of the budget. He further stated it is a planning tool so everyone is on board and so you know what the millage rate is. Residents need to be able to go online and see what the City is planning. He stated if we know we have these pieces of equipment that need to be purchased, you know you will have certain expenditures, it isn't a reactionary decision. The document is to be part of the budget to show what needs to be replaced in the future. He further stated he believes it is important to put these things in place to make decisions by sound reasoning, not reactionary because certain people want certain things done.

Councilmember Kurtzweil stated it is a good communication tool. If it is a separate document which is a fabulous public reaction tool, and we don't have that. We have been missing that link.

Mr. Zelenak stated it takes a while to create because your developing a format that will also create a means as which to create it with the staff you're working with. They have to understand you want to make sure the employees have the proper equipment to do their jobs for the City.

Mr. Vettrainso stated if Council would like they could ask a few more questions.

Councilmember Parisien stated in her opinion, leadership starts from the top. The morale has been low in the City. How would you get people to be passionate about their work again?

Mr. Zelenak stated it would start with meeting with employees. Also, to ensure they know what they say can be held in confidence. If it working environment, wages, or if its they don't feel

appreciated. He stated there are many things you can do that doesn't cost anytime. We have had flex time, where we have 4 ten-hour days, which can help, and even casual days can make such a difference. He further stated they have instituted cookouts for departments, and there are things that go a long way. Mr. Zelenak stated in meeting with the employees and letting them have a free flow of ideas, or even having suggestions anonymously would be great. It is his job to ensure the employees are heard and feel appreciated. Also, setting an example helps.

Mr. Vettrano thanked the candidate for returning and Council had some wise questions. At this point, he will turn the meeting back to the Mayor. He stated Council will now have to decide if they want to have the City Attorney to move forward with making an offer to the candidate, or adjourn and discuss it at the next meeting, or Council can direct GOV.hr to do something else. At this point the process has been facilitated and he has worked with Attorney Wilhelm to come up with some samples agreements.

Councilmember Parisien stated based on the questions that were asked, this matter needs to be considered delicately. She stated we have had a history of issues in the past with city managers, and it has been difficult for the city and employees. She wants this to be clear, he has answered all of his questions. She further stated his answer for question #9 about speaking with people and being part of the community was a really good answer. She thinks he would be a good fit for the City of South Lyon.

Councilmember Kurtzweil stated she wants to send her prayers and thoughts to Tracey and her family. She stated there were 3 candidates, and she thinks the difference between Tracey and Paul were not significant. She thinks they both had strengths and it would have been a difficult choice. She then stated we have an extremely qualified individual tonight and he has interviewed extremely well. She further stated she has had a lot of opportunities over the last 6 months to listen to the community. She wants to address the process; the business community liked the process and thought it was very transparent. She then thanked Mr. Vettrano. She is use to making business decisions, and he is a highly qualified candidate. She stated he brings some qualifications that we have not had in the past. What is important to her, is the community and the employees cannot continue to stay in the Interim City Manager situation. She stated we need a full-time professional City Manager, someone that will be here 50 hours a week, there is a lot of work to be done. She stated she is ready to say this City needs to move forward. Morale is low and it is for a reason. She stated she would vote for him to be the new City Manager.

Mayor Pelchat stated it isn't fair to say Chief Collins is only giving 20 hours a week to City Hall.

Councilmember Kennedy stated Mr. Zelenak has done a great job answering the questions at this interview as well as the first interview. He further stated he has the background and the knowledge and the experience to lead the City.

Councilmember Kivell stated it is pretty artificial environment to meet someone and guess how things will go. He stated he looks forward to meeting him and to he seems pretty aligned with what Council is looking for and he agrees that Mr. Zelenak will be a good fit. He hopes he will be able to raise the comfort level, it has been very stabilizing for the past 9 months.

Councilmember Richards stated this City needs leadership, stability and vision. Those three things have been lacking and he thinks Mr. Zelenak could do all those things.



CM 8-2-18 MOTION TO DIRECT CITY ATTORNEY TO MOVE FORWARD WITH OFFER OF EMPLOYMENT

Motion by Kennedy, supported by Kivell

Motion to direct the City Attorney to move forward with an offer of employment as City Manager

ROLL VOTE:

Kurtzweil- Yes

Richards- Yes

Kennedy- Yes

Parisien- Yes

Kivell- Yes

Pelchat- Yes

MOTION CARRIED- 1 ABSENT

Mr. Zelenak stated he appreciates Council's vote of confidence, and the opportunity. He had discussions with Mr. Vettrainso earlier in the week, he told him he was willing to do whatever the City wanted considering the situation with Tracey. They may have been competing for the same job, but they are still colleagues. He further stated his prayers are with her and her family.

Mr. Vettrainso stated he will work with Attorney Wilhelm to come up with an offer, which will then be brought back to Council to approve.

Councilmember Parisien asked Attorney Wilhelm if he had a time frame for the employment contract to be finished.

Attorney Wilhelm stated we have a working draft, but he will need some input from Council, as well as some information from staff. He expects a 2-4-week process.

Mr. Zelenak stated he will need to give Linden a 30-day notice after the he looks over the rough draft of the contract.

Mr. Vettrainso stated he understands the candidate and Council would like to move this along as soon as possible. Mr. Zelenak stated there is no need to rush this. Councilmember Kivell stated his concern was when he could give notice.

Councilmember Kurtzweil stated if this can get moving the sooner the better. She further stated the real estate market in the City is very tight, and if Mr. Zelenak may have an issue finding a home but possibly in the surrounding area.

PUBLIC COMMENT- None

COUNCIL COMMENT

Councilmember Parisien welcomed Paul. She then wished Tracey a speedy recovery. Councilmember Parisien stated she wanted to thank Chief Collins for doing an exceptional job as the interim city manager, while at the same time running the police department. It is a lot to handle and he has put in so many hours. Chief Collins stated Lieutenant Sovik has helped a lot.

Councilmember Richards stated he wanted to congratulate Mayor Pelchat and he wishes him the best.

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Councilmember Kurtzweil thanked Lieutenant Sovik for holding things together at the Police Department, she thinks there has been some issues, it was not as smooth as they thought it was going to be. She stated she thinks it was major for him to do so, and he should have been paid for his extra hours, including the other police officers as well. She thanked Lieutenant Sovik.

Councilmember Kivell stated he would like to thank all of the departments for stepping up and taking care of their extra load during this time, especially Chief Collins.

Councilmember Kennedy stated he wants to thank all the City employees and Chief Collins and his support through this time. He knows it has been challenging, and the same goes to the other departments as well. We are all in this together and he thanks everyone.

Mayor Pelchat thanked everyone across the board. Everyone stepped up and helped shoulder the load. He stated he told everyone this would be a long process, but he is very happy to move the City forward.

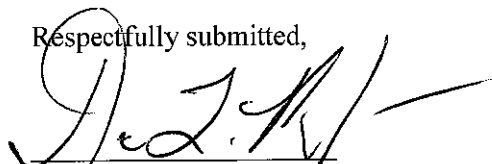
CM 8-3-18 MOTION TO ADJOURN


Motion by Kurtzweil, supported by Parisien  
Motion to adjourn meeting at 7:55 p.m.

VOTE:

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Respectfully submitted,

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor Dan Pelchat

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Deputy Clerk Judy Pieper