



## Controller / Administrator Suggested Interview Questions

**NOTE:** We have provided these questions to guide the interview process; however, there are more questions suggested here than you will have time to ask. We suggest that you ask each candidate the same set of questions to be able to compare them on a “standard” basis.

### **Opening**

Provide a welcome statement. Explain that this conversation is a first round with the Search Committee.

### **Introduction:**

- 1) Ask the candidate to take a few minutes to share about him/herself professionally with emphasis on the experiences and qualifications most relevant to this position -- *should take no more than 5 minutes.*

### **Organizational Leadership & Staff Management:**

- 2) Tell us about your leadership experience. Have you ever led a function of this scale and scope within a county or city government before? If not, how would you utilize relevant experience to make the transition?
- 3) Why is now the right time for you to consider taking over as Controller / Administrator, effectively the “CEO” of Kent County?
- 4) Describe your experience working with a Board of Directors or in this case, a Board of Commissioners.
- 5) Describe your experience growing, developing, and retaining a team and professional staff
- 6) If you could hire one person to back you up or support you in a functional area, what would the role be and where would that individual be strongest?
- 7) Where do you see your greatest learning curve would be as the next Controller / Administrator?
- 8) Eliciting cooperation and high performance from your team will be critical for this position. Talk about your management experience and highlight some examples of how you have handled challenging situations.

- 9) Describe your management style and demonstrate how you build consensus and delegate responsibility effectively.
- 10) Give a few examples of how you have encouraged teamwork within an organization.
- 11) What is one of your most important leadership accomplishments?
- 12) Explain the last plan you developed that reflected your vision of future direction for the organization you served.
  - How did you assess the current state of affairs?
  - How did you identify the organization's future direction?
  - What was your role in the planning?
  - How was the plan implemented?
- 13) Please give some examples of how you have succeeded in motivating others. Tell me about an occasion when you did not succeed.
- 14) Describe your best effort at building a team and leading them toward a goal.
  - What techniques or tools did you use?
  - What was the goal?
  - How successful were you?
- 15) Please give an example of the toughest challenge you have encountered in an organization.
- 16) Please cite an instance in which you were able to successfully translate plans and intentions into achievable and measurable objectives and results.

**General Questions:**

- 17) Describe how your background might connect to our efforts to advance our county in western Michigan. How has your prior experience shaped your current views of the region? What part of this experience will help you? What might you need to be sensitive to? Where will you need additional resources?
- 18) What have you learned in the last three years that you will apply to this role?
- 19) We are hopefully on the cusp of coming out of a very challenging pandemic and certain industries will likely face a recessionary environment for a period of time. Given some uncertainty, what would your priorities be for the first six months? First year?
- 20) COVID-19 and the related restrictions has disrupted every business and every citizen in Kent County and beyond – including tourism and business attraction. What strategies will you implement to drive investment and relationships in a more virtual world (less travel, trade show meetings, etc.)? How does the process look different today? What challenges does it present given you might be stepping into a new leadership role?
- 21) Talk about your regional marketing philosophy and your experience developing a positive climate for regional cooperation and partnerships.
- 22) Describe your view of the intersection of economic development and workforce. What role does diversity and inclusion play in the efforts of groups working together on these initiatives?

- 23) Describe how you first earned the trust of the regional leadership and then collaborated across a region – including uniting a group of municipal leaders at the county and city level as well as businesses and philanthropic community?
- 24) Describe your experience working to keep relevant players informed and coordinated.
- 25) Describe and give an example of your experience developing long-term strategic partnerships with municipalities, foundations, and the business community.
- 26) Describe how you have interwoven a DEI orientation internally into your leadership and management.
- 27) How would you approach a public relations campaign to shape the public perception of Kent County?

**Judgment:**

- 28) Most organizational decision-making has a risk/reward ratio. Please describe a specific instance which demonstrates a high degree of risk in your decision-making and describe how your organization was impacted as a result.
- 29) Please describe the toughest decision you have had to make in your career.
- 30) Describe the decision you have made that you wish most, in hindsight, you could take back.
- 31) What factors guided your initial decision making?
- 32) How did you come to the conclusion that your course of action wasn't correct?
- 33) What did you do then?
- 34) What have you done differently as a result of the experience?

**Personal/Professional Characteristics:**

- 35) Would you share an experience you found to be personally rewarding and one which you found to be professionally rewarding?
- 36) Describe an incident that best illustrates your ability to maintain equilibrium or a sense of humor in a tough situation. What response did it evoke?
- 37) Please give an example of how you have addressed issues or serious problems in an innovative or creative manner.
- 38) What contribution do you want to leave behind as a result of your lifetime activity?
- 39) What was the most fun thing you did this past year?

**Closing:**

- 40) Is there anything else that we have not asked you that you wish to share with us about your qualifications for the position?
- 41) If it were offered to you, would you have any concerns or reservations about this position?
- 42) Do you have any questions? (*Recommend for last 10 minutes*)