

City of Troy, Michigan  
December 2, 2023 Advance Meeting  
Post Meeting Report

January 2024



Report Prepared by:

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**City of Troy**  
**December 2, 2023, Advance Meeting**  
**Post Meeting Report**

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Vettrainso Counseling (VC) was retained to prepare for and facilitate the City of Troy’s December 2, 2023, Advance Meeting. The consultant used a phased approach to execute the project. This Post Meeting Report is intended to review the activities of the meeting and highlight suggested post-meeting action steps.

**Table of Contents**

Phase 1: Preliminary Assessment and Identifying Goals for the Advance Meeting	2
Phase 2: Interviews and Data Collection with Elected Officials and Executive Staff	2
Phase 3: Assembly of Advance Meeting Agenda and Distribution of Relevant Data	2
Phase 4: Facilitation of the Advance Meeting	3
Public Comment, Framing the Day, Review of the Purpose of the Day	3
Prior Year Project Update	4
Priority 1: Revenue and Ballot Question Discussion	8
Emergent Issue 1: Sustainability	9
Emergent Issue 2: Emergency Medical Services	9
Emergent Issue 3: Staff Engagement	9
Phase 5: Delivery of Summary Report	11
Appendix 1: Advance Attendees	12
Appendix 2: Consultant Bio	13

### **Phase 1: Preliminary Assessment and Identifying Goals for the Advance Meeting**

During August 2023, VC reviewed the project goals with the executive staff of the City and studied the project deliverables from the prior year's Advance Meeting. As an experienced local government professional, VC partnered with Troy's leadership team to develop a plan for the December 2, 2023, Advance. The preliminary assessment included reviewing the notes and outcomes from the 2022 Advance, as well as strategic planning, budgeting, and objective-setting documents of the City.

### **Phase 2: Interviews and Data Collection with Elected Officials and Executive Staff**

On August 15, VC attended the staff leadership meeting to review the objectives, expectations, and desired outcomes for the Advance. Mid-September, VC hosted individual interview meetings with the Mayor and City Council members to review each elected official's objectives, expectations, and desired outcomes for the Advance. VC also created and distributed a department head survey to receive individual feedback.

The consultant reviewed feedback received from the elected officials and leadership staff and began assembling common themes and desired outcomes among all stakeholders. From August through November 2023, VC reviewed the project goals with the executive staff of the City and studied the project documents produced by the staff. Over the course of five meetings, several potential topics and sessions were discussed, with several revisions of both project documents and the meeting agenda.

### **Phase 3: Assembly of Advance Meeting Agenda and Distribution of Relevant Data**

After considering the stakeholder feedback the consultants determined there would be three major parts of the Advance agenda: (1) review of the prior year topics (Troy Public Library, Troy Family Aquatic Center, and Recreation and Senior Services) (2) continuation of the discussion from the 2022 Advance regarding the need for additional revenue and the potential of a ballot question regarding revenue; and (3) discussion of several emergent issues (Sustainability, Emergency Medical Services, and Staff Engagement).

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## **Phase 4: Facilitation of the Advance Meeting**

The Advance was held at the Troy Community Center on December 2. Attendees are listed in Appendix 1. The Advance meeting started at 8:00 am and concluded at 3:30 pm. The activities of the meeting included:

- A. Public Comment
- B. Framing the Day
- C. Review of the Purpose of the Day
- D. Prior Year Project Update (Gallery Explanation)
- E. Priority 1: Revenue and Ballot Question Discussion
- F. Emergent Issue 1: Sustainability
- G. Emergent Issue 2: Emergency Medical Services
- H. Emergent Issue 3: Staff Engagement
- I. Wrap Up

While each Advance activity was important, below are the activities appropriate for report out by the consultant:

### **Public Comment, Framing the Day, Review of the Purpose of the Day**

Public Comment was received, encouraging the City to continue to review and prioritize its work on issues related to sustainability.

City Manager Mark Miller noted with his retirement in the coming year, this would be his last opportunity to participate in an Advance. He expressed appreciation to the City Council and staff for their engagement and support over the last several years and looks forward to the Advance and coming months.

The facilitator reviewed the purpose of the Advance is to review Strategic Goals and Priority Action Items, providing direction for staff in their preparation of the 2024/25 budget and 2024 City Council meeting agenda setting. He noted that each Advance is unique and the agenda has been developed based on a review of the prior year meeting, stakeholder discussions, and several planning sessions with the City Manager's office.

