

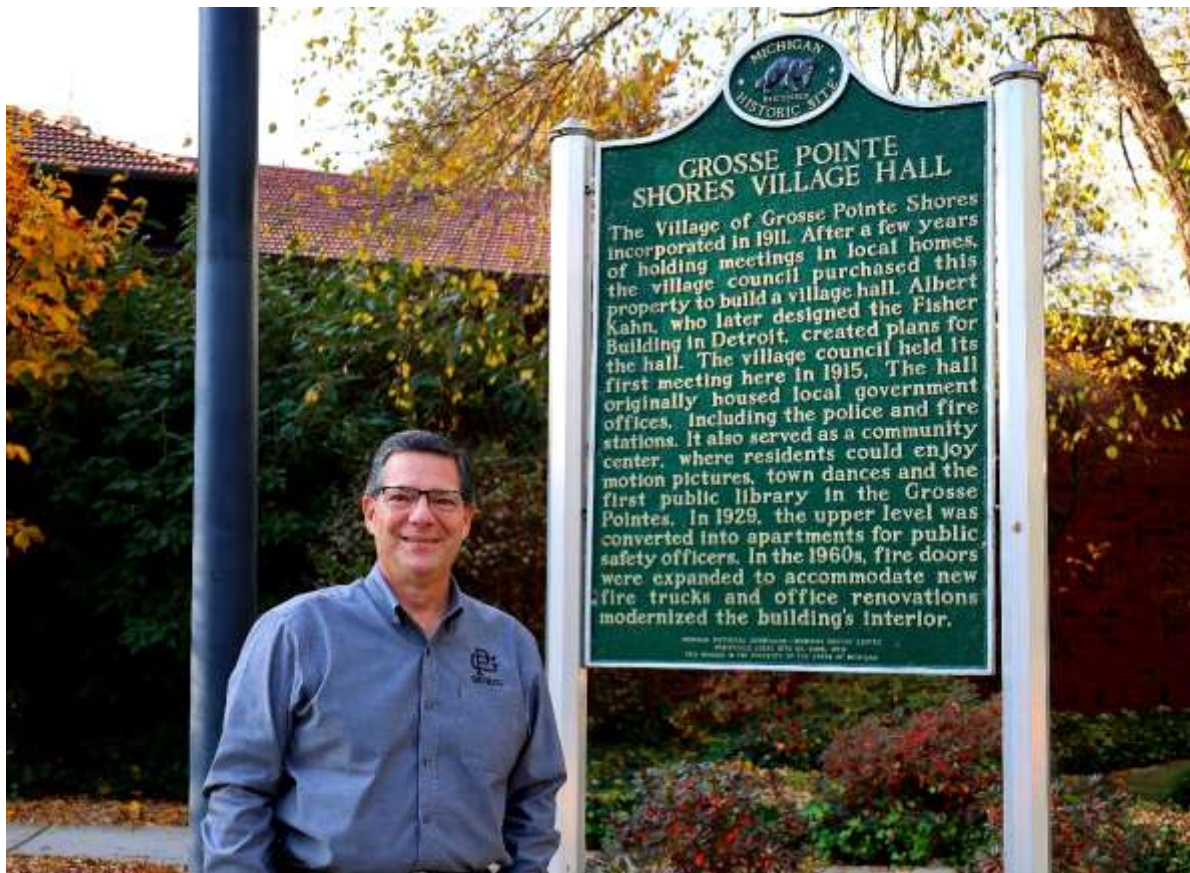
# Higher Calling

## City Manager Steve Poloni entrusts his faith in service to GPS

Don't let his white collar fool you.

Village of Grosse Pointe Shores City Manager Steve Poloni is blue collar.

It's in his DNA.



Poloni, 63, was raised in the city of River Rouge, a blue-collar community and the first city south of Detroit. His dad was the plant manager of the International Salt Company in Detroit and a co-owner of B & J Engineering, a small fabrication shop. His mother raised six children and worked at the local bakery.

“My work ethic was instilled in me by two hardworking parents,” said Poloni, who joined GPS in January 2021 and at one time taught history and general education to fourth and seventh graders as a substitute teacher. “I feel like I have always been called to serve others.”

## **Following His Faith**

Most important to Poloni is his faith in Jesus Christ.

“I am studying his life and attempting to be as much like him as I possibly can and though I fall miserably short at times, I strive to be more like him every day,” he said.

Poloni describes his life as dedication to his Lord, family, and work – in that order.

“I am an open book,” he said. “Fair, compassionate, honest and a hard worker.”

## **Dedicated to Blue**

Poloni dedicated his work life to law enforcement.

He began working as a police officer in the Shores Public Safety Department in January 1987 after several years working for the city of River Rouge as an administrator in the Clerk’s Office, a member of the Department of Public Works and a firefighter. He won numerous awards and worked his way up the Shores ranks, eventually being named in February 2004 to succeed retiring Public Safety Director Gary Mitchell.

After retiring from the Shores in November 2011, Poloni became the Public Safety Director in Grosse Pointe. When Grosse Pointe Park Public Safety Chief David Hiller retired in January 2016, he took over the reins in that city becoming the first Public Safety Director to oversee two departments simultaneously.

## **Switching Roles**

The Shores City Council voted unanimously in favor of naming Poloni as the new City Manager in October 2020, after he spent his life in law enforcement. Poloni said he wasn’t looking for a new job when Shores officials reached out to him about becoming city manager. It’s not the first time he’s been offered this position. He said Shores

officials asked him to become the manager in 2011, as well, but he declined because he had already made a commitment to Grosse Pointe City.

Fast forward to today and Poloni says what he likes best about GPS is the opportunity to work with a team to make things better for residents, employees, and visitors.

“Building a strong team of hardworking, customer service-oriented staff members is the most important accomplishment to date,” he said.

His biggest goals for GPS are to have everyone pull in the same direction, finish projects and reward excellent employees.

“My vision is to leave GPS in a place where it is financially sound and residents are provided with great service,” Poloni said. “This means upgrading infrastructure, equipment, facilities, communications and technology.”

## **Self-Reflection**

What is the one thing Poloni could change about himself?

“Maybe relax a little more and work on being more patient,” he said.

When asked how family and friends might describe his personality, Poloni jokes they might say anal retentive.

“That is true, at times,” he said, laughing. “My family would say he loved us, worked hard to make sure we had what we needed and preached a lot of sermons.”