

Lemos, June

From: Jacob Patterson <jacob.patterson.esq@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2021 8:50 AM
To: Lemos, June
Subject: Public Comment -- 7/22/21 Special Meeting, Item No. 2B

City Council,

I offer a few thoughts for your consideration regarding the City Manager's terms of employment and potential changes to her employment contract:

1. Now that Tabatha has been employed by the City for several years, you may want to consider removing the severance provision from her employment agreement. She has already tried to leave and you don't want to include any unnecessary financial obligations should a future City Council decide to transition to a new administration, which is always a possibility, particularly after the next election when four of the five seats are up.
2. Tabatha has mentioned the option of a part-time City Manager in the past. With the recent promotion of Sarah McCormick to Assistant to the City Manager and a recruitment for an Administrative Analyst with a job description that has a lot of overlap with the Assistant to the City Manager, the City is more likely than ever to be able to manage with a part time City Manager (as you do with the City Attorney, your other direct hiring decision). You might want to see if she still has interest in that option. That could also free up capital to actually fill one of the vacant department director positions, which, considering the ongoing vacancies, is sorely needed, particularly for the Finance and Community Development Departments. (I would have just promoted Issac to Finance Director and think it might be worth considering rolling the CDD director position into Sarah's job description since she is the only current staff with significant planning expertise if reopening the outside recruitment remains off the table.)
3. At most, I would consider the same COLA that applied to the two management groups.
4. I believe there is no justification for any merit increase or even an increase allegedly justified by Tabatha's assuming the responsibilities of one or more of the vacant director positions considering those vacancies are the result of her decision-making and they are causing issues for the City, including a drop in quality of services to the public and for succession planning since the City could be in an unfortunate position should Tabatha be unavailable to work for any reason, including medical leave, death, or voluntary departure for a new position as she has already attempted to do.

Moreover, many people in the community are understandably concerned about the direction of the City and are perplexed, as I am, regarding the current Council's decision-making and leadership. As such, it is likely past time for the City to be considering a recruitment to facilitate a transition to a new administration (i.e., you might want to consider negotiating a compensation package with someone else) to increase the likelihood of our short- and long-term success.

In my opinion, other than the impacts of climate change (including drought), the biggest obstacle to the City's success and growth is a lack of skills, knowledge, relevant education, experience, and competence among some critical members of staff at City Hall. Staffing and operations are the City Manager's responsibility but the ultimate responsibility for how the City is operating (or failing to operate in a competent and effective manner) rests with the City Council and residents and voters are definitely paying attention to how the decisions you make impact our lives, property, and businesses. Right now, the City is barely able to provide basic services like reliable water and sewer, much of our infrastructure is in such poor condition (e.g., the very leaky sewer system

or many terrible and dangerous alleys) that public safety and reliable services are undermined, and the City regularly smells so bad that residents and visitors alike are describing our town as a literal "s***hole"!

Many in the community feel the City is way off track and that the government organization is actively positioning itself in opposition to the public rather than in service of the public. I honestly believe that the public trust in our local government is at an all-time low during my lifetime and I am constantly hearing from people in other parts of our County who ask what is going on in Fort Bragg because so many things seem so dysfunctional (just review the meeting video from recent Planning Commission meetings where staff can't even answer basic questions and you will see part of why people are asking questions about the current ability of the City of Fort Bragg to function even on a basic level).

Regards,

--Jacob

Lemos, June

From: Jenny Shattuck <jenxvann@yahoo.com>
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2021 1:01 PM
To: Lemos, June
Subject: 7/22/2021 item 2B public comment

Dear Council members,

As you deliberate on labor negotiations for the city manager's employment please think about the following. When our current city Manager came to Fort Bragg we had 5 department heads. We have 1 now. How is a city supposed to work this way? Meeting after meeting we hear things can't be done because they are short staffed. Permits take longer, they are farming out work, the list goes on. Our town looks abandoned with weeds growing in nearly every gutter, sidewalks and in some cases the streets around cars that have been parked for over a year. There has been little public outreach about our drought and future water supply, odd that when I emailed and talked to city staff, we finally got a post after a year on social media about our water situation. After Tabitha Miller stated we were NOT in a water emergency and we don't want to alarm people at the latest VFB meeting, 3 minutes afterwards the city put out a post.. saying we are in an emergency. Are we are we not? We pay 180k a year to advertise the city, yet we have trash piling up, the smell if sewer, (hope the permits for their new fix come soon), we have lost valuable employees with institutional knowledge of how things work, permits are taking longer, because of alleged staffing and competence issues. Shouldn't we be looking for a new city manager at this point? Don't get me wrong, we have some amazing staff at city hall. Working hard. Some not so amazing. As is evident by many of the planning commission meetings lately. Including staff making statements that are lies to justify a permit the city staff seem to want to go through no matter what commissioners and the public say. How can they all get their jobs done efficiently and timely if they have no qualified department head or oversight? Enough is enough. Never thought I'd see the day when I'd be saying we need new blood at the top.

Any business, agency or city is dependent on competence at the top. All the now vacant department head positions were filled when Tabitha became city manager. Yet there is no listing for any of these important positions. We afforded it with less money in budget previously and also had a surplus. A house is only as strong as its foundation, and it is apparent to most the foundation has already crumbled. It is time for repair.

Jenny Shattuck

Fort Bragg