

COLIN BAENZIGER  ASSOCIATES

EXECUTIVE RECRUITING

Bogdan “Bob” Vitas

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Resume

RESUME

Innovative, results orientated leader that strongly encourages team work, individual performance and a collaborative approach to achieve organizational excellence and promote community prosperity. Highly skilled in strategic planning and community visioning, successfully managed both rapid growth and economic recovering communities producing significant results. Innate ability to communicate successfully with donors, elected and appointed officials, staff, general public, businesses, and the media to achieve important organizational goals. A high impact local government chief administrative officer with diverse experience in overseeing complex multidisciplinary organizations coupled with extensive local government management consulting experience focused on USAID democracy and governance projects overseas in post conflict transition countries and in the U.S. on FEMA disaster relief programs. Provided professional management or consulting services for more than 100 government entities, ranging in size from communities of 5,000 to capitol cities of over 1.7M. Areas of expertise and specialized knowledge:

- Turn Around and Change Management
- Strategic Management Planning
- Organizational Analysis and Project Management
- Monitoring and Evaluation
- Labor Relations and Personnel Management
- Economic and Community Development
- Financial Management and Budgeting
- Public Procurement & Debt Management
- Constituent and Customer Relations
- Intergovernmental Relations

LOCAL GOVERNMENT MANAGEMENT EXPERIENCE

Village Administrator **2007**
– 2011

Village of Lake Zurich, Illinois population 19,964, Chief Administrative Officer with oversight of a \$45M budget, 7 operating departments and 172 full time employees

City Administrator **2000**
– 2001

City of Lewiston, Maine, population 35,690, Chief Administrative Officer with oversight of a \$67.7M budget, 15 operating departments and 550 employees

Town Administrator **1991**
– 2000

Town of Menasha, Wisconsin, population 16,546, Chief Administrative Officer with oversight of a \$22M budget, 11 operating departments and 198 employees

Administrator of Finance and Personnel

1987– 1989

City of McHenry, Illinois, population 13,656, Senior Manager with oversight of a \$11.9M budget, 6 operating departments and 183 employees

Director of Development Services

1985

– 1987

City of East Moline, Illinois, population 20,960, Senior Manager with oversight of a \$12.5M budget, 13 operating departments and 152 employees

Assistant to the City Manager

1982

– 1985

City of Crystal Lake, Illinois, population 42,142

Administrative Intern

1980

– 1982

Village of Willowbrook, Illinois, population 8,967

LOCAL GOVERNMENT CONSULTING EXPERIENCE

Associate, short term, USAID Democracy and Governance proposal, Republic of Uganda

2012

Management Systems International, Washington, D.C

Associate, short term, USAID Monitoring & Evaluation contract, Republic of Serbia

2007

The Mitchell Group, Inc., Washington, D.C.

Vice President, Community Municipal Economic Development Programs

2006

– 2007

America's Development Foundation, a 501c (3) corporation, Alexandria, Virginia

Operations Manager and Deputy Team Leader– City of New Orleans

2005

– 2006

Regional Program Manager – South Central and South Western Louisiana

U. S. Department of Homeland Security - FEMA Long Term Community Recovery Program

AECOM International Development, Washington, D.C.

Project Manager – City of Belgrade Metropolitan Project

2001- 2005

Chief Municipal Advisor - Financial Management and Citizen Participation

Senior Municipal Management & Financial Management Advisor

USAID Serbia Local Government Reform Program, Republic of Serbia (former Yugoslavia)

Planning & Development Collaborative International - AECOM, Washington, D.C.

Deputy Director, Division of Urban Management, Finance, and Governance
2000

Senior Financial Advisor, short term, USAID contract Republic of Zambia
Planning & Development Collaborative International, Washington, D.C.

Government Finance Advisor, short term, USAID contract, Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina
1998

Local Government Advisor, short term USAID contract, Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina
1996

International City and County Management Association, Washington, D.C.

EDUCATION

Master of Arts in Public Affairs (MPA), concentration Urban Management and Development
1982

Northern Illinois University, De Kalb, Illinois

Bachelors of Arts, Political Science, majors - International Relations and Public Law, Russian
Minor **1979**

Northern Illinois University, De Kalb, Illinois

NATIONAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM CERTIFICATIONS

United States Department of Homeland Security FEMA Emergency Management Institute

ICS 100 Introduction to the Incident Command System November 2008

ICS 200 ICS for Single Resources and Initial Action Incidents January 2009

United States Department of Homeland Security FEMA Center for Domestic Preparedness

ICS 300 Intermediate ICS for Expanding Incidents January 2009

Texas A&M University System - US Department of Homeland Security Office of Grants and Training

Senior Officials Workshop for All-Hazards Preparedness February 2009

Public Information in a Weapons of Mass Destruction/Terrorism Incident January 2010

Mayoral Institute Seminar for All-Hazards Preparedness March 2010

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

- Illinois City and County Management Association 1985-1991, 2007 - present
- International City/County Management Association 1980-2004, 2011 - present
 - International Task Force 1999 - 2000
 - Committee on International Management Issues 1997 - 1999
- NIU Master of Public Administration Global Affairs Committee – 2012 - present
- International Council of Shopping Centers 2008 – present
- Chicago Sister Cities International - Belgrade Committee Member 2006 - present

LIST OF KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Village of Lake Zurich

- Under my direction Lake Zurich achieved its first prestigious Government Finance Officers Association of the US and Canada Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for Fiscal Year 12 on first attempt
- Restructured and reorganized the organization in FYs 9, 10 and 11 resulting in a reduction of 26 full time positions and a permanent cost savings in excess of \$2.5 million in salary and fringe benefits while not impacting level or quality of municipal services
- Successfully initiated and orchestrated a public referendum in November 2010 to authorize the Village of Lake Zurich to impose a local non home rule sales tax of .5% projected to raise \$2.0M in FY 2012 for public infrastructure improvements and general property tax relief in future years
- Crafted and instituted a 2.5% Municipal Utility Tax raising \$750K in new revenue for FY 2011 to assist with general fund expenditures to maintain service levels
- In concert with Finance Director and consultants devised a financial plan to restructure and refund \$14M of TIF debt resolving a long-standing internal financial crisis affecting all municipal funds
- Maintained the Village's Moody A-1 Bond Rating for all prior Village debt obligations and obtained a Standard and Poor AA positive bond rating upgrade for the restructuring and refunding of \$14 million in TIF obligation debt resulting in a \$1M cost savings to the taxpayers
- Instituted Capital Improvement Plan and Budget to address public infrastructure, capital equipment, and public facility needs as funded by the new local non home rule sales tax and other revenue sources
- Managed to fully fund the public safety pension fund annual actuarial requirements for both police and fire the past four fiscal years, reversing a 17 history of negligent underfunding thereby increasing the combined general fund tax levy contributions from \$400K to \$2.5M while correspondingly reducing other expenditures
- Prepared and conducted a Request for Qualifications for legal services resulting in a significant reduction in annual legal saving taxpayers nearly \$200K annually replacing corporation counsel after 22 years of service
- Renegotiated contractual relationship between Lake Zurich and Rural Fire Protection District resulting in \$600K in increased revenue to the Village from four adjoining municipalities the past four fiscal years
- Completed an Intergovernmental Agreement with the Village of North Barrington and Lake County on behalf of the Wynstone Property Owners Association for extension of sanitary sewer services outside of Village and generating \$840K in connection fees and significant new annual water and sewer revenues for Lake Zurich
- Negotiated memorandum of agreement with Canadian National (CN) rail road obtaining \$2M for mitigation costs to alleviate impacts of increasing rail operations pursuant to final environmental impact statement issued from United States Surface Transportation Board in Washington, DC

- Attracted and retained two new commercial businesses in the downtown TIF district, orchestrated the development of a new park, oversaw the remediation of two downtown Brownfield sites, the demolition of three buildings to create pad ready sites, and settled a six year old lawsuit involving a tenant allowing for future remediation of the site, and demolition of the several remaining buildings to create pad sites

BOGDAN VITAS, JR., MPA
820 Ravenswood Court, Lake Zurich, Illinois 60047
Home: 847-847-7946 Mobile: 224-202-4107 E-Mail: bobvitas@gmail.com

- Successfully resolved long standing 18 year dispute with Village of Kildeer resulting in a new understanding allowing for the development of new commercial properties on Illinois Route 12 and Illinois Route 22
- Initiated and directed process by which a one of a kind Form Base Code, Development Regulations and Overlay District were adopted for the redevelopment of the downtown TIF district
- Coordinated and negotiated the successful conclusion of a \$9M lawsuit involving the Village of Lake Zurich TIF district, the developer and lending institution which commenced in 1997, resulting in the return of all affected Village property, payment of \$750K non-disputed funds by the Village, termination of the development agreement, and limiting total loss to under \$250K to assist in satisfying mechanic liens
- Creatively developed financial solutions for both the foreclosed Coventry Creek and Flint Crossing residential developments with two lending institutions to remove properties from foreclosure and return to active development status at no Village cost
- Initiated and developed a tailored comprehensive strategic management planning system to provide for more transparent, accountable and efficient government; including community outreach measures, internal self assessments, and performance measurement tools resulting in the establishment of clear and attainable strategic goals and objectives linked to realistic financial resources, budgetary plans and delivery of services
- Coordinated Lake Zurich's first Citizen Satisfaction Survey through the Northern Illinois University Public Opinion Laboratory and integrated results as a component of the Overall Strategic Management Planning process which I designed and developed for implementation in the Village
- Researched and acquired updated hardware and software equipment necessary for the live transmission of all official Village meetings and related agenda materials via the Internet and television broadcasting to improve public access and to promote more open and transparent government operations on Granicus platform
- Re-examined existing labor agreements based on the downturn of the economy and renegotiated the terms of the final contract year resulting in a \$700K cost saving to the taxpayers for FY 2011. All employees accepted a salary freeze and ten percent increase in individual health insurance premium costs
- Implemented a new merit based pay for performance evaluation system for all Village employees
- Prepared a new Employee Handbook in accordance with all current applicable Federal and State employment laws, replacing an outdated 1988 Personnel Policy Manual in FY 2011
- Evaluated Village's partially self-funded health insurance program and migrated to a fully funded plan, resulting in a recurring \$1M reduction in annual premium costs to the Village
- Created Assistant Village Administrator position to bolster administrative oversight of the organization
- Created Human Resources Manager to lead a new Human Resources Division within the Administration
- Directed consultants in development of a Job Classification and Compensation Plan and Management Audit for implementation in FY 2010 to establish internal and external equity for non-union employees after salary plan was abandoned 17 years earlier
- Outsourced payroll function to replace paper based system to enhance efficiency and accountability

- Instituted internship programs with Northern Illinois University and University of Illinois at Chicago in the Administration, Finance and Building and Zoning/Economic Development Departments to mentor young professionals and benefit the organization

- NIU Master of Public Administration Program Intern Supervisor of the Year Award 2011
- NIU Master of Public Administration Board of Directors – past member

City of Lewiston, Maine

- Attracted and negotiated Wal-Mart's state of the art Distribution Center project serving the Northeastern US and Canada, resulting in 400 new jobs (90% full time), \$9M annual payroll, \$40.5M in private investment, and construction of a 485,000 sq. ft. facility. Structured incentive package of \$18M for the necessary water and sewer upgrades, sale of City owned land, and a tax increment-financing package
- Negotiated the sale for 3 of 10 City owned former Bate's textile mill buildings (\$5.5M) to private sector, increasing the annual local tax base by \$157,410, and leveraging \$15M in new private investment
- Resolved several matters of litigation related to City acquisition of both the fee simple and leasehold interests of private property for library expansion resulting in \$250,000 acquisition cost savings
- Converted traditional line item financial management system to a performance based budgeting system
- Restructured and implemented a new Capital Improvement Plan and Budgeting system

Town of Menasha, Wisconsin

- Stabilized local tax levy rate between 1991 and 2000 achieving one of the lowest rates among all comparable sized full service municipalities statewide while increasing level and quality of municipal services
- Negotiated attraction of a new \$500M Kimberly Clark industrial manufacturing facility on 140 acres generating 352 jobs, increased tax revenues and stabilizing local tax rate
- Structured and spearheaded attraction of a new \$75M commercial retail/office and residential development project located on 215 acres creating a new Town Center with plans for a 10K-seat convention center
- Attracted new \$28M Kimberly Clark R&D/Conference Center facility, including the award of a \$250K State of Wisconsin Transportation Economic Assistance Grant for highway improvements
- Obtained a \$750K WDOD economic development public facilities grant commitment to install new water and sewer lines, and improve local roads to support new industrial complex growth
- Directed issuance of \$5M Industrial Development Revenue Bonds to expand Hayes Manufacturing's facilities
- Developed the concept and legal mechanisms for the design build construction of the Municipal Complex Building Project (34,000 square feet) including all furnishings, equipment and site development for \$3.1M or \$59 per square foot without any tax levy increase and further consolidated all municipal operations

- Orchestrated settlement of two 50-year-old disputes between the Town and Cities of Appleton and Menasha resulting in multiple intergovernmental cooperation agreements establishing jurisdictional boundary lines
- Spearheaded overall consolidation of Sanitary District after 30 years of operating as independent Municipal Corporation and development of organizational and transitional operation management plans. Established four intergovernmental cooperation agreements and consent resolutions from all adjoining municipalities
- Negotiated settlement of 25-year dispute with City of Appleton resulting in intergovernmental cooperation agreement to consolidate Town's Para transit system and re-establish fixed route bus service to the community resulting in overall cost reductions, service improvements and enhanced federal and state aids for the system
- Initiated and completed intergovernmental cooperation agreements with three adjoining municipalities, Appleton, Neenah and Menasha to consolidate the elderly and disabled Para transit systems

- Annually prepared the Capital Improvement Program and Capital Equipment Replacement Program between 1991-2000 in excess of \$15M for buildings, equipment, streets and storm water improvements
- Developed first comprehensive program budget in accordance with GAAP and State of Wisconsin Chart of Accounts to improve public accountability and transparency in the financial reporting systems
- Obtained first State of Wisconsin GRATE Award for Town's 1997 Financial Statements
- Improved municipal bond rating with Moody's Investors Service from an "A" to "A1" rating resulting in reduced long-term bond interest rates and annual cost savings to the debt service fund
- Attained a Moody's Investors Service rating of "A3" for the newly formed Utility District based upon strong financial position, management structure and government consolidation
- Implemented a community-wide curbside recycling program utilizing State of Wisconsin recycling grant funds (\$68K) subsidizing 80% of resident costs between 1992 and 2000
- Managed community wide revaluation and reassessment project resulting in the tax equalization of all ratable classes of property
- Coordinated efforts with Wisconsin DOT to develop and construct new US Highway 10 Corridor, new State Trunk Highway "441" Corridor and the communities first local inter-modal pedestrian facilities
- Guided the preparation of the Comprehensive Storm Water Management Plans to alleviate local flooding
- Developed and annually updated the first performance-based, market-driven Administrative Salary Plan for all non-represented employees which reduced employee turnover, served as a model for other local governments, and was later used as a model by private consulting companies in Wisconsin
- Reorganized the Administration, Clerk, Treasurer, Finance, Police, Fire, and Community Development Departments through the creation and abolishment of positions and consolidation of operating departments to generate cost savings, enhance operating efficiencies and improve service delivery
- Restructured and created Public Works Department including Street, Water, Wastewater, and Storm Water Departments upon abolishment of Town's Sanitary District No.4 and consolidation with Town

- Successfully negotiated multi-year labor contracts with AFSCME, IAFF, and FOP unions, and defended against employee claims of wage discrimination, sexual harassment, and workman's compensation
- Instrumental in establishment of first Board of Police Commissioners
- Initiated and completed an update to the Comprehensive Land Use and Master Plan, including developing an economic development marketing program on a local and statewide level
- Formulated and coordinated the citizen involvement process on the Municipal Complex Building Committee to evaluate and recommend an architectural firm and design builder for Board approval, and a Citizens Building Committee to conduct a spatial needs analysis of all departments and to assist in the preparation of a financial feasibility study requiring public approval in accordance with Wisconsin law
- Initiated and edited quarterly newsletter serving 7,500 property owners, including the origination of an Annual Citizen Satisfaction Survey to gather input on service delivery and capital project interests
- Designed and implemented a citizen participation process for inclusion in the development of the first long range capital improvement plan and budget program
- Introduced and implemented a computer based citizen contact and service request program
- Established a citizens' Recreational Trail Committee to develop and plan new inter-modal facilities in conjunction with the new US Highway 10 Corridor and new County Trunk Highway 441 Corridor

Further supplemental information available upon request

CB&A Interview

Bogdan “Bob” Vitas, Jr.

