

From: postmaster@muniweb.com
To: [Hanson, Cortney](#)
Subject: Application for City Council
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Thank you for your interest

Name:

Aaron Martinez

Nickname, if preferred:

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Are you a registered voter in the City of Novi?

Yes

How long have you lived continuously in the City of Novi?

30

Employed by:

Power Law (Southfield, MI)

Educational Background:

A.A., Paralegal Studies, Oakland Community College (2014) B.A., Political Theory and Constitutional Democracy, James Madison College, Michigan State University (2017) J.D., University of Detroit Mercy School of Law (2022)

Please describe your professional qualifications, skills and/or work experience, and how you would use these to benefit the community.

I have spent my entire career working to advocate and collaborate to make our community a better place to live. I am a former employee of the Novi Schools where I worked in facilities and within the Novi Athletics Department. These roles allowed me an opportunity to mentor young people who were interested in pursuing technical careers and careers in broadcasting. I have served as both a Legislative Intern and a Legislative Director on behalf of Republican and Democrat State Representatives from Novi. I earned unprecedented access to being able to craft the landmark 2014 bill which first provided our first responders with heroin overdose treatments. I had the rare honor of giving testimony in support of this legislation as an intern before the Senate Judiciary Committee in 2014, serving as the office liaison for this legislation, working with stakeholders, and attending the bill signing. In the years that followed this legislation, I worked to study how it was being implemented and I used Novi as the key example. In my undergraduate thesis entitled The Silent Epidemic: An Analysis of Michigan's Opiate Epidemic and Public Policy Solutions, I placed the service multiple Novi

Police Officers at the front and center to understand how their service was impacted by having overdose treatments available. According to the Detroit News, in the first year of having Narcan available to Novi officers, 17 lives were saved. The vast majority of them being young people. Every year now, our city honors the officers who make lifesaving decisions for our community members. As the Legislative Director for Novi's State Representative in 2020, I worked to advance legislation which protected the arbitration rights of law enforcement officers and expand child care options for families. My work helped secure \$400,000 in the state budget for the Novi Schools outdoor classrooms. These days I am an active litigation attorney who has practiced in courts throughout the state of Michigan including the Michigan Supreme Court. Most recently, I have served as one of the youngest Special Assistant Attorneys General in our state's history, being trusted to litigate on behalf of the state in matters involving public health employees and criminal competency matters. As an attorney, I am often faced with situations in which I need to work closely with my opposing counsel to find resolutions to legal disputes. Doing so requires collegiality, respect, and a measured approach. It requires aggressive but principled negotiation, and an understanding that no negotiation should involve every person getting everything they want. That is the focus I would bring to the open position on the Council. Novi residents understandingly want leaders who are willing to put differences aside and focus on the business of moving our city forward. My professional background and experience, coupled with my lifetime residency in my hometown, place me in a unique position to give back to Novi.

Please list any City Board or Commission, or community group(s) you are currently or have previously been active. Describe your role and how your involvement contributed to the community.

Former Member, Novi Cultural Arts Advisory Board. In this inaugural role, I helped the Parks and Recreation Department to craft the scope of what the board would cover, and implemented the City's planning of the then-recently acquired Villa Barr Property. Along with my colleagues, we met with the late David Barr to discuss how he hoped the property would be used and balanced that alongside the city's needs/desires for cultural arts programming and utilization of park space. I proud to say that this work has been continued beyond our Inaugural Board by so many other CAAB members. This is an important asset for our city and the work that it does to build on the inclusivity of all cultures and backgrounds present in Novi. I previously worked with the City to operate its Novi Theatres productions, working in both Youth and Senior programming, in both technical and directing capacities. This was some of the most fulfilling work I have done with the City because it allowed me to meet and know so many Novi community members at both ends of the spectrum of their lives. This work helped to enrich the lives of so many of our participants, and also our community members who enjoyed these programs. I have been passionate about my work with the arts in our city because I have found that even when words and languages may fall short, art and music is a common thread that can bring people together across all differences.

Describe your current and past volunteer involvement in or for the City?

In addition to my volunteer involvement with the Novi Cultural Arts Advisory Board, I have volunteered my time, effort, and skills over the years to our Novi Schools. Every year between 2006-2011, I returned to Deerfield Elementary to assist with their 3rd and 4th grade student musical productions. I worked behind the scenes leading a stage crew of volunteers to support the students and the backstage parents with stage placement and other technical needs. I am a frequent reader during March is Reading Month at our local elementary schools, and I have appeared as a guest speaker in numerous classroom settings to talk about my background and my career. I serve as the Board Secretary for the Kathy's Kids ALS Foundation. This

foundation was formed by my cousins in memory of my Aunt Kathy who died of ALS. Since her death in the late 1980's, my family has raised over \$100,000 to support Lou Gehrig's Disease research and support for patients and their families. Since forming the foundation in recent years, we have added tens of thousands of dollars onto that total. I also volunteer my time in a number of professional organizations including the Oakland County Bar Association, the State Bar of Michigan, the Ingham County Bar Association, the Michigan Association for Justice. I am a member of the Oakland County Bar Association's Legislative Committee which works to review legislation making its way through the Legislature and to provide a key voice for practitioners and judges in Oakland County. All of my involvement has blessed me with the ability to get to know our residents in the context of what matters most to them.