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## Prior Year Project Update

A “gallery tour” was used to update attendees on the priorities identified during the prior year’s Advance. Attendees were asked to review large posters that stated the suggested next steps to move the priority forward, from the 2022 Advance, and the actions taken by the City during the past year. Throughout the day attendees were asked to use sticky notes to provide comments or questions on the poster presentations.

The gallery tour tool was used to try to efficiently report on the four (4) priority items and allow attendee feedback. As noted in the “Action” reported on the posters, all four priority items have planned follow-up in 2024. Below are photos of the poster presentations from the day-of meeting and the Action items for 2024.

This report includes all of the sticky note comments (verbatim) captured on the posters during the meeting. As noted for staff follow-up under each priority item, staff should review the sticky note comments and prepare a report to City Council in response to the comments/questions. It is recommended that the report be provided during the first quarter of 2024.

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### Troy Public Library (TPL) Noted actions for staff:

A Special City Council meeting will be requested during the first quarter for 2024 to review the formal report generated from the Library Strategic Planning process (May 2023 – December 2023).

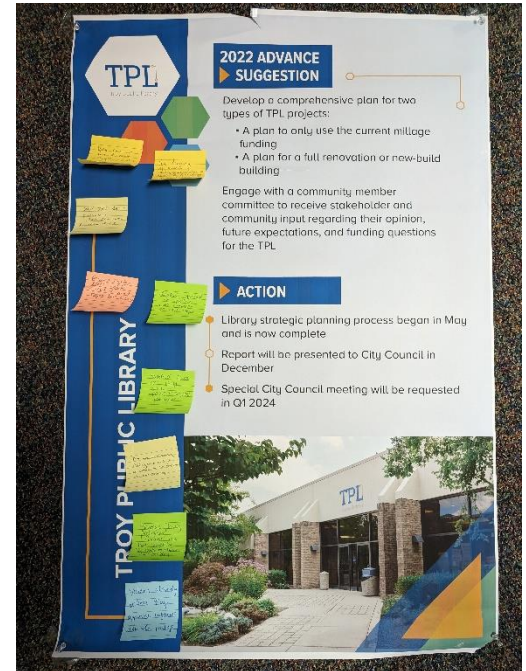
Review below sticky note comments and provide responses via written report to City Council.

#### City Council Notes:

- Are we considering adding on a wing or an addition to the building vs. new building
- Will the report include both renovation and new build
- Update Council on costs of desired changes and their trends
- I am hearing so much disappointment that the building is in/remains in its current state – status?

#### Staff Notes:

- Voters already believe they approved upgrades with the millage
- Strategic Planning preliminary findings are that something big needs to happen with building
- Band-Aid fixes are very costly approx. \$500,000 per year
- Looking forward to working with Council on next steps
- Receive Master Plan update and look at next steps for Library



### City Hall Noted actions for staff:

Architectural program consultant RFP to be prepared and presented. City Council chambers redesign project is ongoing.

Review below sticky note comments and provide responses via written report to City Council.

#### City Council Notes:

- Our City Hall is so tired... we really need to keep improving
- I really want to have a comprehensive list of needs and wants and costs

#### Staff Notes:

- City Hall improvements are necessary to attract and retain one of Troy's greatest assets: its employees. It is a need not a want.
- If considering renovations to city hall and library, and determining priority, please consider the library has 1000+ people in every day
- Continue to improve City Hall with proper capital projects. No need for new building.





## Recreation and Senior Services Noted actions for staff:

Recreation and Senior Services will continue to be monitored and reviewed during the coming year.

Review below sticky note comments and provide responses via written report to City Council.

### City Council Notes:

- Is there an area in a city building which can be dedicated as a “senior center”
- Hearing really positive things from the Friends of Troy Seniors – great to see/hear
- Create aspirational plans based on various funding levels on what recreation and senior recreation could look like
- Need to better understand and quantify the wants and needs of our seniors
- Have we “Council” provided the policy direction staff needs? What more can/should we be doing?

### Staff Notes:

- Have increased senior programs and opening new senior room this year
- Turned senior store into card room for seniors
- Increase senior services. Can we look at floor plan of rec center for additional dedicated place/time for seniors?
- Troy provides much better senior services than so many communities. I think we need to comfortable sometimes saying “no” to demands



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## Troy Family Aquatic Center (TFAC) Noted actions for staff:

TFAC will continue to be operational and actions to review its future use, funding, and capital investment will continue during the coming year.