Education

MPA, Northern Illinois University, De Kalb, IL
BA, Political Science Majors, Northern Illinois University, De Kalb, IL

Local Government Experience

Village Administrator, Lake Zurich, IL	2007 – 2011
City Administrator, Lewiston, ME	2000 – 2001
Town Administrator, Menasha, WI	1991 – 2000
Administrator of Finance and Personnel, McHenry, IL	1988 – 1989
Director of Development Services, East Moline, IL	1985 – 1988
Assistant City Manager, Crystal Lake, IL	1982 – 1985
Administrative Intern, Willowbrook, IL	1980 – 1982

International Government Consulting Experience

Associate, Management Systems International, Washington DC	2012
VP, Community Municipal Economic Development Programs, America’s Development Foundation, Alexandria, VA	2006 – 2007
Senior Local Government Management Consultant, AECOM International	2001 – 2006

Background

Lake Zurich is the commercial hub of south Lake County, IL (a rural/suburban county immediately north of Cook County whose central city is Chicago). The population is 19,936. Lake Zurich’s fire and police departments provide dispatch services for over 40,000 residents in Lake Zurich and the surrounding communities. The Village has 172 full time employees. They also have many intergovernmental agreements, some of which include fuel, police and fire. During the summer months an additional 100 employees are hired to address street and parks maintenance. Mr. Vitas directly supervised nine employees. The general fund budget was \$24 million and the total budget was \$46 million. The three most important issues facing Lake Zurich while Mr. Vitas was manager are:

- Financial. Before Mr. Vitas’ arrival, the Village borrowed \$32 million via Tax Increment Financing (TIF) to redevelop the downtown area. Most of the funds were spent on land acquisition and consultant fees. One successful project was completed but it does not generate enough income to cover future payments. The situation was worsened by the economic downturn. Mr. Vitas restructured the TIF in 2009 and created a five year window to bring it back on track.
- Economic development. Securing new development to increase the tax base and the redevelopment of other areas in the Village.

Bogdan “Bob” Vitas, Jr.

- Maintaining service levels. When Mr. Vitas was hired, the City had 192 employees. Over the years the number was reduced through job abolishment and reductions in work force. Mr. Vitas has been able to provide the same level of service with fewer employees.

Interview Comments

Mr. Vitas is an executive level local government manager with 31 years' experience. He has a diverse background and is looking for the right challenges. Key West would be perfect. For many years he has been interested in relocating to Florida and feels now is the right point in his career. He spent many vacations in Key West and has a fondness for the community. Living and working in there would be ideal. Key West offers a wonderful way of life.

In regards to management style, Mr. Vitas has an open door policy and is very communicative. He is hands on when he needs to be. He gives a great deal of latitude to department managers, expecting them to complete their work. He does not interfere with their decisions, but provides assistance when needed. He believes government workers should be transparent and accountable.

The staff would say that Mr. Vitas is a good manager. He loves his work and respects his employees. He creates an environment where employees take pleasure in their work. He encourages open dialogue, listens to their ideas and is extremely approachable. Individual successes are important but team success can make or break an organization and the services provided. He believes in mentoring employees and has guided many employees on their career path.

Elected officials would say that Mr. Vitas believes in, and is, transparent. He openly communicates with the Board which was, unfortunately, fractured at the time he resigned. While the Board Members are all from the same political party, they have very different ideas about to address the Village's future and its issues. The environment was difficult but Mr. Vitas supplied all the elected officials with what they asked for and what they needed.

Mr. Vitas' personal strength is his belief in family. He and his wife have been married for 28 years and have three children. He is a supportive father and a strong believer in education. His professional strengths are financial management, labor management and economic development. Local and international companies have hired him for his extensive skill set in these areas.

Regarding weaknesses Mr. Vitas feels he does not give himself enough credit for his accomplishments. Also, he is involved in so many projects that he puts in too many hours and as a result, does not have the personal time he would like or should have.

Performance metrics used by Mr. Vitas have varied with the organization. In one organization he created a merit based, pay for performance system. The performance measures were based on each employee's job description. Mr. Vitas took that plan to a new level in Lake Zurich. The plan is based on private and public experience. First he completed a job analysis for each

Bogdan “Bob” Vitas, Jr.

employee. He involved employees in preparing questionnaires and creating a pay per performance plan. Job performance is tied to the individual, the department, and the organization. Everyone from the janitor to the police chief needs to understand how their role meets operational plans to deliver on the objectives the Council sets and, as a result, appropriate measures are built into each employee's evaluation.

Mr. Vitas has enjoyed many successes. His greatest success in Maine was the attracting and building out of Wal-Mart's Northeast region distribution system that services New England and Lower Canada. In Menasha he attracted several major industrial projects and R&D centers from the Kimberly Clark Company. One success he is particularly proud of is leading a very successful program in international development. He worked with 87 governments in the country of Serbia. The impact was significant. His team opened doors of government that had been closed for sixty years. He introduced transparency and accountability and involved the citizens in decision making for capital improvement plans regarding water, sewer, planning and residential growth. He involved citizens in the entire budgeting process. The citizens were hungry for change and his team delivered. Their efforts shaped politics and laid the foundation for Serbia to become a full member of the European Union. In Lake Zurich his most significant accomplishment was bringing financial stability to the city. The city was on a downward spiral when he was hired as the manager.

Mr. Vitas' biggest regret is not attending law school when he was already admitted. He was in graduate school and working for a Chicago transportation company. Instead of attending law school, he opted to continue his employment with this company because they promised future promotions. After a year Mr. Vitas decided his career path with the company was not one he wished to pursue and returned to graduate school. During this time he visited his college mentor and they spent the day talking about local government. Immediately Mr. Vitas decided to pursue a career in public service. While it took years to achieve the same salary level he received from the trucking company, he is very happy working in public administration. However, he would have achieved financial success sooner had he attended law school.

Mr. Vitas believes in fostering relationships and nurturing employees. When Mr. Vitas is required to terminate employment, he handles it diplomatically. He does not harbor regrets because he recognizes the employee is responsible for the choices that led to employment termination.

Mr. Vitas feels the new City Manager of Key West will face a number of challenges including:

- Redevelopment questions. The City has a number of infrastructure needs as well as commercial redevelopment;
- Tourism. The city accommodates over 3 million tourists a year. The challenge will be to find ways to generate revenue from them; and
- Transition. With any change in management, the transition can be a challenge. In Key West this challenge will be relatively minor.

Bogdan “Bob” Vitas, Jr.

In the first six months as Manager, Mr. Vitas would:

- Spend a good amount of time with Council members and the Mayor to understand their vision for the city. The elected officials might have similar views or distinctly different views and he would want to understand them all;
- Get to know the staff. Really understand what role they play and how they view the management team;
- Meet with the business community. Gain a clear understanding of who they are and what their needs are, both met and unmet. Learn as much about the commercial sector as quickly as possible;
- Review the finances of the community. See where they have been, where they are at and where they are going; and
- Gain a clear understanding of the overall community environment. Learn the vision for the future and possibly conduct a strategic planning exercise.

Mr. Vitas works extremely well with the media and understands their purpose. He is open and honest with them. If one is not honest with the media, the tenor of the story begins to change. He has worked with all facets of the media in multiple states and even on an international basis. In fact, he worked with foreign correspondence in Europe during times of war and of peace.

The most embarrassing situation Mr. Vitas has encountered while employed for Lake Zurich involved a county sanitary sewer rate increase. The Village has an agreement whereby Lake County buys all of the Village’s wastewater. The previous city manager of Lake Zurich was notified of a rate increase before Mr. Vitas was hired. However, the situation was not communicated to Mr. Vitas. He soon received notice that the village owed the county a considerable sum of money. He knew his hands were tied and the bill must be paid to avoid disconnection. He wrote a letter of apology to every resident in Lake Zurich to explain the increase. The residents were initially upset but appreciated his honesty.

Adjectives or phrases Mr. Vitas uses to describe himself:

- Sense of humor,
- Serious when necessary,
- Honesty and integrity,
- Highly principled,
- Loves life, and
- Built a career on helping others.

Bogdan “Bob” Vitas, Jr.

Reason for Leaving Most Recent Position:

Mr. Vitas’ and the newly elected council reached an agreement regarding his departure from Lake Zurich. He submitted his resignation in November and his contract ended December 31, 2011. His job search has been targeted to where he can find the right challenges and to where he and his family want to live. Key West is not only a wonderful job but it is a wonderful place to live. He not only wants to spend the rest of his career there (at least another ten and probably fifteen years) but he would like to retire in Key West when the time comes.

Most Recent Base Salary:

\$145,000

Interviewer’s Impressions

Extremely personable and a professional manager with a vast amount of experience. Thrives on facing and overcoming significant challenges. A team builder who believes in mentoring and training the next generation.

Interview by: Lynelle Klein
Colin Baenziger & Associates

Candidate Response to Requested Questions

BOGDAN VITAS JR.
CITY OF KEY WEST, FLORIDA
RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FOR THE CANDIDATES - MAY 9, 2012

- 1. Describe your experience in finance, budgeting, cost control, infrastructure and maintaining an efficient organization. As part of your answer, describe the approach you would take to evaluating our organization to insure it is operating as efficiently and effectively as possible.**

My experience in local government financial management spans three decades and began in the early 1980s. Since that time, I have been directly involved in all aspects of public finance, budgeting, cost control, internal control, treasury, debt management, and capital improvement planning for a wide variety of infrastructure projects. From traditional line item budgets to sophisticated performance based budgets, I have developed, implemented and managed many forms of government budget systems. My approach to budgeting assumes that before you can move forward, you must first understand the past financial history and then establish clear benchmarks of current financial conditions. In essence, I would want to have a comprehensive financial picture, gain an understanding of the City's annual budget, other related documents, and very importantly how it all relates to current service levels.

As Key West is a mature community with a long budget history, I would first examine and gain a thorough understanding of the current and past budget history, financial projections for all revenues and expenditures, outstanding debt obligations, fund reserve and investment funds, capital improvement plans, annual audits (CAFR), and management letters. The second part of this process would include conducting meetings to gain perspectives from the Mayor and Council, department heads, outgoing City Manager, Auditor, Financial Advisors, and others within the organization and community with intimate knowledge of the City's finances. The research and information gathering process would place me in a position to better evaluate operating efficiencies and the effectiveness of the organization. Based on this, I would next move forward with the introduction of new ideas and concepts for future fiscal years that would be vetted with the overall organization. As described in paragraph 2, question 2 below, I would want to fully integrate the annual budget with the City's Strategic Plan goals and objectives. Not only would I prepare the routine line item budget, I would have each department prepare an annual work plan that details each of the annual and ongoing programs and projects to attain the Strategic goals and objectives. The work plan details out all of the departments activities and in turn assigns detailed staffing levels and budgetary costs. Through the work plan I am further able to monitor and measure performance on a routine basis. The goal of this entire process is to operate effectively and efficiently utilizing limited valuable resources as needed based on clearly identified priorities.

- 2. Describe your experience with sustainable communities and a tourism based economy.**

Long before the term sustainable communities became the current buzz in local government, we as managers, me included, were practicing this very philosophy to insure the public that their local government was operating efficiently and effectively within the given resources of the community. The meaning of sustainability is a relative term and should be determined locally by

BOGDAN VITAS JR.
CITY OF KEY WEST, FLORIDA
RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FOR THE CANDIDATES - MAY 9, 2012

the general public, elected officials, and appointed staff. In my own experience, I have relied on a number of different systems and techniques to determine the local definition of what sustainability means to the entire community. In Lake Zurich, I designed, developed and implemented an overall Organizational Planning Process to insure that we could sustain our municipal services within given resources. This four cycle process is briefly described below.

My approach to understanding the pulse of a community is to first establish a set of benchmarks if they do not already exist. What I have called the Environmental Assessment Cycle entails conducting a citizen satisfaction survey and a business attitude survey to gather input to evaluate and assess the principal question of "How are we doing?" in all aspects of municipal service delivery from an end users point of view. This barometer or snap shot is essential as a first phase in order to determine current and future priorities and essential services for the community. During this cycle, I also conduct a thorough analysis of the City's financial systems and evaluation of the organization structure. Only after this cycle is completed will I move forward to the Strategic Planning Cycle, as absent this information it would be difficult to truly have the tools to properly conduct this phase. In this cycle the community vision, mission, strategic goals and objectives are developed to compliment the findings from the Environmental Assessment Cycle. Once the strategic plan is completed I move to the next critical phase which is the Budget Development Cycle. It is in this cycle that the organizational structure, delivery systems, capital improvement plans, and departmental action plans are directly linked back to the Strategic Plan, Citizen and Business Surveys to insure that they are all fully integrated to achieve community expectations. In the next phase, and perhaps one of the most difficult, I would conduct the Performance Measurement Cycle. In this last cycle, the organization performs an internal evaluation or self-assessment to determine if departmental work plans achieved the desired and intended results. This leads to publicly reporting out organizational results prior to repeating the Environmental Assessment Cycle. This is a fairly involved and long process but I believe that the final result truly reflects the efficiency and effectiveness of a local government while at the same time enhancing transparency and accountability to the taxpaying citizens and businesses.

