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Distributed at the
Meeting 7-23-19 #3

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MEMORANDUM

To: Yakima City Council
From: Mayor Coffey, Deputy Mayor Gutierrez, Council Member Hill – Ad Hoc
Committee reviewing the City Manager and Assistant City Manager vacancies
Date: July 23, 2019
Subject: Ad Hoc Committee recommendations

Council Colleagues,

The Ad Hoc Committee empaneled by the full Council on July 16 to discuss the city manager and assistant city manager vacancies met on July 18. This memorandum represents the recommendations from that meeting that the Committee wishes to share with the full council for consideration.

First, we recommend that Sara Watkins be named as acting city manager starting on August 21. Ms. Watkins would serve until the City is able to contract with an individual to serve as interim city manager. It is estimated that the process to contract with an interim and have that individual available to start working for the City would take up to two months to complete. Note that Ms. Watkins will be on vacation starting September 12, so we will need to act with purpose to identify an interim city manager by that date.

For an interim city manager, we recommend that the City contract with an individual from the ICMA *Manager's In Transition* database. We propose that the interim serve through at least the end of February 2020, with a possible extension. ICMA requires a position description for the interim role; a draft of that document is attached.

As you know, there are efforts underway to change our community from a Council-Manager to a strong mayor form of government. It is possible this current Council will be asked to move this initiative to a vote of the people in early 2020 at a special election. For the February 11, 2020 special election, a Council resolution is due December 13, 2019. For the April 28, 2020 special election, the Council resolution would be due February 28, 2020. We believe it would be imprudent to start the process to identify a permanent city manager at this point in time if it is possible that the strong mayor initiative would be sent to a vote of the people in early 2020.

Depending on the direction of the strong mayor process, council could then determine the most appropriate course of action. If the strong mayor initiative fails, then our committee recommends contracting with an executive recruitment firm to assist in the search for a new city manager.

We also discussed the vacant assistant city manager position. We recognized in that discussion that staff capacity has been impacted by having this position vacant and we recommend moving forward with the process currently in place to have city manager Moore identify and hire an assistant city manager prior to his departure. Mr. Moore has completed preliminary Skype interviews with a number of candidates and has identified four finalists. Human Resources has

already mapped out a preliminary interview schedule that could be implemented quickly. See attached.

Mr. Moore has been advising assistant city manager candidates regarding the uncertainties we are facing, including his own impending departure, the fact that we will have at least three new Council members in January and the possibility that the Strong Mayor initiative could move forward. Given the aforementioned uncertainties, we should all be aware that accepting this position at this point in time could well be seen as a risk. As a result, the Committee believes that we should pre-authorize a six month severance, with a three year expiration clause, as part of an employment agreement for this position.

Another alternative for the assistant city manager vacancy would be to name a current city staff member as an interim assistant city manager to serve until issues related to the strong mayor initiative are resolved one way or another.

Because time is of the essence on these matters, pending Council discussion, the Committee is prepared to move that we suspend normal practice at Agenda Preview meetings in order to vote on Council direction for these processes.