What motivated you to apply to serve on City Council?

Simply put: I have a passion and a desire to serve my hometown. The moment my parents left the hospital after I was born, they brought me home to Novi. I have never looked at any other place as my home. My wife and I are invested in ensuring that our city remains the kind of place where we can raise our infant son. I love the city of Novi and I love the promise that it has always held for families like mine who were trying to make a better life. I still believe that promise exists, and has only grown stronger. I feel a sense of responsibility to give back to the city that has given me so much. I am not interested in seeking a higher partisan office, and I would aim to run in 2 years to retain the seat on City Council. My priorities now are investing back into my community for as long as the residents will have me.

If appointed, what do you hope to accomplish during your term? What do you hope to learn?

As a new member to the Council, I think it would be important for me to keep my sights set on unifying the Council behind the initiatives and priorities of city staff which are already in progress. Additional to that, I would seek to advocate for: 1. Addressing Public Safety Building Needs (location, service areas, and facilities themselves) and building upon the efforts undertaken by Council thus far; 2. Expanding Senior Services; 3. Increasing our investment in neighborhood roads and sidewalks; 4. Promoting a diverse tax base which meets the needs of Novi residents; 5. Continued fiscal responsibility and budgeting; and 6. Engaging in conversations around our water and sewer infrastructure which is nearing the end of its useful life and facing replacement costs of up to \$900 million over several years, according to City estimates. As far as what I would hope to learn, I would first want to first learn more about our city staff and department leaders. I would hope to be able to arrange through the City Manager to observe the day to day at various departments and learn what inspires our staff to work for Novi. I would also be greatly interested in learning more about the work that the City staff has been doing on the City West zoning proposal since that was last brought before Council. I think the Council took the proper measured approach when that issue came up last and sent several items back for revision and review. I am eager to see what the city staff has done to incorporate some of the feedback from Council. I am always looking for ways in which we can help engage our residents and provide them with services. I would be interested in using my professional connections and working with the Michigan Attorney General's Office, the Michigan State Police in conjunction with our Novi Police Department, and the Oakland County Bar Association to host an expungement fair in Novi. I have volunteered my services on a number of these events statewide and I have always found that there are more people needing assistance than we realize. Even here in Novi there is a need for helping people through the new processes and clean slate laws, and I would like to see our city be a partner in that work.

What do you think the City is doing well or could be doing differently when you think

about the areas of responsibility for City Council?

We are blessed with a great City staff which I believe faithfully adheres to the policy directions given by our City Council. I think our staff is responsive to Council feedback which in turn allows the elected and administrative sides of our city government to run efficiently. The city maintains solid finances, which is ultimately the cornerstone of our city's success. Maintaining our three-year approach to budgeting is important and helps put us in a strong position to plan for the future. I am interested in helping support our city in its efforts to communicate and engage with our residents. The recent capital improvements being made to Studio VI presents an opportunity for the City and Council to expand the ways in which we support our comms team to reach residents. I have heard from several residents who feel that they are not in the "know" about what goes on with our city. I'd like to leverage the expertise within our city and the new survey program to find how the Council might be able to help support the work of the staff in this regard.

Do you foresee any conflict of interest if you were appointed to serve as a Council Member?

No. Should any conflict or an appearance of any conflict arise, I would recuse myself from any such vote accordingly.

Is there anything else you would like City Council to be aware of, or know about you?

Throughout the campaign for the November 2023 election, my volunteers and I spoke with thousands of Novi residents. In public forums throughout the city I let it be known that I considered it an honor to be running on a ballot where either of the two candidates for Mayor would be the first lifelong resident, and the first graduate of Novi High School to serve in that role. I still feel that astonishment today, and it is a testament to the progress our City has made since it was a pioneer town in the 1800's. We undoubtedly live in times in which division threatens our abilities to work together and see our neighbors as extensions of ourselves. That does not have to be Novi's story. I was proud to earn over 5,300 votes from my neighbors to serve them. I see an opportunity where our City Council can send a bold statement to all of our residents that their voices matter at the Council table. By granting me the honor of being appointed to Mayor Fischer's former seat, the Council can ensure that every single person who voted in the Mayoral election has their vote represented at the table. My commitment to the Council and our residents is sincerely this: if there is a common ground we can find, that will be my focus. If there is a way in which I can support your goals and those of our City staff to build a stronger future for our city, that will be my focus. I am committed to ensuring that the actions I would take, and the decisions I make, on Council further the City's services, goals, and priorities. I commit to you what I stated throughout our campaign: When Novi residents come together, there is nothing we can't accomplish. I thank you for your consideration of my application and for considering the potential of our future partnership together on the Novi City Council. I welcome any questions you may have, and I look forward to answering them during the interview session.