Though my experience with tourism based economies is perhaps my most limiting attribute, I have traveled and lived extensively outside of the US and have an understanding for other cultures and people, which gives me a unique perspective on the subject. I would approach the tourism business sector as I would any small, medium, or large business, either commercial or industrial, with the knowledge that it plays a significant part in the sustainability of the community and must be treated as such. I have had great success and established rapid relationships with all local businesses throughout my career. My approach to the tourism based economy would be no different and I would expect to become intimately familiar with this important part of Key West, supportive of local business needs and actively engaged in local business events and associations as needed. I would be committed to working with the tourism sector to achieve new results leading to the improvement of the overall community and local tax base.

3. Significant weather events occur from time to time in Key West. Describe your experience preparing for and dealing with the aftermath of storm events and /or natural disasters.

Beginning in 1980, my very first major project was to prepare a comprehensive emergency services and disaster assistance plan for the Village of Willowbrook, Illinois. Many years later, as a testament to the quality of the project, when an actual flooding disaster occurred in the Village my first boss sent me a thank you letter complimenting me on my work as it was utilized to manage that local disaster. Who would have known, that over two decades later, I would be confronted with and involved in one of the single greatest natural disasters in US history.

As a local government manager and consultant for AECOM International Development I was dispatched to the State of Louisiana following the aftermaths of both Hurricanes Katrina and Rita to work directly with the US Department of Homeland Security, Federal Emergency Management Agency to assist in the disaster recovery planning efforts throughout the lower third of the State. The single largest domestic planning effort of its kind, "Louisiana Speaks", and one that won many American Planning Association awards, I worked alongside a select group of nationwide experts from many professions to prepare the first ever Disaster Recovery Planning Tool Kit and Final Plans for FEMA as part of Emergency Support Function #14 (formed in 2004), Long Term Community Recovery team. Upon completion of this assignment, I continued to work with FEMA in the field and managed the remediation of private and public properties in St. Tammany Parish, one of the heaviest hit areas affected by Hurricane Katrina.

In Lake Zurich, I required that the Mayor, Village Trustees, Department Heads and their next in line complete certification under the National Incident Management System to one, prepare the team in the event of a disaster, and two, to insure that we availed the Village to all available funding following any disaster. I attained NIMS certification while at the Village, along with taking other FEMA classes during my tenure in Louisiana, i.e. debris management. During my Lake Zurich tenure I also worked with the Fire Chief to insure that the Village completed its first comprehensive Disaster Management Plan, which was adopted by the Board of Trustees.

As I recognize the significance and risk that natural hurricane disasters can have on Key West, as was the case of flooding in 2005 from Hurricane Wilma, I am fully prepared to undertake further FEMA educational classes on the relevant subject areas to insure the citizen's safety both during a mass evacuation and in the aftermath for their safe return home. I would work closely with and depend upon the Fire Chief and Police Chief to rapidly gain an understanding of existing plans and to work together with the full staff to improve any such plans and their knowledge in responding to natural disasters.

4. Describe your experience building effective teams, facilitating consensus, and bargaining with unions.

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Suffice it to say, I have worked very successfully with many teams in local government and have also started up and worked with numerous teams on short and long term overseas assignments. I am a strong believer that one of the principal roles of a good manager is to build effective teams and nowhere else is this more true than in local government. My approach to working with key department heads and staff is to build a rapport of trust and understanding early on in the relationship. I am very comfortable as a manager in delegating responsibility to department heads, empowering them to do their given jobs to the best of their ability, to coach them as needed, but most importantly, to allow them to manage day to day affairs of their departments. This is a defining aspect of my management style and has led to great success in years past.

In working with the Mayor and Council and department heads, it is critical that I establish a clear understanding of the working relationship early between my office and that of the department heads. This is a crucial first step in order to facilitate discussions leading to consensus on issues. Perhaps one of the most difficult aspects of any managers job, I have overcome many obstacles in my local government career to help build consensus when it seems that the parties at the table have no interest in reaching a consensus for whatever the reason. As a recent example, I found that the Village of Lake Zurich and two of its neighboring municipalities had reached a political impasse related to the annexation and development of several properties of slightly over 59 acres. Though there were boundary and cooperation agreements between the parties, it appeared that they were all willing to throw away a major new development project that I and staff had worked on for several years. Through careful work and shuttle diplomacy, I was able to forge a new working relationship with the adjoining municipalities and build a consensus with the Lake Zurich Board leading to the settlement of litigation and new intergovernmental agreements. The sale and development of the property is now assured and the property owners are no longer hampered by all three municipalities after more than two decades. I have learned through the years that consensus can only be reached when you have willing parties at the table and where all parties believe that it is their mutual interest to cooperate to bring about solutions.

As far labor unions, I have worked with multiple unions dating back to my early employment in East Moline, Illinois. Since that time I have successfully negotiated numerous agreements all without the need for binding arbitration in Illinois, Wisconsin and Maine. This has included the Fraternal Order of Police, International Association of Fire Fighters, American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, International Brotherhood of Operating Engineers, etc. Over time, I have served as the chief negotiator in many instances, a mediator, and as a member of many negotiating teams in local government. I believe that my success at the bargaining table is based on my approach from the outset of carefully preparing proposals that are realistic and fair for both sides of the negotiations. It is also important to understand the local labor market conditions, bargaining history and arbitration trends in the State, and most importantly, to be prepared to fully negotiate towards a settlement rather than protract the process at great expense to both sides; dollars that can be spent more wisely. Last, I treat this as an opportunity to educate the local unions on the financial condition of the city which greatly aids both sides in forming trusting relationships.

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- 5. Key West prides itself on its diversity and its accepting attitude toward all groups. Describe your experience in encouraging diversity within your organization and working with diverse community groups. What role do you intend to play in the Key West community?**

I understand that Key West is a community that is open and receptive to all groups and I wholeheartedly would support the ongoing efforts to maintain and enhance the diversity of this City. During the course of my career I have seen many changes in the face of local government. As a person in a position of authority, I have always been an ardent supporter of these changes and have encouraged the organizations I have managed to be inclusive of all groups within the community in order to strike a healthy balance of representation within the local government organization. As an example, in Menasha, Wisconsin our Police Department had the greatest percentage of female officers of any department within the State. In Lake Zurich we successfully integrated women and minorities into the Public Safety Departments, and further amongst all other departments though there is work still to be done in that regard.

In addition, much of my work on USAID programs outside of the US included involving and working with marginalized or underrepresented groups of individuals whether women, minorities, youth or elderly persons. This knowledge can also be an asset I would share to insure that all such groups in Key West are an integral part of the discussion and properly represented.

Last, I am considered by my professional colleagues, friends and family to be an open minded, people friendly person and highly approachable, which I view are the important attributes necessary to embrace others, support diversity, and to learn from one another. As the next City Manager of Key West, I would not only be supportive of such organizations but would also engage and involve them in the affairs of local government as I do with any organizations or community interest groups.

- 6. From your research and knowledge of Key West, what do you believe are the four biggest challenges facing the community in the next four years? Have you faced similar challenges in your prior employment experience, and how might they assist you in developing strategies to successfully respond to those challenges?**

The City of Key West is faced with many of the same challenges today that other Florida local governments are confronted with handling over the past several years. The same holds true in local governments throughout the country and Lake Zurich during my tenure was not without similar challenges.

Declining property values and related property tax base loss is one of the key challenges of the day and is directly related to the recent recession. In bedroom communities lacking a solid commercial business sector the impact was felt even greater. Further diversification of the economy of Key West is essential but cannot be accomplished by the local government alone. It will require fostering even stronger trust and relationships with the local business community to help retain and expand existing

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businesses. It will require additional effort to attract new investment from off the island as well, keeping in mind that most all local governments are competing for today's private investment dollars. A solid economic development plan must be formulated between the City, the business community and local citizens that can lead to sustainable development and redevelopment to strengthen the local tax base. In Lake Zurich I was actively engaged in the Chamber of Commerce and Industrial Council to involve their members in economic development efforts and small businesses and citizens in our redevelopment efforts in the TIF district.

The next challenge I see facing Key West is driven in part on the above in terms of increasing revenues to support operations, but is also prudent that the City take the necessary steps to contain municipal costs. In my response to question 2 above I have outlined the process by which I would approach the issue of cost containment and reduction. This is the approach that I recently used in Lake Zurich and resulted in the savings of significant tax dollars and further led to the generation of new tax dollars in the form of sales and utility taxes. Through my Administration's open and transparent approach to government, the Village Board was able to gain support for the introduction of a new utility tax, an increase in water and sewer fees, and to sway the public to support a referendum that increased in the local sales tax rate by .5%. These increased funds were earmarked to improve aging infrastructure, funds not available for this critical purpose the past several years.

As Key West is a worldwide tourist destination it is imperative that the City maintain and improve its outward appearance to its guests, as well as its local population to maintain property values and the quality of life. In my experience, I have approached this issue in several ways. Proper code enforcement administered fairly and consistently will almost always lead to an improvement in the appearance of a community. In the case of local businesses that draw tourists, local façade improvement programs and small grants can lead to vast improvements. And last, public spaces must be properly maintained and always present an inviting atmosphere to draw the public and tourists.

Another challenge I see is the need to re-evaluate the City's 1993 Comprehensive Plan, as amended through 2008, to insure that all of its components are fully in-line with the present day needs and desires of the community, and that it is properly linked to the overall mission, vision and strategic goals of the City. This plan affects all the local citizens and businesses and must be written to achieve the highest quality of life desired and to promote the future sustainability of this historic community. I would link this priority project into the process I described in question 2 above.

- 7. Assume for the moment that you are the City Manager of Key West and you are doing next year's budget. Your preliminary numbers project a significant budget deficit. What departments would you look at in terms of cutting expenses? Would you consider layoffs and benefit reductions?**

Just as I have done the past four years, I approach each fiscal year budget with several key questions in mind: What essential and non-essential services can we provide and at better cost?; How can we achieve organizational goals and objectives while providing services at less cost?; When can we realistically expect to accomplish the desired programs, projects and tasks in order

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to get the job done right?; Where can we realistically reduce operating and non-operating costs without adversely affecting service levels?; and Why is it or is it not plausible given present and future financial resources of the community?

This approach applies to ALL city departments and to ALL city service providers. It also applies with due consideration to the question of ALL related employee layoffs and the reduction of employee benefits. In Lake Zurich this was precisely the approach and management philosophy I adopted day one on the job upon finding that there was a significant deficit at hand and that reserves had or would be soon depleted. As such, the first step I took was to order an overall hiring freeze until such time that a careful evaluation and analysis of the entire organization was completed. The second step was beginning to eliminate all new hiring, abolish vacant positions, and further to reduce the number of active full and part time positions. This was done each and every fiscal year between FY 2009 and FY 2012. The result was a net reduction of 22 full time positions and a cost savings of over \$2M annually, no reduction in essential services, and new dollars available to fully fund the long standing unfunded public safety pension liability the past 17 years.

As for employee benefits, in Lake Zurich I immediately began to restructure the employee health insurance program migrating away from a non-sustainable partially self-funded plan to a fully funded plan, which resulted in an annual cost savings over \$1M annually. Employee contributions were increased from on average 8% to 15% in FY 9 and remain at this level today, with the exception that in FY 11 the rates were increased to 25% which was accomplished with full concurrence of the four collective bargaining unions mid-contract and all non-represented employees. Other benefit considerations during this time frame were to reduce non-essential employee training costs, eliminate out of state conference attendance, and restructure the Police and Fire Departments to reduce overtime costs and to freeze wages.

I am not afraid to make tough decisions and have done so in my past career. In doing so I am always open, honest and fair in the process when it comes to the employees recognizing that I too am directly affected by my recommendations and decisions. I would approach employee wage and benefit discussions in a manner that there are no hidden agendas, only transparent and accountable actions by my office.

Background Checks

**Background Check Summary for
BOGDAN "BOB" VITAS, JR.**

Criminal Records Checks:

Nationwide Criminal Records Search	No Records Found
County	
Lake County, IL	No Records Found
Alexandria City/County, VA	No Records Found
District of Columbia	No Records Found
Androscoggin County, ME	No Records Found
Winnebago County, WI	No Records Found
State	
Illinois	No Records Found
Virginia	Records maintained by County of Residence – See above
District of Columbia	No Records Found
Maine	No Records Found
Wisconsin	No Records Found

Civil Records Checks:

County	
Lake County, IL	No Records Found
Alexandria City/County, VA	No Records Found
District of Columbia, DC	No Records Found
Androscoggin County, ME	No Records Found
Winnebago County, WI	No Records Found
Federal	
Illinois	No Records Found
Virginia	No Records Found
District of Columbia	No Records Found
Maine	No Records Found
Wisconsin	No Records Found

Motor Vehicle

Illinois	No Records Found
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Credit

Very Good

Bankruptcy

No Records Found

Education

Confirmed

Employment

Confirmed

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Mark Ernst – Former Village Trustee, Lake Zurich, IL 949-502-6669

Mr. Ernst met Mr. Vitas in 2008 while he was the Lake Property President. Mr. Ernst and Mr. Vitas worked together very closely during that time. Mr. Ernst was also active in the Chamber of Commerce and worked with Mr. Vitas in that capacity. In April 2011 Mr. Ernst was elected as a Trustee. Mr. Ernst recently moved to California to pursue a work opportunity. He has seen Mr. Vitas from many different aspects and thinks very highly of him.

Mr. Vitas does what he says he will do. He is honorable. The board in Lake Zurich is divided and Mr. Vitas does a remarkable job of not playing favorites. He maintains an objective balance in a very difficult political situation. He has a good grasp of political and business situations. He gets right to the heart of the issue. He handled many difficult situations in Lake Zurich from labor bargaining to replacing pension money that had not been paid to the pension for nine years before his arrival. He explains an issue in a way everyone can understand. He is on top of every situation. He is insightful and shows good judgment.

Mr. Vitas leads the organization. He also understands that there are processes to track and maintain. He is gregarious and does not sit behind his desk. He is very active in the community, with the chamber and is on different committees. When the chamber holds evening events he always attends on behalf of the village to answer questions that residents have.

When Mr. Ernst was a Lake Property Owner, Mr. Vitas set up meetings with various stake holders during negotiations. If Mr. Ernst still had questions he could privately meet with Mr. Vitas after the meeting to talk about the roadblocks and how to overcome them. The communication was professional, adult and practical.