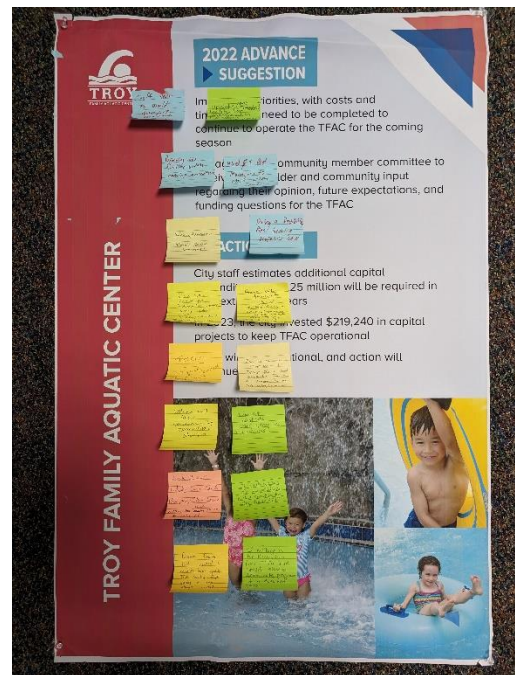
Review below sticky note comments and provide responses via written report to City Council.

### City Council Notes:

- Can we re-think TFAC as it is? Splash pad is a good consideration. There can be alteration that are less costly to maintain
- Have we thought about establishing a maintenance endowment for TFAC – housed at Community Foundation for SE Michigan?
- Can we increase hourly rates /pay for lifeguards? Residents are asking.
- Funding alternatives. Public/private partnerships?
- When will the community committee start?
- TFAC, let's just do it. Renovate. Why can't we?
- Determine funding level needed and maintain high quality TFAC amenity. Propose options if major changes are needed.

### Staff Notes:

- Doing a feasibility plan. Getting proposals now.
- Hired FT pool managers to assist with pools
- Branding the facility with naming amenities
- Staff went to World Water Park Convention for ideas
- Update (not just maintain existing) facility for modernization and staffing efficiency (\$\$)
- If millage is for Recreation (include TFAC) we could close or terminate programs if it does not pass
- If 60% of users are non-residents, is that something the city should fund?
- Why not investigate easier options like a splash pad
- Look at our whole Civic Center floor plan/future before putting too much more \$ into it



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## Priority 1: Revenue and Ballot Question Discussion

During the 2022 Advance meeting, City Council had significant discussion regarding aligning the City's goals with its available resources. General consensus was reached during that meeting that additional resources would be needed to meet the City's goals and that if the City is going to ask the community to provide additional revenue via ballot initiative, a questions could be considered November 2024. A significant factor in planning a ballot initiative is the question of the type of revenue that should be raised (a millage to service debt on capital improvement bonds or a special use operational millage). No consensus regarding the type of revenue was reached during the prior Advance meeting, though consensus was reached that any ballot question would require significant community engagement and communication.

The 2023 Advance continued the 2022 Advance discussion regarding revenue and a potential ballot question. The City Manager's office presented information focused on answering four (4) questions: *What to fund? How to fund it? How much? and How long?*. The presentation focused on data available from the 2022 Community Survey and public information available regarding dedicated millage and bond proposal ballot questions considered by comparable communities and other Oakland County municipalities between 2011 and 2023.

The elected officials deliberated the questions noted in the City Manager's office presentation. The primary consideration discussed was the wisdom of a bond proposal verse a dedicated millage as the type of revenue that should be considered. No consensus was reached on this issue.

Another significant focus of contemplation was on the question of how much funding was needed and for what exact projects/operational need. The specific questions of *If it is a Bond Proposal, what projects would be recommended (with options) by Administration?* and *If it is a Dedicated Millage, what mix of operational and/or projects would be recommended (with options) by Administration?* were points of deliberation. During the meeting staff provided information regarding current City funding levels, how much could be raised at different millage amounts, the interaction between funds (capital and general), and the funding levels for certain projects/operational need. During the meeting it became apparent that the Administration would need to develop additional reports for the elected officials to consider these questions further.

