

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Media Contact: Judy Davids
Ph: 248-763-3036
judyd@romi.gov

CITY OF ROYAL OAK ANNOUNCES FINALISTS FOR CITY MANAGER POSITION

ROYAL OAK, MI – On Sept. 20, 2024, the Royal Oak City Commission convened in a closed session and selected finalists for the city's next City Manager from a pool of 54 applicants. The search process was led by Double Haul Solutions (DHS), an executive search and consulting firm hired to assist city leadership in finding a qualified candidate. DHS recommended 12 candidates, whom it pre-vetted through a questionnaire and screening interview.

The candidates were presented to the city commission based on their alignment with the desired characteristics and skillsets outlined in the [opportunity profile](#) used to promote the position. The city placed a strong emphasis on finding candidates with skills and qualities in effective communication, financial acumen, the ability to build strong organizational cultures, operational innovation, and accountability.

Following deliberations, the city commission invited four candidates to interview, with three agreeing to participate in interviews on Saturday, Oct. 12. The finalists are:

- **Joseph Gacioch:** Currently serving as the City of Ferndale City Manager, where their mission statement and organizational values drive their work culture, Gacioch is a Credentialed Manager under the International City/County Management Association (ICMA). Gacioch is also active with the Michigan Municipal Executives (MME) where he serves on the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee. During Gacioch's tenure, he oversaw the development of the City's first Climate Action Plan.
- **Khalfani Stephens:** A seasoned government administration professional, Stephens has direct experience at the local, county, and state levels, as well as strong community and economic development experience. Stephens has served as the Deputy Mayor of the City of Pontiac since 2022. He is a Certified Economic Developer and holds an Economic Development Finance Professional certification. Stephens also serves on the Michigan Municipal League Board and is active in multiple professional and non-profit organizations.
- **Erik Tungate:** A Credentialed City Manager through the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) and certified in 'Leading with Excellence,' Tungate has led the City of Oak Park as its City Manager since 2012. Tungate prides himself on being an exceptional communicator and collaborator with the ability to implement change. He holds a Human Resources Senior Certified Professional certification and was named Public Service Executive of the Year by the American Society of Public Administration Detroit Metropolitan Chapter.

"We are fortunate to have attracted such highly qualified professionals to our amazing community," said Mayor Michael Fournier. "The City Commission and I are looking forward to a robust process to ensure we find the best candidate to lead our organization and support an elected body focused on developing a new strategic direction built upon community principles."

Public interviews with the finalists will be held on **Saturday, Oct. 12**, starting at 12:30 p.m. at **Royal Oak City Hall**, 203 S. Troy Street. Once a candidate is chosen, a comprehensive background and reference check will be conducted.

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