Mr. Vitas kept the board informed primarily through board reports. They received an email or a phone call when needed. The Village was involved in litigation over the annexation of a property for development. Mr. Vitas called a special meeting and gave a full briefing. Mr. Ernst always had a clear understanding of what the issues were. Mr. Vitas also kept the public informed of why decisions were made.

Mr. Vitas set performance expectations for the staff and improved the efficiency of the organization. The Village had hired David Smith as a developer for the downtown redevelopment area. Mr. Smith made many promises but did not deliver. Mr. Vitas was instrumental in the board's decision to dissolve the contract. He laid out the facts so the board could see it was not in the Village's best interest to continue the contract and he guided the trustees through the process. He determined the strategy necessary to protect the city from litigation. He kept the politics out of the situations and handled it as a business transaction. He gave Smith the benefit of the doubt while documenting everything. His decisions and recommendations are very solid.

Mr. Vitas solicits the opinions of the trustees and looks for ways to move forward. In the time that he has worked for Lake Zurich there have been more positions cut than new hires. However, Mr. Vitas hired as Assistant Village Manager who is very sharp and has been a good employee.

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Mr. Ernst is not aware of anything embarrassing in Mr. Vitas' background. He would hire him and recommends him. Mr. Ernst does not put his name behind anyone unless they are a good person. He asked to be a reference. Mr. Vitas is a very competent and capable city manager.

Words or phrases used to describe Bob Vitas:

- Honorable,
- Trustworthy,
- Friendly,
- Approachable,
- Professional, and
- Integrity.

Strengths: Good grasp of situations, operates with high integrity, good strategic view.

Weaknesses: Not ingratiating himself to the Trustees who hold great power over his position.

James (Jim) Johnson – Former Village Trustee, Lake Zurich, IL 847-624-2897

Mr. Johnson has known Mr. Vitas since 2007. Mr. Johnson worked for 20 years as a school administrator. He worked for many superintendents and with the school board. He also served on the Village board. Mr. Vitas is at the top of the list of any manager Mr. Johnson has worked with during his entire career.

Mr. Johnson has been involved in Lake Zurich politics since 1970 and is still very active in the community. Mr. Vitas rated superior in all areas on his evaluations from Mr. Johnson. The current board is the worst and most contentious board he has ever seen. They have no concept of what it means to be a trustee. Mr. Johnson did not run for re-election because of the current board. Many of the managers in Lake Zurich are retiring for the same reason. Mr. Vitas has done an amazing job of keeping the board together. He is always civil and very professional. He meets every expectation and provides the information requested. One Trustee meets with Mr. Vitas for two hours to discuss an issue. He comes back two days later to discuss it again, and then asks the same question at board meetings. Mr. Vitas handled the situation like a gentleman.

The Village borrowed several million dollars on a TIF to keep things going and afterwards the economy fell apart. Mr. Vitas did a masterful job of refinancing the TIF and the revenues now cover the expenses. Mr. Vitas works very hard and is very professional. When Mr. Vitas was hired, the Village Administrator building was not a friendly place. He turned the situation around. Residents are now treated with courtesy and smiles.

Mr. Vitas always answered any questions the Trustees had and keeps them informed. He sends an email within minutes that an issue occurred. A contract was signed with a developer and the developer defaulted. The developer felt he was due \$9.5 million based on the contract. The board felt a more accurate number was \$2.5 million. Mr. Vitas led the negotiations and in the

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end the Village only paid \$300,000. He brought the parties together without attorneys and resolved the situation to the great benefit of the Village.

Mr. Vitas makes good decisions. The Village had a short fall and he was the sole negotiator with the unions regarding the situation. He explained that the Village would either have to lay off 32 employees or the unions could accept a salary freeze for one year and limits on raises for the second year. Every union agreed to the arrangement. Mr. Vitas has implemented a number of creative plans.

Lake Zurich has not hired many individuals in recent years, but those hired by Mr. Vitas stand head and shoulders above other employees in the district. In addition, he created job descriptions and implemented performance evaluations for current employees.

Mr. Vitas does not have anything controversial in his personal life. Due to the nature of city management, he is involved in many controversial situations and he handles them very well. Mr. Johnson would hire him immediately. Mr. Vitas has been the leader and the problem solver that Lake Zurich needed. He is a talented and gifted individual.

Words or phrases used to describe Bob Vitas:

- Intelligent,
- Charismatic,
- Caring,
- Gets things done,
- Professional, and
- Creative.

Strengths: Works very well with others. Very intelligent, personable, likeable, analytical, hard worker, thinks fast on his feet, does not hold a grudge.

Weaknesses: Sometimes in public meetings Mr. Vitas goes a bit overboard in answering questions. Some Trustees have become jealous and feel he is monopolizing the show. He is just very thorough.

Suzanne Branding – Mayor, Lake Zurich, IL 847-255-5544

Ms. Branding has known Mr. Vitas since 2007. She worked with him as a Trustee and now as the Mayor. She has the highest regard for him.

Mr. Vitas works well with elected officials and residents. When residents or Trustees have a problem, he removes the emotion from the situation and resolves the issue. The residents always leave happy and know they can count on him for help. He is also very good at bringing development to a community. If a developer encounters a snag, he solves the issue and moves the project forward. Some people escalate situations. Mr. Vitas is a de-escalator in controversial or emotional situations. Because he has a great deal of experience, he sizes up a problem from a

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number of perspectives and understands how it will play politically, financially and how it will move in the community.

She and Mr. Vitas interact very well. They talk on the telephone, face to face and they communicate through email. Ms. Branding feels they are a good team. He is an excellent speaker. He makes good decisions, and makes them quickly because of his depth of experience. He hires good employees. Mr. Vitas is innovative and accomplishes tasks in a timely manner. There is a noticeable difference in work output when Mr. Vitas is not in the office. Things simply do not move as well.

Mr. Vitas is careful to steer clear of the political arena. Nothing controversial will be found in his background. The current board is fractured and some trustees are micro managers that want to manage day to day operations.

Ms. Branding was a Trustee during the interview process when Mr. Vitas was hired and she was his advocate. What she liked about him then, and still does today, is that he manages crises very well. The community was at a crossroads. Mr. Vitas has cleared up most of the issues. She would hire him again. Mr. Vitas is an excellent manager.

Words or phrases used to describe Bob Vitas:

- Experienced,
- Good writer,
- Personable,
- Familiar with the process,
- Positive,
- Strong financial background,
- Good public relations, and
- Extremely ethical.

Strengths: Works very well with others. Networks well and has established connections.

Weaknesses: Some have complained that Mr. Vitas is slow to return calls, but he has always been very responsive to Ms. Branding.

Brian Pesmen – Real Estate Broker, Marcus & Millichap Real Estate Investment Services, Lake Zurich, IL 773-867-1518

Mr. Pesmen has known Mr. Vitas since 1995. Mr. Vitas asked Mr. Pesmen to precipitate plans to redevelop the downtown area. Together they created a government structured funding plan similar to a TIF. Mr. Pesmen has watched Mr. Vitas accomplish great things in a number of different settings. They worked together in Lewiston and currently in Lake Zurich.

Mr. Vitas has a reputation with developers in the community for being pro-business and accomplishing tasks quickly. All projects are typically approved in 45-60 days, which can take

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years in other municipalities. Mr. Vitas saw the potential of an area and told Mr. Pesmen about the opportunity. Mr. Pesmen reached out to the residents and helped build consensus on a common goal. Multiple buyers were secured and the area was redeveloped. The project currently brings in \$500,000 sales tax revenue. While the economy has been stagnant throughout the country, Lake Zurich has many development projects in the works. In a six month time frame a new 80 unit assisted living facility and two groceries stores were approved. Mr. Vitas understands the need for development and how to attract businesses to the community. He is creative in moving projects forward and overcoming hurdles.

Mr. Vitas is not one to sit behind his desk unless other people are on sitting the other side and they have having a meeting. He is a proactive leader for the organization.

Mr. Vitas kept Mr. Pesmen informed to the extend he could. Mr. Vitas does not disclose confidential information. He does not make representations he cannot follow through on. Mr. Vitas does very well in public meetings. The current board in Lake Zurich is divisive and conflicted. He keeps a lower profile in public meetings in Lake Zurich than he did in other communities, because this style works better with the current board. He was effective even though the board is extremely difficult to work with.

Lake Zurich has several properties under contract with a grocery and other retail stores. The property is in an unincorporated area, on the boundary of the village. The situation became very controversial when an adjacent municipality heard about the project and wanted the tax dollars. This municipality tried to annex the properties. Lake Zurich had already entered into an agreement with these stores and the agreement was upheld by the courts. Mr. Vitas expertly handled the controversial side, while allowing the Building and Zoning Director to take the softer position. He orchestrated the process and met with the municipalities involved. He held meetings with board members and his counterpart in the other communities. His handling of this complex situation was very effective and quite an accomplishment.

Mr. Pesmen does not know of anything embarrassing in Mr. Vitas' background. He would hire Mr. Vitas. Mr. Vitas walked into a difficult situation and made many improvements. He was very good for Lake Zurich.

Words or phrases used to describe Bob Vitas:

- Motivated,
- Professional,
- Focused,
- Creative
- Determined, and
- Looks at the big picture.

Strengths: Professionally motivated, focused, creative.

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Weaknesses: They spent a considerable amount of time on a project and had the board census that the project would be approved. However, Mr. Vitas was so focused on the economics, the feasibility of the project and ensuring the project was in the best interest of the community that he did not do an adequate job of selling the project to the residents. Some residents started a blogging campaign against the project and gathered the support of 75 residents. In light of the opposition, the board did not give approval for the project.

Brad Townsend – Financial Advisor, Ehlers & Associates, IL 630-271-3335

Mr. Townsend has known Mr. Vitas since the 1980's. Mr. Townsend is a former city manager and they worked together as colleagues. Mr. Townsend is currently the public financial advisor for many governments, including Lake Zurich. He holds Mr. Vitas in very high regard.

Mr. Vitas is an excellent professional. He handles his responsibilities with a high level of skill and some humor. He relates personally to others. He is a leader among city managers in Illinois and has embraced some very difficult challenges in Lake Zurich. He worked with consultants, the council and his staff to tackle challenges. He cleaned up the city.

Mr. Vitas can sit behind the desk and manage processes, he has that skill set. He is definitely a leader that works not only to develop a vision but also to implement the vision in the form of a strategic plan. He has a very good balance between concept, which is the largest opportunity for expressing leadership through discussion, seeing what can be done and what needs to be done. He has the practical ability to put the vision in writing and implement it.

During his tenure Mr. Vitas led several teams in solving problems. One example was when board members had a particular interest in how to resolve financial issues related to the tax districts. He put together a team of the elected officials, key staff members and a consultant to assess the situation and discuss ideas for resolving it. The resolution required real policy differences that had to be worked out. Unfortunately he did not have the full support of the board. The city is still trying to implement what he started. His handling in this situation was a task force approach and was very well done. When he puts together a team, he brings in the right people with the right skill set who have an interest in resolving the issue.

Even though Mr. Townsend and Mr. Vitas have been friends for many years, Mr. Townsend was still required to go through the competitive process to work as a consultant for the city. Mr. Vitas is ethical and takes great care in hiring consultants.

Mr. Vitas communicates very well with the elected officials in board meetings. His reports are always very good and he provides alternative actions and recommendations. Mr. Vitas welcomes diversity of opinion and has been very professional while working with a difficult board – one where some trustees work actively against the Mayor. Mr. Vitas has been able to accomplish amazing things despite the situation. The city is in a better place because of his management.

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Mr. Vitas can boil issues down to their essence and explain them to others – in a way that is actually enjoyable to listen to. He completely rebuilt the staff with the support of the Village Board. He is willing to listen to opposing opinions and he is always open to new ideas. Mr. Townsend presented creative financing ideas to him as part of the clean-up of the outstanding debt. Mr. Vitas is very open to new ideas.

Mr. Vitas is personable but does not waste time in his interactions. He gets right to the point. He is very responsive and returns calls within a very short time period. He is experienced in working with the public. He answers questions during public meetings and also talks one on one to residents that have concerns. He is candid but careful about what he is saying.

Problem solving is the part of his work Mr. Vitas most enjoys. It seems to energize him. He does not shoot from the hip, but he does not labor over a decision either. He considers an issue carefully, particularly if it is complicated, and then makes the decision he feels is best for the community.

Mr. Vitas is an open book and nothing controversial will be found in his background. If Mr. Townsend were a Trustee, he would be happy to have Mr. Vitas as a manager. Mr. Vitas is top quality and one of the best Mr. Townsend has ever worked with.

Words or phrases used to describe Bob Vitas:

- Strong personality,
- Passionate about city management,
- Wants to make a difference,
- Achieves goals, and
- A manager that really engages and fixes issues. He is not a caretaker.

Strengths: Personable. Hires smart employees and consultants. Gets results.

Weaknesses: Lacking some technical skills. However, he recognizes his weaknesses and hires employees and consultants who are strong in those areas.

Dana Rzeznik – Village Trustee, Lake Zurich, IL 847-726-0224

Ms. Rzeznik has known Mr. Vitas since he was hired in 2007. She became a trustee about a year after his arrival. She enjoyed working with him.

Mr. Vitas has a vast knowledge of municipal operations and law. He is very professional. He has great people skills. The trustees were always welcome to stop by and ask questions. His door is always open. On the rare occasion he could not answer the phone when a trustee called he returned the call within a few hours. He is very responsive.

Mr. Vitas made good decisions when hiring personnel. He made good decisions for the village. He is innovative and a change agent. When he was hired the organization was poorly run. He instituted very specific policies that improved the culture. Employees became more responsible

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Bob Vitas

and began taking pride in their work. The village did not have an employee manual. He guided the board through the process of creating one. He instituted employee reviews.

The trustees were always informed on what was happening in the village. Mr. Vitas has much experience working with the public and does well. Customer service is very important to him. He solves problems and has a good grasp of government finance. The city employs a very good finance director to handle the finances. Mr. Vitas works with the Director and truly understands the nuances of municipal finance.

Mr. Vitas is definitely a leader who has a vision for the future and works to implement it. The best example of his leadership was the development of the strategic plan. He organized a two day intense workshop for the staff and elected officials where they could develop a common vision and set goals for the future. He guided the entire process and found the right professional to conduct the meeting. He compiled information from the first workshop before the second one, which was very helpful. The village has a really good strategic plan that is not gathering dust. Currently they are going through the budget process for the new fiscal year and the strategic plan is a very integral part of the process.

The village signed an exclusive contract with a developer that was not performing to the terms of the contract. Mr. Vitas stayed on top of the situation. He made everyone aware of deadlines that were not met and showed them the next step to take. Eventually the city was able to terminate the contract. Mr. Vitas was instrumental in the process. He took it upon himself to check the information provided by the developer and found it was not accurate. He also uncovered some 'behind the scene' operations of the developer that made termination possible.