### Revenue and Ballot Question Discussion - Summary and Suggested Action

During the 2023 Advance meeting, no consensus was reached regarding moving forward with a communication and action plan for a ballot question related to revenue. As noted above, consensus was that more information would be required to be provided from the City Manager's office to the elected officials regarding funding options. **At a future date, City Council could consider formal action requesting Administration to prepare specific information related to the questions/requests generated during the Revenue Discussion.**

## Emergent Issue 1: Sustainability

Staff presented information and updates on the Michigan Green Communities Challenge (MGC) and the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant Program (EECVBG). The City's internal sustainability team review the 127 action items of a prior MGC Challenge and anticipates the City will receive silver certification during the 2023 Challenge. After considering feedback heard during a special Council meeting in September, staff has changed its EECBG application to focus on the Voucher Program for technical assistance provided by the Department of Energy Office of State and Community Energy Programs.

### **Noted next steps:**

- Join the Michigan Green Communities Challenge when as soon as available
- Complete an application to the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (Voucher Program) to develop a city-wide sustainability plan
- Continue to engage the community on the City's sustainability plans and actions

## Emergent Issue 2: Emergency Medical Services

Staff presented information regarding the history of EMS services in the City, recent / current staffing challenges, and the limited funding (reimbursement) available to provide the service. Important recent developments include a report regarding Alliance's agreement and engagement with Fitch & Associates to provide a professional assessment of the City's service.

### **Noted next steps:**

- Prepare needed amendments to the agreement with Alliance
- Continue to monitor Alliance's performance
- When complete, receive and consider the Fitch & Associates report. Use the information to develop the future state of the City's EMS service

## Emergent Issue 3: Staff Engagement

Staff presented information regarding a need identified during the 2021 Advance to augment the City's employee attraction, engagement and retention capabilities. The position of HR Specialist has been added and, with a committee of employees from various departments, is focused on employment engagement. Based on the results of a spring 2023 employee survey staff has identified opportunities for staff engagement improvement/growth.

### **Noted next steps:**

City Management is committed to:

- Open Communication: Improving lateral communication between departments and vertical communication within the organization.
- Honest Assessments: Celebrating what's working and having the courage to improve the things that aren't.
- Cooperation & Curiosity: Asking questions, learning from others, speaking well of others, and believing the best.

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## **Phase 5: Delivery of Summary Report**

The report was prepared in draft form for review by the City Manager's office and is submitted in final for distribution. The Consultant Bio is provided in Appendix 2. Post-Advance participant survey feedback was provided separate from this report.

## Appendix 1: Advance Attendees

Title	Name	Title	Name
Mayor	Ethan Baker	Information Technology Director	Alex Bellak
Mayor Pro Tem	Rebecca Chamberlain Creanga	City Attorney	Lori Grigg Bluhm
Councilmember	Ellen Hodorek	Public Works Director	Kurt Bovensiep
Councilmember	Mark Gunn	Police Chief	Frank Nastasi
Councilmember	Theresa Brooks	City Assessor	Kelly Timm
Councilmember	David Hamilton	Library Director	Emily Dumas
City Manager	Mark Miller	Recreation Director	Brian Goul
Deputy City Manager	Robert Bruner	Fire Chief	Peter Hullinger
Assistant City Manager	Meg Schubert	Chief Financial Officer	Rob Maleszyk
HR Specialist	Heather Shaw	Human Resources Director	Jeanette Menig
		Community Development Director	Brent Savidant

## Appendix 2: Consultant Bio

### Jaymes Vettraino

Vettraino Consulting, LLC

Jaymes provides municipal management consulting services to communities. His focus is on assisting with operational management, financial planning, community engagement, facilitation, and economic development. In addition, through a partnership with GovHR USA, Jaymes provides executive recruitment and employee class and compensation study services.

Prior to starting his consulting service, Jaymes spent 17 years as a City Manager. Most recently as the City Manager of Rochester, MI, where he had the opportunity to lead a dynamic management team to simultaneously reduce expenses and increase the level of community service during years of the “great recession.” Prior to serving the City of Rochester, Jaymes was the Manager of Kutztown, PA and had the chance to be the first Manager of Pen Argyl, PA.

Jaymes currently serves Rochester University as its first Director of Civic Engagement and as an Assistant Professor, where he is accelerating the University’s development of students that have a passion for working in the social and community service sector. Jaymes has an MBA in Management from Lehigh University and a BA in Political Science from Michigan State University.