Nothing in Mr. Vitas's background would embarrass an employer. His contract was up for renewal and they mutually agreed to part. Mr. Vitas really likes to fix things. He fixed many problems in Lake Zurich and perhaps it was time to move onto a new challenge.

Ms. Rzeznik would hire Mr. Vitas. He is the best manager around.

Words or phrases used to describe Mr. Vitas:

- Great leader,
- Dependable,
- Outgoing,
- Gets things done,
- Responsive, and
- Fair.

Strengths: Great people skills. Gets along with everyone. Extremely knowledgeable about municipal affairs. Good manager.

Weaknesses: Sometimes it took him longer to respond than the board liked. However, he did not have a deputy or an assistant. He managed everything personally and

Reference Notes

Bob Vitas

sometimes things had to be put on the back burner. He is very good at prioritizing and the top issues were always dealt with immediately.

Dale Perrin – Executive Director, Chamber of Commerce, Lake Zurich, IL 847-438-5572

Mr. Perrin has known Mr. Vitas since 2007. Mr. Vitas was very helpful to the chamber and answered questions they had. Mr. Perrin wishes Mr. Vitas had more time in Lake Zurich to continue resolving their issues.

Mr. Vitas is a very competent manager. He walked into a very difficult situation and did the best he could with the board he had to work with. He made very good decisions. He did not blindly follow the directives of the board; he offered alternative solutions and ideas. He did his job well.

Mr. Vitas communicates through the phone, email and even Facebook. He is always available to answers questions and responds much faster than other managers have. He is missed in Lake Zurich. Mr. Perrin did not always get the direct answer he wanted but it is the nature of the job and not a reflection on Mr. Vitas. Sometimes Mr. Vitas is unable to share details.

Mr. Vitas tried be a change agent but was hampered by the board. He presented many opportunities and improvements. He brought the organization to a high performance level.

They interacted mostly in group settings. Mr. Vitas attended chamber functions. He also sat on the Chamber’s board as the Director At Large, which is a non-voting position. He worked very well with all the groups Mr. Perrin was involved in. He is absolutely customer service oriented.

The downtown revitalization has become very controversial. Unfortunately they started the revitalization around the time the economic downturn began. They were not able to secure financing to complete it. The vision has changed numerous times depending on who the trustees are and what is happening. The vision changes every time new trustees are elected. Multiple managers have struggled to build consensus and move forward, including Mr. Vitas. The inability to move forward is a reflection of the board and not of Mr. Vitas.

Mr. Perrin is not aware of anything controversial in Mr. Vitas’s personal background. Mr. Vitas was a very good manager for Lake Zurich.

Words or phrases used to describe Mr. Vitas:

- Detail oriented,
- Visionary,
- Strong communicator,
- Friendly, and
- Competent.

Strengths: Communication

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Weaknesses: None identified.

Jim Iverhouse - Community Activist, Lake Zurich Property Owners Association, Lake Zurich, IL 847-726-2780

Mr. Iverhouse has known Mr. Vitas since 2007 when he came to Lake Zurich. Mr. Iverhouse has been in business since 1997. He did not work with Mr. Vitas on a day to day basis.

On a scale of 1-10 Mr. Vitas's job performance would be between an 8 and a 9. He did wonderful things for businesses in Lake Zurich. He is friendly and always willing to give advice to those who request it.

Mr. Iverhouse was interested in developing the area around his store. Mr. Vitas assisted him, was always there for him and responded promptly to his needs and his questions. He is very forthright and helpful. He resolved many problems and concerns.

Mr. Vitas made very good decisions for the village. He is innovative and maintains an organization at a high performance level. He kept others informed and communicated with Mr. Iverhouse mostly through email. Mr. Vitas has much experience in dealing with the public and is very good at it.

Mr. Vitas is both a leader who shares the vision of council with employees and then works to achieve it, and a manager that keeps processes running smoothly and efficiently. He is definitely customer service oriented.

Due to the nature of his job Mr. Vitas was involved in controversial situations but Mr. Iverhouse has no personal knowledge of these situations. He is not aware of anything in Mr. Vitas's background that would be of concern to anyone.

Mr. Iverhouse wished that Mr. Vitas was still the manager of Lake Zurich and would hire him. He is a great manager.

Words or phrases used to describe Mr. Vitas:

- People person,
- Very approachable,
- Well organized, and
- Good person to deal with.

Strengths: He is very organized, helpful and works well with others.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Prepared by: Lynelle Klein
Colin Baenziger & Associates

Internet Research

Internet Research Bob Vitas

[Articles Appear In Reverse Chronological Order]

Lake Zurich Courier (IL)
January 12, 2012

Lake Zurich Board OKs severance for Vitas

Author: *BY STEPHANIE KOHL, skohl@pioneerlocal.com*

Although former Lake Zurich Village Administrator **Bob Vitas** is no longer employed by the village, he will receive severance benefits through June 30.

A voluntary separation agreement and release of all claims was recently ratified by the Lake Zurich Village Board, with all members but trustee Jeff Halen voting for ratification.

Per the agreement, **Vitas** is entitled to severance benefits “equal to six months compensation based on his yearly base salary of \$145,000,” or \$72,500; deferred compensation of \$6,500; and vehicle allowance of \$6,000 from Dec. 31, 2011 through June 30, 2012. In addition, during the same six months, **Vitas** and his family are eligible to continue under the village’s health insurance plan.

“The original employment agreement provides for severance benefits as outlined on the agenda tonight,” Mayor Suzanne Branding said following the vote at the board’s Jan. 3 meeting. “The board concurred with the severance payment and were advised by two attorneys, the (municipal) counsel and labor counsel, to honor the agreement.”

Discussions regarding the agreement were held in executive session prior to the vote.

Following the meeting, Halen said **Vitas**’ contract had ended Dec. 31 and he was being fiscally responsible to taxpayers by opposing the agreement.

“I just felt the contract had expired, so I’m looking out for the taxpayers,” he said, adding the severance package comes to nearly \$90,000 when you factor in all the benefits.

Vitas, who had been in the position for four years, tendered his resignation in November and it was announced in a news release Nov. 18.

The news release stated that **Vitas** had completed his contractual obligations with the village and would be “moving on with his career in order to pursue other alternatives.”

Section 11 of **Vitas**’ original contract, from Oct. 2007, stated that if **Vitas** was terminated without a determination of just cause then the village would pay him a severance package and that if **Vitas** voluntarily resigns, and the resignation was not under circumstances in which his resignation “is being actively sought by the Board of Trustees,” then the village is not obligated to pay severance.

Trustee Rich Sustich said Wednesday that the severance package was negotiated based on **Vitas**’ original contract.

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“Do we have an obligation to be responsible to the cost to the village, absolutely,” he said. “... but at the same time, I continue to believe we have an obligation to meet our contractual obligations.”

Sustich questioned what it would look like to potential village administrator candidates if the village didn't honor a contractual obligation.

Branding said Wednesday the village has already posted the openings for both Village Administrator and Finance Director. Former Finance Director Al Zochowski also left the village on Dec. 31. She added the village has received some resumes, but they have not yet been reviewed and that the Village Board is in discussions as to what their next step should be. Branding said the village would like to fill the vacancies as soon as possible.

Internet Research

Bob Vitas

[Articles Appear In Reverse Chronological Order]

Lake Zurich Courier (IL)
December 29, 2011

Villages approve revenue sharing deal

Author: *BY STEPHANIE KOHL, skohl@pioneerlocal.com*

A recently approved intergovernmental agreement between Lake Zurich, Hawthorn Woods and Kildeer, which spells out revenue sharing terms for several properties along the shared boundaries of Route 22 and Quentin Road, has put an end to litigation between Lake Zurich and Hawthorn Woods related to annexation in the area.

The agreement was drafted to include the Wooten, Obenauf and Nielsen properties, which together form what is commonly known as the Cedar Hill property, in addition to the Cummings and Dartmoor properties.

No boundaries will change, and the revenue sharing deal will take effect when any of the parcels are developed or annexed.

According to the agreement, the Cedar Hill property's sales tax revenue will be split as follows: 40 percent to Lake Zurich, 20 percent to Hawthorn Woods and 40 percent to Kildeer.

For the Cummings property, 50 percent of sales tax revenue will be earmarked for Lake Zurich, 10 percent for Hawthorn Woods and 40 percent for Kildeer.

The Dartmoor property's split will be 25 percent to Lake Zurich and 75 percent to Hawthorn Woods.

Property tax revenue also will be shared. Per the agreement, property taxes on the Cedar Hill property will be split with 75 percent to Lake Zurich and 25 percent to Kildeer. Property taxes generated by the Cummings property will all go to Lake Zurich and property taxes generated by the Dartmoor property will all go to Hawthorn Woods.

Under the agreement, the villages can no longer object to the annexation of the properties, ending a long legal battle between the Hawthorn Woods and Lake Zurich.

The Kildeer Village Board unanimously approved the intergovernmental agreement at its Dec. 20 board meeting. Village administrator Michael Talbett expressed confidence that the intergovernmental cooperation will continue with the development of the three parcels.

"We have some idea of what's going to happen at that intersection, how it will be developed and what will take place," he said, adding that Kildeer's voice will be heard by the other village boards.

The agreement also was unanimously approved by the Hawthorn Woods Village Board on Dec. 20.

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“It settles a dispute with our neighbors over a boundary agreement annexation request,” said Pam Newton, Hawthorn Woods’ chief operating officer. “It shares sales tax to all three villages where the villages meet.”

Newton said that every board involved gave a little and got a little, resulting in a win-win-win situation.

Lake Zurich unanimously approved the agreement at its Dec. 19 meeting, with Village Administrator **Bob Vitas** telling the board that only the Cedar Hill property has a project ready to come forward.

Although all Lake Zurich Board members voted in favor of the agreement, at least one trustee still wasn’t a big fan of the outcome.

“I guess at this point, it’s no secret I’m no fan of this agreement,” said Trustee Tom Poynton.

“(But) this is the next best chance we have at developing the property.”

Internet Research

Bob Vitas

[Articles Appear In Reverse Chronological Order]

Daily Herald (Arlington Heights, IL)

November 19, 2011

Lake Zurich's top administrator leaving

Author: *Bob Susnjara bsusnjara@dailyherald.com*

Lake Zurich Village Administrator Bogdan "**Bob**" **Vitas** is heading out the door, with his resignation effective Dec. 31.

Vitas became Lake Zurich's top administrator after a nationwide search was completed in October 2007. He was an independent consultant when he was tabbed by then-Mayor John Tolomei to replace retiring administrator John Dixon.

Lake Zurich Mayor Suzanne Branding said **Vitas**' contract expires at year's end. **Vitas**' scheduled departure was announced Friday, but he submitted a resignation letter to Branding on Nov. 11.

"I could kind of feel it coming. You know how you just sense things sometimes," Branding said.

Downtown redevelopment was a stated priority when **Vitas** took over as village administrator four years ago, but plans remain stalled. **Vitas** could not be reached for elaboration Friday.

Vitas did not share any specific reason for his resignation in the letter to Branding. "I do so in order to move on with my career and to pursue other alternatives having successfully completed my contractual obligations," **Vitas**' letter stated in part.

Vitas thanked the village board and Branding for his time in Lake Zurich. "I am especially grateful for having the privilege of leading a truly capable, outstanding and dedicated employee workforce," **Vitas** said.

He had a disagreement with trustees in January, when the board refused to spend public money on his tickets to the chamber dinner-dance. **Vitas** subsequently spent his own \$150 so he and his wife could attend the Evening of Excellence sponsored by the Lake Zurich Area Chamber of Commerce.

He was to make a \$145,000 base salary in the 2011 fiscal year, Lake Zurich's budget shows.

Before coming to Lake Zurich, **Vitas** served more than 10 years in village administration for towns throughout the Chicago area. He led several U.S.-sponsored economic redevelopment and government reform projects in Serbia from 2000 to 2007.

Vitas said he plans to work with the village board and Branding to find his successor as part of a smooth transition before he leaves Dec. 31.

Internet Research

Bob Vitas

[Articles Appear In Reverse Chronological Order]

Chicago Tribune

July 25, 2011

Village hires consultants to help with downtown development

By Amy Alderman

Lake Zurich officials hired a new consultant for \$33,000 to help analyze and plan for the future of downtown development.

Evanston-based Teska Associates Inc., a firm that specializes in economic development, fiscal impact analysis and tax incremental financing districts, won a 12-month contract with the Village of Lake Zurich recently.

“It will be for the village’s own purposes in working with developers,” Village Administrator **Bob Vitas** said. “As we get our hands around two main documents- financial analysis, Community Gap analysis, it will help us communicate with developers, negotiate, and know what we are capable of instead of grasping at straws.”

Teska will help develop a new strategy for the downtown area and analyze the village’s 7-year-old tax incremental financing district.

The contract is needed in order to update the information on the district-something that hasn’t been done in several years.

Trustee Jeff Halen has been the only nay-sayer in the discussions of hiring Teska, saying there could be a duplication of efforts when village finance officers analyze the village’s finances and a private consulting firm could be doing the same.

“It’s a lot more complicated than it is now,” **Vitas** said.

Teska’s scope of services ranges from a financial analysis of how the village could tackle the TIF district’s \$28 million debt to canvassing business owners and developers and what they want in Lake Zurich, according to village documents.

“The Gap Analysis is going to give us an opportunity to find out, does the development plan makes sense. If it doesn’t, we need to make modifications to it,” **Vitas** said. **Vitas** said in an interview he’s been in discussions with six developers that are interested in bringing their residential and commercial businesses to Lake Zurich.

“I’m waiting for them to step forward,” **Vitas** said. “When they do, they would be referred to the new consultants to evaluate their plan and relationship to TIF district.” The banking industry dishing out less loans and the tough economic climate in recent years have been a couple of the biggest obstacles for developers, which is why intensive planning is required to boost healthy and long-lasting growth in Lake Zurich, **Vitas** said.

“It’s no longer if you build it, they will come,” he said.

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[Articles Appear In Reverse Chronological Order]

Lake Zurich Courier (IL)

May 5, 2011

On 3rd try, Lake Zurich OKs \$44.5M budget

Author: *By Stephanie Kohl*

Although it had been thought former Trustee Jim Johnson's last meeting as a Village Board member was April 18, it was a motion by Johnson to approve the fiscal year 2011-12 budget that was approved April 27.

After failing to approve a 2011-12 budget at both the April 4 and April 18 Village Board meetings, a special meeting was called April 27 to adopt the budget. The budget, which had previously caused hours of discussion and dissatisfaction among the Village Board members, was approved in less than 10 minutes.

"The compromise came about as a result of internal discussions between my office and each of the members of the board," said Village Administrator **Bob Vitas**, adding the village worked through the board's concerns and came up with a deal that allowed the \$44.5 million budget to be approved.

The motion, approved by all but Trustee Jeff Halen who was absent, called for the adoption of the annual budget as recommended by the village administrator Feb. 25 and adjusted to reflect a decrease in the water and sewer fund expenditures of \$500,000 and a related decrease in the general fund revenues of \$500,000 subject to the requirements: the general fund will be brought into balance with the use of \$500,000 from the general fund reserves; an in-depth village wide cost allocation study will be completed during the first quarter of the fiscal year; an operational audit of the public works department utility division must be completed during the first quarter of the fiscal year; the current village water and sewer rates will remain unchanged until the outcomes of the cost allocation study and operational audit; and a hiring moratorium will be put in place during the first quarter of the fiscal year for all vacant positions.

The previously proposed budget called for a \$500,000 transfer from the water and sewer fund to the general fund, and a related 40 percent increase in water and sewer rates for residents, to cover administrative costs of running the utility services. Several Village Board members were vehemently opposed to such a transfer, which was a major reason the budget had not been previously approved. The April 27 approval of the budget keeps the village in compliance with state law, which required the 2011-12 budget be approved by April 30.

Both the cost allocation and operational audit are scheduled for completion by Aug. 1. **Vitas** said administrators have already spoken with companies capable of doing a cost allocation study and have found three that can complete it in 90 days. He added administration would start looking for companies April 28 to complete the operational audit, with a goal of also having that completed in 90 days.

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Bob Vitas

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“The budget we look at on May 1 could be completely different Aug. 1 after the cost allocation study and operational audit have been conducted,” **Vitas** said.

By using \$500,000 from the reserves, the reserve balance is projected to be about \$3.5 million at the end of 2011-12, down from about \$4 million at the close of the current year.

Internet Research

Bob Vitas

[Articles Appear In Reverse Chronological Order]

Chicago Tribune

April 20, 2011

Trustees split vote on next year's budget

By Amy Alderman

Lake Zurich trustee failed to approve a proposed \$44.5 million budget during a recent meeting that saw heated discussion over the way administrators want to spend tax dollars.

A tie vote stalled the proposal.

Most of the criticism during the nearly two-hour discussion on April 18 focused on a plan to transfer \$500,000 from the water and sewer fund to the general fund — in tandem with a 28 percent water and sewer rate increase. The Tribune watched a recording of the meeting on the village's website, www.volz.org.

Trustee Jeff Halen gave a laundry list of concerns over what he called "inflated" costs in the budget. He vehemently opposed moving money from one fund to another, and suggested cutting two administrative positions to save \$250,000.

He also opposed using a hotel-motel tax to pay for July Fourth celebrations, arguing that the fireworks don't bring in enough out-of-town guests to justify the expense.

"It's like saving money for your child's college fund and using it to go out to dinner and a movie," Halen said. "I am not for cutting personnel, but if it saves the budget, it has to be done."

The rate hikes are justified because the current revenue does not cover the cost of the water and sewer services, Administrator **Bob Vitas** said. The rates have not changed since 2005. But the actual costs versus expenses are not itemized, and a study would answer questions about the true value of those services, **Vitas** said.

If the \$500,000 in the water and sewer fund isn't transferred to the general fund, as many as eight jobs would have to be cut, he warned. The proposed budget has already been cut 22 percent below recent years, **Vitas** added.

Meanwhile, Trustee Jonathan Sprawka said he was interested in putting an ambulance back in service, which had been taken out of service.

That would cost more than \$1 million because it would add six to eight positions, **Vitas** said.

Trustee Jim Johnson, at his last board meeting before his term expires, said Halen and other trustees have mulled over the same questions, which **Vitas** said he answered multiple times. The budget discussions were delayed at the last board meeting because of the questions.

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Bob Vitas

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“The thing that is frustrating to me is, and I know I’m the lame duck trustee, but I see we have a professional staff,” Johnson said, looking at administrators. “I see you spending hours and days and weeks and months, coming up with figures and answering questions. You do your best job going over documents and we (trustees) all the sudden come up with lists of questions, saying let’s start over again, let’s start over again, and let’s start over again.

“I think we ought to vote the budget in, and do whatever amendment we want to fix it,” he added. “I don’t think it’s broken right now. I’d like to get this done and move on.” However, only two trustees sided with Johnson on the final vote — Dana Rzeznik and Tom Poynton.

So the motion to pass the budget failed in a 3-3 tie, due to a lack of a majority. Halen, Richard Sustich and Jonathon Sprawka voted against the budget. Mayor Suzanne Branding, who could have broken the tie, did not attend the meeting.

The board attempted to pass the budget twice with one motion to approve the budget, which failed in a four to two vote, and the second motion to pass the budget with a contingency to possibly revise the budget at the board of trustees June 6 meeting.

The village could schedule a special meeting to vote on the budget before its May 2 meeting, village attorney Kelly Cahill said. If the budget is not approved by the April 30 deadline, the current budget would remain in place for 90 days, Cahill said.

Internet Research

Bob Vitas

[Articles Appear In Reverse Chronological Order]

Daily Herald (Arlington Heights, IL)

February 13, 2011

Getting on board with budget

Author: *Bob Susnjara bsusnjara@dailyherald.com*

Lake Zurich Village Administrator **Bob Vitas** says he wants elected officials to help shape the next fiscal year's budget in an effort to create one of the best such documents in Illinois.

Vitas spoke of his preference for the elected officials to spend up to 18 hours over various budget sessions after Trustee Jonathan Sprawka suggested otherwise during a village board meeting last week.

"It's time to place our trust in the staff to develop a budget that reflects the board's direction," Sprawka said.

But **Vitas** said the elected officials' input will be valuable for the new fiscal year that starts May 1. He said the village's strategic plan will be incorporated into the 2011_12 budget with ideas that would need funding.

Lake Zurich officials have an opportunity to adopt a budget "that's second to none in Illinois" by following a process designed to lead to full transparency on spending, **Vitas** said.

"I know we don't want to meet for 24 hours or even 18 — I know that," he said.

Village boards in Gurnee and Vernon Hills are among those that spend considerable hours in budget sessions. Vernon Hills even has had special Saturday budget work sessions for the board.

Before **Vitas** spoke Monday night, Mayor Suzanne Branding and trustees Jim Johnson and Dana Rzeznik supported Sprawka's idea of less village board involvement in the budget.

"I'd just as soon hang up the green eyeshade and move on to the policy_making aspect of being a trustee," Johnson said.

Trustees Tom Poynton, Jeff Halen and Rich Sustich were opposed to reducing the time they are scheduled to spend on the proposed budget. Poynton said such a move would be counter to what most cash-strapped governments are doing.

"I think there will come a time when we will be able to look at (the budget) 100 percent and say, 'We don't need to look at the details,'" Sustich said.

Last year, the Lake Zurich village board approved a \$40.8 million spending plan that ends April 30.

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Several steps were taken before the budget was passed to narrow what had been a \$3.3 million gap between revenue and expenditures.

Employee wage freezes and increased health insurance contributions were among actions taken to balance the budget.

Lake Zurich's strategic plan runs from 2011 to 2013. The document includes goals such as ensuring the development and maintenance of a capital improvement plan.

Internet Research

Bob Vitas

[Articles Appear In Reverse Chronological Order]

Daily Herald (Arlington Heights, IL)

February 8, 2011

Lake Zurich looks at plan for downtown development

Author: *Bob Susnjara bsusnjara@dailyherald.com*

Lake Zurich's village administrator on Monday outlined a preliminary, three_phase strategy that may be used in an effort to land a developer for a long_stalled downtown project.

Village Administrator **Bob Vitas** said what Lake Zurich won't need to do is start from scratch, because there are different plans that can be used.

"What do we do when the truck doesn't show up and there is no money to make the project go?" **Vitas** asked.

Lake Zurich's downtown is once again on the front burner in the wake of developer David Smith and his Equity Services Group's recent departure. Smith's inability to deliver \$12.5 million in funding by Jan. 1 opened the door for a different firm to take over the project.

Downtown Lake Zurich was declared a tax_increment financing district in 2002, meaning property taxes to local governments are frozen so any new tax income could go into development. However, because the project stalled, the income isn't there.

Vitas said there has been developer interest in some aspects of the project, particularly the unfinished Somerset townhouse development.

Lake Zurich's current debt on the downtown project, including interest, is about \$28.3 million. Officials said some of those loans will come due in the next few years.

As part of the preliminary strategy he presented Monday, **Vitas** said an evaluation of the village's financial conditions must happen first for Lake Zurich to forge ahead with the downtown project this year. He said initial consulting services would be paid on a flat-fee basis.

When Lake Zurich is ready for the second phase, **Vitas** said, the village must attract highly qualified and well_capitalized developers with proven, successful track records. Such developers must match the village's vision and financial needs.

In the third phase, Lake Zurich would execute developer agreements. Responding to Trustee Tom Poynton, **Vitas** said part of that will be to get the word out that Lake Zurich is "open for business," adding that Lake Zurich is competing with other Illinois communities for downtown revitalization.

Poynton said it may be worth discussing developer incentives.

Internet Research

Bob Vitas

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"What do we want to give away to get things developed?" he said.

Smith's inability to make the payment by the deadline already extended from September 2010 essentially voided the deal he'd struck with Lake Zurich officials. At a meeting in January, the village board listened to Smith ask for an additional extension until the end of the month, but trustees opted to show him the door.

Vitas told village board members he'd welcome their input on strategies to ignite the downtown redevelopment strategy.

Internet Research
Bob Vitas

[Articles Appear In Reverse Chronological Order]

Daily Herald (Arlington Heights, IL)

January 19, 2011

Lake Zurich official has to pay own way

Author: *Bob Susnjara bsusnjara@dailyherald.com*

Lake Zurich Village Administrator **Bob Vitas** has spent his own money to buy tickets to a local business organization's dinner_dance set for Saturday because trustees refused to cover the expense with taxpayer funds.

Despite objections by Mayor Suzanne Branding, village board trustees recently declined to approve spending public money for the \$75_a_head Evening of Excellence sponsored by the Lake Zurich Area Chamber of Commerce.

Set for 5:30 to 11:30 p.m. Saturday at Concorde Banquets in Kildeer, the chamber's dinner-dance will include awards in categories such as business of the year, educator of the year and citizen of the year. The Roy Vombrack Orchestra will entertain.

Branding said **Vitas** spent \$150 on two Evening of Excellence tickets for him and his wife late last week. Branding said she also used her own \$150 on tickets so she can attend with her husband.

Given **Vitas**' job responsibilities as Lake Zurich's top staffer, Branding said it would have been appropriate for village money to cover his ticket. She added she understands the financial concerns about spending on the dinner-dance.

At last week's Lake Zurich village board meeting that Branding could not attend, Trustee Jim Johnson read into the record an email from the mayor supporting the spending of taxpayer money for **Vitas** to be at the chamber event.

Branding said relationships must be maintained between village officials and those with other local governments and the chamber.

"Lake Zurich has hired a professional administrator," Branding wrote, "and the board is handicapping him by not paying for him to attend the chamber's dinner-dance. Attending this function is part of his job."

But Trustee Rich Sustich responded that spending on dinner-dance tickets would be questionable in tight budget times in Lake Zurich. He said nothing would prevent village officials from paying their own way to the Evening of Excellence.

"Participation in an event such as this, I think, falls under the category of discretionary spending," Sustich said.

Internet Research

Bob Vitas

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Vitas did not return messages seeking comment.

Lake Zurich isn't the only suburb where a small expenditure has been placed under a microscope and rejected.

In May, the Round Lake village board declined to contribute \$150 in public money to a private foundation that assists the village's park district in sending children to summer camp. Two trustees voiced concern about the message the \$150 donation would have sent to municipal employees whose pay was frozen.

Internet Research

Bob Vitas

[Articles Appear In Reverse Chronological Order]

Daily Herald (Arlington Heights, IL)

January 4, 2011

Village's development deal over?

Author: *Russell Lissau* rlissau@dailyherald.com

The developer of Lake Zurich's planned downtown redevelopment project missed a Jan. 1 deadline to deliver \$12.5 million, officials said Monday.

"That date came and went," Village Administrator **Bob Vitas** said.

The missed payment essentially voids the deal Lake Zurich officials had struck with David Smith and his Equity Services Group, **Vitas** said.

But **Vitas** hopes Smith is still interested in the project and said the developer can request an extension or a new agreement.

Proponents of the project have so much time and energy invested in the plan, **Vitas** said, "it'd be horrible for the village to start from scratch."

Smith could not be reached for comment.

The Jan. 1 deadline was itself an extension, an ultimatum set for Smith in October after village officials said they haven't seen any evidence of the financing Smith had said he arranged.

Smith also missed a Sept. 30, 2010, deadline to submit detailed plans for the project. In October, he requested a 10-month extension.

Village officials have said other developers have expressed interest in the project, but those avenues haven't been pursued because of the contract with Smith's group.

Officials are eager for development to begin. The area has been declared a tax increment financing district and is supposed to generate rising property tax revenue as the land is rejuvenated.

At least, that's the plan. Without redevelopment, the village could be short millions of dollars it needs to pay off loans for the project.

If Smith formally requests another extension, **Vitas** believes village leaders will entertain the concept with certain unspecified conditions.

The village board is next scheduled to meet Monday, Jan. 17.

Internet Research

Bob Vitas

[Articles Appear In Reverse Chronological Order]

Chicago Tribune

Dec. 21, 2010

Sale of park property delayed

By Andrea L. Brown

The sledding hill and skate park in Lake Zurich will not be sold for commercial development for now, but the issue will likely come up again next year as the village evaluates its park plan and looks for ways to raise cash.

The Village Board this week unanimously voted not to declare a 7-acre slice of Paulus Park that fronts Illinois Highway 12 as surplus property. A yes vote would have paved the way to sell the land.

The board will begin in March to update its master plan, which will include a review of all of the village's 30-plus parks to determine if any of the parcels qualify as surplus property, Village Administrator **Bob Vitas** said.

The village has discussed selling a piece of Paulus Park for more than a year, after brokers approached Lake Zurich officials at a trade show, **Vitas** said. The proposal under discussion called for a group of free-standing buildings, which had attracted interest from chain restaurants.

The developers wanted to attach the park property to a vacant parcel, the former BP gas station on the northeast corner of Route 12 and Illinois Highway 22. Since Route 22 was widened a few years ago, the property is no longer desirable because a raised median limits access, **Vitas** explained.

Residents opposed to the idea of selling the park land filled the Village Board meeting room and spoke about the important role the park and its amenities, such as the skate park and sledding hill, play in the community.

"They're also singular," said Mary Mihelic, a member of the Park and Recreation Advisory Board. "If you get rid of that, your finger's right over the delete key. They will not exist any more."

The village's precarious financial state drives the need to look for creative solutions to bolster the village's cash reserves, contribute to underfunded pension accounts and pay impending debt in the tax increment financing district, Mayor Suzanne Branding said.

"The sale of this property seems to be the least bad in a group of bad choices," Branding said.

Acknowledging residents' concerns they had little public notice about the development proposal, Branding said many developers won't negotiate unless discussions are private in the early stages. She said she would like to see the matter discussed in a public hearing format.

Internet Research

Bob Vitas

[Articles Appear In Reverse Chronological Order]

Maureen Degen, a member of the Park and Recreation Advisory Board for 12 years said she was thankful that so many residents showed up at the meeting to oppose the notion of selling the Paulus Park land.

“I’m thrilled Paulus Park is going to remain,” said Degen, who expressed skepticism about the village’s contention the skate park and sledding hill could be moved another location either in Paulus Park or one of the system’s other properties.

She also said the village should consider adding the former BP site to the village’s park holdings.

“I don’t think this is dead,” Degen said. “What we should be doing is putting a bond referendum on the ballot to continue this park.”

Internet Research

Bob Vitas

[Articles Appear In Reverse Chronological Order]

Daily Herald (Arlington Heights, IL)

October 15, 2010

Will sales tax increase?

Author: *Russell Lissau rlissau@dailyherald.com*

A proposal to increase Lake Zurich's sales tax by half a percentage point probably stands a 50_50 chance of passing on Election Day, Village Administrator **Bob Vitas** said Thursday.

"It's a tossup right now," **Vitas** said during an hourlong discussion at Daily Herald's Lake County office. "My guess is, people have already formulated an opinion."

Vitas and two other village officials — Public Works Director David Heyden and Finance Director Al Zochowski — talked about the referendum during an editorial endorsement interview.

The proposal on the Nov. 2 ballot would raise the sales tax on most retail goods purchased in the village to 7.5 percent.

If the tax is approved, it could raise between \$1.8 million and \$2.2 million annually for the village.

Most of that money would be used to resurface roads throughout town, and to pay for simultaneous sidewalk, curb and sewer work, Heyden said.

Funds generated by the tax also would pay to replace aging ambulances, police cars, snow plows and other village vehicles, Zochowski said.

If approved, the tax hike would become effective in July 2011. The village would start receiving revenue from the tax the following month.

Village leaders already are eyeing some roads for repairs. If the sales tax is approved, projects will be assigned based on the time since a road last was resurfaced, a road's condition and appearance, and its structural integrity, Heyden said.

Vitas believes residents in older neighborhoods with streets in need of repair will support the proposal. Residents in newer neighborhoods with streets in better shape may not, he said.

"If you're living on a street that was just dedicated by a developer two years ago in Coventry Creek, are you going to be inclined to vote for something (that) you won't see the road improvement benefit of for 20 years? Probably not," **Vitas** said. "Each individual taxpayer makes a decision based on their personal need and their personal financial situation."

Internet Research

Bob Vitas

[Articles Appear In Reverse Chronological Order]

The village can't afford the repairs and purchases with its current revenues, **Vitas** said. Nearly two dozen workers have been laid off in recent years as cost saving measures.

During the last round of budget talks, officials looking to save money went as far as to debate eliminating village -funded coffee for staffers — a step they eventually took, he said.

"That's how deep we cut," **Vitas** said.

Employees have accepted salary freezes and costlier health insurance premiums as ways to save the village money, **Vitas** said.

Officials opted for a sales tax because it also would be applied to nonresidents, unlike vehicle stickers or other dedicated taxes.

Residents in other communities shop in Lake Zurich and drive on its roads without paying property taxes to the town, and this is a way for them to contribute to the maintenance of those roads, Zochowski said.

If voters reject the sales tax increase, services will be cut and more layoffs will be necessary, **Vitas** said.

Private contractors could be hired for tasks such as snow removal and street sweeping, he said.

"We appreciate (residents) want all these services, but please recognize it comes at a cost," **Vitas** said. "And those costs have gone up."

Internet Research

Bob Vitas

[Articles Appear In Reverse Chronological Order]

Daily Herald (Arlington Heights, IL)

April 8, 2010

Lake Zurich, CN approve of land swap

Author: *Adam DeRose* aderose@dailyherald.com

Lake Zurich officials have formalized the land exchange with Canadian National Railway as part of plans to build a 270-foot communications tower.

Construction is under way on the tower, which will be used to monitor rail traffic. The negotiations were to replace the original tower site near downtown.

"In large part, we were trying to straighten up their property lines, and we were only interested in taking what we need and leaving the rest as a tax piece," Village Administrator **Bob Vitas** said

The property CN was looking to exchange with the village was larger than the parcel at the industrial park on Ensell Road, where CN is constructing the communications tower, he added.

Village officials wanted assurance the property, along Route 22, and bordering the railroad tracks, was of equal size and value.

"We're not interested in taking new property at this time," **Vitas** said.

The tower construction was originally slated for a lot behind the Casper Hardware store in the downtown district. Village officials were not informed about the railway's plans to construct the tower. Because it is regulated by the Federal Railroad Administration, CN had no obligation to inform the village.

In negotiations with the village, CN agreed to move to the Ensell Road location. Doing so would incur the least amount of visual obstruction to nearby residents, **Vitas** said. "They could have placed that tower downtown, but we've worked with them to create the land swap," he said.

The tower will need to reach 270 feet, 45 feet taller than original plans, because the new site is lower and farther away from the original site and there are obstructions.

The real estate closing for the exchange will occur in the coming weeks, Village Attorney Mark Burkland said.

CN purchased the EJ&E railway in late 2008, and has been working with Lake Zurich and other suburbs as agreed upon with the purchase. The village and CN are developing plans for a sound barrier, and possible future road rerouting in the village.

Internet Research

Bob Vitas

[Articles Appear In Reverse Chronological Order]

Lake Zurich Courier (IL)

February 11, 2010

Lake Zurich may assess new taxes

Author: DAVID CONARD dconard@pioneerlocal.com

Lake Zurich is facing a \$1 million to \$2 million shortfall in the proposed budget for fiscal year 2010-11, according to Village Administrator **Bob Vitas**, and he may suggest closing that gap with a utility tax, a wheel tax or a non-home rule sales tax.

Vitas still isn't finished with his budget recommendations to the Village Board and won't be for at least two weeks.

"My recommendation might include \$300,000 in additional taxes that are not here today in order to balance the budget," **Vitas** said at the Feb. 1 Village Board meeting. "I don't like surprises, and I don't want to hand you any surprises at this point, I just want to be upfront."

Vitas said such a utility tax might be a one-to-five-percent tax on residents' natural gas and electrical bills.

Every one percent of utility tax would generate \$240,000 a year, up to the state-mandated maximum of five percent, Village Finance Director Al Zochowski said.

A wheel tax might be \$30 every year on every vehicle village residents own, **Vitas** said.

Zochowski estimated 13,000 vehicles in the village. Zochowski expects a wheel tax would generate between \$400,000 and \$500,000 a year. Trustee Jim Johnson said at the meeting the village had a wheel tax through its vehicle sticker program several years ago.

Trustee Tom Poynton added the village had shifted the tax from a wheel tax to a telecommunication tax on village residents' phone bills.

That telecommunication tax is expected to generate about \$1.125 million this year, Zochowski said.

Board members had varying opinions on a new wheel tax.

"From my perspective, we already have a wheel tax -- it's on our phone bill," Poynton said at the meeting. "Another wheel tax on top of a wheel tax, regardless of where the money is and where it's been going, is an issue for me."

"It's too early to make any judgment," Johnson said at the meeting. "To reject a wheel tax out of hand I think is premature, too."

Internet Research

Bob Vitas

[Articles Appear In Reverse Chronological Order]

The money generated by the wheel tax would be used for a road program, which the village hasn't had for two years, **Vitas** said.

The final possible new tax would be a non-home rule sales tax, which the village has never had, **Vitas** said. He added voters would have to approve that in a referendum in November, and the earlier the village could see sales tax revenue would be July 2011.

Zochowski said a half-percent sales tax increase would generate about \$2.8 million a year. Both **Vitas** and Zochowski said a sales tax would spread the burden to non-residents.

Vitas and Zochowski both expressed hope that sales tax revenues in excess of what was needed for future budgets could allow the village to reduce property taxes.

"The sales tax is more palatable," Poynton said. "I don't know how many more taxes we can afford."

Next official meeting on the budget is village board budget workshop on March 6, **Vitas** said.

Zochowski said the gap is caused in part by increasing funding expectations for village employee pensions, contractual obligations for village employee unions, and decreasing income tax revenues from the state.

Zochowski said he expects the village to have to pay \$1.8 million in 2010-11 as part of pension obligations to police and fire pensions, up from \$600,000 two years ago.

Vitas said the increase was partially due to the pensions' investment funds losing money in the stock market decline. The village is required by state law to fund the pensions at the full level with no exceptions, Zochowski said.

Vitas said the telecommunicators, public works and parks, and firefighters unions had a scheduled 3.5 percent raise next year, with the police union's contract being up for renegotiation.

Vitas said the village was looking for wage freezes for all union and non-union employees to avoid personnel layoffs.

Vitas said Friday he was preparing financial numbers in order to have a meeting with union representatives soon.

Vitas and Zochowski said TIF district revenues, or lack thereof, were not contributing to the shortfall. Zochowski said there was ability to refinance bonds within the district through 2015.

Internet Research

Bob Vitas

[Articles Appear In Reverse Chronological Order]

Daily Herald (Arlington Heights, IL)

February 20, 2009

Lake Zurich issues bonds to pay TIF debt

Author: *By Phil Collins pcollins@dailyherald.com*

Lake Zurich village officials say they'll be able to pay tuition reimbursement to Lake Zurich Unit District 95 on time in September, after delivering last year's payment five months late.

The village reimburses District 95 for tuition from students in a special tax increment financing district for downtown redevelopment. Last year's bill was \$532,000.

Tuesday, the village board voted to issue four series of bonds, restructuring a \$25 million debt.

"They restructured the debt so the current revenue, \$1.3 million, for the TIF will be enough to cover the school district payments," Village President John Tolomei said.

Village administrator **Bob Vitas** is confident this year's payment will be on time.

"We have shored up the leaky faucet of the TIF ... for the next four to five years," **Vitas** said.

He said the new bonds will also serve to make any outstanding principal and interest payments to previous bondholders.

Vitas said if there is no development in downtown Lake Zurich, the village will find itself in the same position again in four or five years.

Lake Zurich is also seeking to extend the life of the TIF, giving it more time to pay off the debt. The extension would be for a minimum of 12 years and would require General Assembly approval.

District 95 and other taxing bodies would continue to miss property tax revenue within the TIF for its extended life. School board President Kathy Brown said the necessity of an extension and its impact on the school district is still unclear to her board.

"It's my understanding that the board may be requesting to have the village of Lake Zurich bond council give our board a presentation so that we have a clear understanding of all the information involved," she said.

Vitas said the bonds will be available soon in \$5,000 increments. Anyone can buy them.

Internet Research

Bob Vitas

[Articles Appear In Reverse Chronological Order]

Daily Herald (Arlington Heights, IL)

March 5, 2008

Looking to fill another vacancy Lake Zurich on spot with Wickes closing

Author: *Madhu Krishnamurthy*

Barely a year after Wickes Furniture came into Lake Zurich like a lion, the national store is going out like a lamb, leaving village and business community leaders pondering what will take its place.

It's the second chain furniture store along Route 12 to go belly up in two years. Bay Furniture in Lake Zurich closed in June 2006.

Village officials don't know exactly how much sales tax will be lost with Wickes' departure, but they say it will have minimal impact. The bigger fear is that the property will sit vacant a long time.

"It is a concern," Village Administrator **Bob Vitas** said. "We'll be looking for another retailer to occupy that space."

Officials started talking to other potential users as soon as they were notified last month that Wheeling-based Wickes Furniture Co. was filing for bankruptcy protection from creditors.

Nothing can really happen on the site until Wickes sells off its remaining inventory.

"They've got 90 days under Illinois state law to do that," **Vitas** said.

Vitas said he's relieved Wickes does not own the site, so the property should not be tied up in bankruptcy proceedings.

Lake Zurich's business community has weathered blows from several major store closures in the last few years, including a Big Lots and a Mattress Giant going bust.

The soon-to-be vacated Wickes site at 825 S. Rand Road, the former Bay Furniture lot and a long-vacant Kmart property are three prominent Route 12 pockets community leaders are eager to see occupied.

Since the recent business closures have been regional chain stores, it's not a reflection on the local economy, said Dale Perrin, executive director of the Lake Zurich Area Chamber of Commerce.

"There is still tremendous interest in this area for businesses and corporations to come in here," he said.

Internet Research

Bob Vitas

[Articles Appear In Reverse Chronological Order]

One example is a proposed development of a Lowe's Home Improvement Warehouse and a Meijer targeted for a Route 12 property on the border of Lake Zurich and Kildeer, Perrin said.

There may be challenges to finding another tenant for the 42,000-square-foot Wickes building because of the way it was built, said John Sfire, president of The Fidelity Group, real estate developers based in Lake Zurich.

"It's all glass ... a very expensive building to maintain from a heat loss perspective and difficult to subdivide," he said. "The building wasn't really constructed to be anything more than a furniture store, so it's going to be a difficult transition."

Sfire said the national economy needs to improve before any new big retailers come to town.

So far, there is no indication what retailer may fill the Bay Furniture location, owned by Sfire's group.

The Kmart site, owned by a New Jersey corporation, has been a thorn on the side of village officials, but there is hope.

"There's been some recent interest in that property and the building plans were produced and released to a private company," **Vitas** said.

Internet Research

Bob Vitas

[Articles Appear In Reverse Chronological Order]

Daily Herald (Arlington Heights, IL)

October 19, 2007

Lake Zurich hires new administrator

Author: *Madhu Krishnamurthy*

The top priority for Lake Zurich's new village administrator will be downtown redevelopment, village officials said.

After a nationwide search, the village board hired Bogdan "**Bob**" **Vitas**, who served as chief administrative officer for Menasha, Wis., for nine years and as city administrator for Lewiston, Maine.

He replaces John Dixon, who is retiring at the end of this year after 16 years with the village.

Vitas, now an independent consultant, served more than 10 years in village administration for towns throughout the Chicago area. Born and raised in the Chicago area, he has a master's degree in public administration from Northern Illinois University.

Since 2000, **Vitas** has led several U.S.-sponsored economic redevelopment and government reform projects in Serbia. Recently, he managed community recovery efforts in New Orleans and southern portions of Louisiana.

"The International City/County Management Association speaks highly of the work that he did in Serbia," Dixon said.

His economic development background is the main reason **Vitas** was chosen, Lake Zurich Mayor John Tolomei said.

Tolomei said **Vitas'** leadership and guidance is needed to help add momentum to the village's own downtown redevelopment projects that have stalled. "I think the challenge will be being able to manage whatever resources we have and what additional resources we'll need to try to accomplish some of the redevelopment," Tolomei said.

Another challenge for **Vitas** and the village is filling empty storefronts and vacant parcels on Rand Road, he said. **Vitas** agreed the success of downtown redevelopment is Lake Zurich's biggest test.

"With the economy being where it's at right now, especially with the housing market, I think it had a dramatic impact on the progress or the momentum that should have been there," he said. "It's not like building a new industrial park ... you are dealing with a different animal altogether."

Vitas said Lake Zurich needs to find its own niche, like Long Grove has, with developments that draw people to downtown and make them want to live there.

Internet Research

Bob Vitas

[Articles Appear In Reverse Chronological Order]

Morning Sentinel (Waterville, ME)

October 19, 2001

Lewiston administrator quits for Yugoslavia job

Author: *Associated Press*

LEWISTON - City administrator **Bob Vitas** announced he is resigning from his post to work in Yugoslavia.

Vitas said Nov. 12 will likely be his last day in the job. He expects to start his new job as a municipal government management adviser in Belgrade on Nov. 15.

"I've done jobs like this on and off for five years," **Vitas** said of his new position. "It's something I truly enjoy, but it's always been something I've been able to do for a year at most because it separated me from my family. This opportunity is different because it allows me to bring my wife and children."

Vitas took over as city administrator in November. The city paid a headhunter more than \$10,000 last year to find a candidate to replace Robert Mulready.

City Council President Joyce Bilodeau praised **Vitas** as accomplishing much during his tenure.

"Economic development has been his strong point," she said. "I think it's safe to say that a lot of the success we've seen recently and a lot of the successes we will be seeing in the next few months (are) due to his work."

Vitas, a Serbian-American, spent several weeks in Sarajevo in 1999 with the U.S. Agency for International Development.

"I decided 20 years ago that if the opportunity to do this came up, I'd take it," he said. "This is a pivotal project. This is a country that we were at war with a few years ago that is just beginning now to open its doors again to democracy. It's a unique opportunity that will not likely be repeated."

Internet Research

Bob Vitas

[Articles Appear In Reverse Chronological Order]

Sarasota Herald-Tribune (FL)

March 14, 2000

Top choice declines North Port position

The manager job may now go to a candidate whose resume was inaccurate.

Author: *Kelly Cramer STAFF WRITER*

The North Port city commissioners will offer the city manager post to their second choice after being rejected by the top candidate Monday.

The move comes despite reservations by the commissioners and residents about inaccurate information on the resume of Robert Koncar, the city's unofficial runner-up for the job.

Commission Chairman Joseph Fink said **Bob Vitas Jr.**, the town administrator in Menasha, Wis., called him shortly before Monday's meeting to turn down the city's offer. Instead, he will take a job in Croatia, said Fink, who handled the negotiations.

Vitas is Croatian and has worked as a city government consultant in Bosnia since 1996, according to his resume.

After being turned down by **Vitas**, the North Port commissioners voted 4-1 to offer the post to Koncar, a former DeSoto County administrator.

"It is an outrageous move for the good of North Port," said Dick Lockhart, who was on the citizens' committee that pared the list of 88 applicants to 11.

"The accuracy of his resume was not there. His statements were not accurate," Lockhart said. "It's just outrageous that they would consider him now. That's not the kind of city manager we want."

Koncar, the commission's unofficial second choice for city manager, submitted inaccurate information on his resume and failed to disclose during an interview that he had left his position as DeSoto administrator under pressure.

Koncar said he was not trying to hide anything; he said he just didn't update his resume.

Commissioner Tom Williamson voted alone against offering Koncar the job, though Commissioner Roy Hall said he had questions about Koncar.

And Fink said providing false information on a resume is grounds for being fired, according to city policy.

Internet Research

Bob Vitas

[Articles Appear In Reverse Chronological Order]

"The voting of ranking 1, 2 and 3 was only intended for seeing if people had different rankings," Williamson said. "I want to go back to the list the citizens' committee recommended. We cannot act in haste."

But the other commissioners groaned about how much time interviewing more people would take.

"I don't know why we have to go back and re-evaluate," Mullen said.

And Hall said Koncar, who was ousted from his last job, "could be here tomorrow."

More than three months after knowing his job was ending, Koncar sent North Port his resume, which said he had been the DeSoto County administrator from January 1996 to present.

But his last day as county administrator was Dec. 21. He sent his resume to North Port on Dec. 27.

Koncar's most recent employment status wasn't the only mistake on his resume.

It states that he was an administrative assistant to the mayor and City Commission of Valparaiso from February 1978 to November 1985.

But Valparaiso city records state that from February to October 1985, Koncar was a part-time grants coordinator and that he did not become the administrative assistant until October.

The North Port commissioners decided not to verify the resumes or check the references of the three city manager finalists before they paid for their travel, interviewed them and offered one the job.

City Clerk Doris Briggs said that the firm hired to investigate **Vitas** would have its report to her Wednesday. That investigation cost up to \$1,300 plus the expenses of the investigators.

The city manager post opened when Paul Kaskey resigned Oct. 18, citing his rocky relationship with the city commissioners. Stan Frank, the city's communications manager, has been serving as interim city manager.

The new city manager will become the fourth permanent manager since North Port switched from a mayoral form of government.

Contact staff writer Kelly Cramer at 486-3052 or kelly.cramer@herald-trib.com.

Internet Research

Bob Vitas

[Articles Appear In Reverse Chronological Order]

The Post - Crescent - Appleton, Wis.

Date: Apr 11, 2000

No Title

By Steve Wideman Post-Crescent staff writer

TOWN OF MENASHA

Outgoing Town Administrator **Bob Vitas** claims a broken promise by Town Chairman Arden Tews and the Town Board cost him a \$108,000 city manager's job in Florida. Meanwhile, a city official in North Port, Fla., said **Vitas** rejected the city's job offer to take a job in Croatia.

Vitas filed a claim against the town on April 6 seeking more than \$7,000 in bonus pay, unspecified criminal penalties and other fees involving the alleged garnishment of his wages and a breach of promise by Tews and other town officials.

The controversy began when supervisors adjusted **Vitas'** salary in closed session on March 6 from \$65,985 to \$69,212 and granted him a bonus of \$4,352.50 intended as compensation for **Vitas'** work in forming the town's utility district. The vote came as **Vitas** was mulling a job offer to be the city manager in North Port.

Vitas said in his claim that Tews knew he was disappointed with the Town Board's action after he had requested a pay increase to \$76,957. **Vitas** alleges that the Town Board, through Tews, offered him on March 7 an \$8,705 bonus or a salary increase to \$76,957. **Vitas** said he viewed Tews' offer as an inducement to remain with the town.

Tews previously denied making any promises to **Vitas** involving pay increases or bonus payments. **Vitas** accepted Tews' alleged offer of an \$8,705 bonus and provided Finance Director Grace VanderVelden with his salary adjustments on March 8. He was issued a check for the adjustments, including the \$8,705 bonus, on March 9. **Vitas** said he reported his decision to accept the bonus offer to supervisors and Town Clerk Carlene Sprague on March 10. **Vitas** said in his claim that he turned down the North Port job offer on March 13 because of the town's promise to pay him an \$8,705 bonus.

North Port City Commission President Joseph Fink told The Post-Crescent on Monday that **Vitas** told him during a telephone call that **Vitas** was rejecting the city manager's post because he had accepted a job in Zagreb, the capital of the Republic of Croatia. "That's my recollection," Fink said.

In his claim **Vitas** said he had been offered a compensation package in North Port worth \$108,000. Fink said North Port never put together a complete compensation package for **Vitas**, but he said **Vitas'** proposed annual salary was \$75,000.

Internet Research

Bob Vitas

[Articles Appear In Reverse Chronological Order]

Tews declined to comment on **Vitas'** claim or the North Port information. **Vitas** did not return phone calls. It wasn't until March 13, the same day **Vitas** rejected the North Port job, that Town of Menasha supervisors took action on his salary, granting him a pay increase to \$71,794 annually, the use of a staff car and the earlier approved \$4,352.50 bonus for his work in forming the utility district.

Vitas alleges Tews first told him on March 14 the offer of an \$8,705 bonus was made in error. VanderVelden, on the advice of Tews and town legal counsel, ordered **Vitas** to repay the alleged \$4,352 bonus overpayment.

Tews, in a separate letter to **Vitas**, said **Vitas** should have known when he collected the higher bonus that the payment was unauthorized.

Vitas said that repaying the funds would result in a significant financial loss to him and his family. **Vitas** claims the town garnished his paychecks in identical amounts of \$2,176 on March 30 and April 13. In his claim, **Vitas** is seeking \$4,352.50 in bonus pay, \$2,176 as a penalty for 50 percent of the amount he claims is due him, \$500 for an unspecified criminal penalty and reasonable attorney fees.

Internet Research

Bob Vitas

[Articles Appear In Reverse Chronological Order]

The Post - Crescent - Appleton, Wis.

Date: Mar 8, 2000

No Title

By Steve Wideman Post-Crescent staff writer

TOWN OF MENASHA - Although he is mulling a job offer from a city in Florida and allegedly courting another job in Bosnia, Town Administrator **Bob Vitas** received a pay raise Monday retroactive to Jan. 1. **Vitas** was among several non-union town employees granted annual pay hikes on a 4-1 vote of the Town Board. Under the new wage plan, **Vitas** will be paid \$68,888 annually, a 4.89 percent increase over 1999. Town Chairman Arden Tews said Monday's vote did not constitute an attempt to lure **Vitas** into staying on as town administrator. Sources said **Vitas** received a \$4,352.50 one-time payment, or half of what he had requested.

Other bonus payments also totaled about half of the requested amounts, the sources said. Tews said all the bonuses were well deserved because of the work by town employees to get the utility district up and running.

Internet Research Bob Vitas

[Articles Appear In Reverse Chronological Order]

Sarasota Herald-Tribune (FL)

February 23, 2000

North Port commission agrees on manager

Author: *Kelly Cramer STAFF WRITER*

In a rare 5-0 vote, the North Port city commissioners picked their new city manager Tuesday.

Bob Vitas Jr., the town administrator in Menasha, Wis., went into negotiations with the city about an hour after his interview ended. He left City Hall to fly home.

"This sure makes going home more exciting," **Vitas** said.

He said he'll deliver the news to his wife, Janet, and three children, Bob, 12, Allie, 9, and Johnny Max, 7, as soon as he gets home.

"He was everyone's top choice," Commissioner Joseph Fink said.

Charline Cristofori and Richard Lockhart, who served on the citizens board that initially reviewed the 88 applicants, said **Vitas** had been at the top of their lists since the beginning.

Vitas was the last of three finalists to be interviewed. Robert Koncar, the former DeSoto County administrator, and Donald Crawford, city manager in Streator, Ill., were interviewed last week.

Koncar was the runner-up for the city manager post with all the commissioners but Fink.

"I'm glad they've finally decided on someone," Koncar said. "I'd be interested in talking to them again" if **Vitas** does not become city manager.

Vitas said he could start 30 days after signing a contract.

His employment depends on passing a background check, which City Clerk Doris J. Briggs will conduct. She will also check his references.

Vitas told the commissioners he wanted to come to North Port because it is a growing city. He said he wanted to stay until he met the city's biggest challenge: balancing growth with city services.

"I've always liked a challenge," **Vitas** said. "I have a young family. My son is two years away from starting high school, and my objective is that he'll start high school and graduate in the same place."

Vitas has been at his post in Wisconsin for nine years and said he wanted to leave because he had accomplished what he wanted to do for the city.

Internet Research

Bob Vitas

[Articles Appear In Reverse Chronological Order]

According to his resume, he speaks Serbian, Croatian and Bosnian fluently and is proficient in Russian. He worked in Bosnia as a city government consultant.

Vitas will replace Paul Kaskey, who resigned Oct. 18, citing his rocky relationship with the city commissioners. Stan Frank, the city's communications manager, is serving as interim city manager.

The job could pay up to \$82,000 a year. Kaskey made \$69,461 and drove a city vehicle.

Vitas would be the fourth permanent manager since North Port switched from a mayoral form of government in 1987.

The unanimous show of support for **Vitas** was a relative rarity for the commissioners.

"This is the first time all five of us have agreed in a long time," Commissioner Roy Hall said.

Internet Research

Bob Vitas

[Articles Appear In Reverse Chronological Order]

The Post - Crescent - Appleton, Wis.

Date: Feb 25, 1999

No Title

By Steve Wideman Post-Crescent staff writer

TOWN OF MENASHA - Something old, something new. Something borrowed, something blue.

The continuing honeymoon between Menasha and Town of Menasha after last year's historic border agreement is bringing a marriage of new ideas that could save residents money while enhancing services. Joint operation of recreation programs and building inspector services are just two of a dozen scenarios for cooperation being tossed around by administrators for both municipalities during regular breakfast meetings.

"Now that the long-standing boundary dispute with the City of Menasha is officially over, the town and city have begun to move forward with our future relationship which promises to address many common issues between the two communities long overlooked," Town Administrator **Bob Vitas** wrote in a Feb. 22 memo to Town Board members.

Menasha Mayor Joseph Laux, who **Vitas** credits with initiating the breakfast discussions, said it is important for both municipalities to pursue talks to erase long-standing barriers to cooperation. "For many, many years the town and city have constantly been at odds," Laux said. "Now there are really strong possibilities for both communities to move and work together like we've never worked together before."

Vitas and Laux said good progress, in particular, has been made in the area of joint contracting for crack sealing and chip sealing of streets in 1999. "This should result in a cost savings to both communities," he said. An old issue of constructing sidewalks over joint boundaries on State 47 and Midway Road also is moving toward resolution with construction possible this year. Borrowing for the project is included in the town's capital improvements budget. The reflection of blue skies in streams of stormwater runoff that crosses municipal boundaries may disappear if talks of joint stormwater management prove fruitful.

"The topic of stormwater management is one that has been discussed for some time between the communities to no avail," **Vitas** said. He said the city has expressed an interest in working with the town on stormwater problems, but no specific projects have been discussed. On the other hand, a lowering of water levels in the Heckrodt Wetland Reserve could be reversed, in part, through a cooperative venture between the town and city.

One long-term project under discussion is converting an abandoned railroad trestle, known locally as the "mile bridge," to a bicycle and pedestrian trail linking the city and town over the Fox River.

Internet Research

Bob Vitas

[Articles Appear In Reverse Chronological Order]

Laux said he foresees the city and town entering into joint application for state funds to help convert the trestle. "That is a very important component regarding the bicycle trail system," Laux said.

Perhaps the most fitting cooperative proposal came from **Vitas** at the March 17 meeting. He is proposing that the town and city welcome in the new millennium with a joint celebration.

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