

STAFF REPORT

City Council Consent Item

DATE: January 16, 2024

TO: Honorable Mayor and Council Members

FROM: Merritt Perry, City Manager

SUBJECT: **Approve Appointment of Community Development Director**

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the selection of the Community Development Director.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Fortuna Municipal Code (FMC) identifies the Community Development Director as the Department Head for the Community Development Department with the main purpose of assigning duties including planning, engineering, building inspection and solid waste functions. For several years these duties were delegated to the City Manager, Public Works Director and former Deputy Director of Community Development. On April 17, 2023, shortly before the retirement of the previous deputy director, the City Council approved the addition of a Community Development Director to organizational chart and budget. The position has been vacant since that time. The position is an unrepresented at-will position under the supervision of the City Manager and not a contract position.

The City actively recruited for several months and conducted interviews of qualified applicants for the position. The recruitment process was difficult because planning professionals and engineers are in very high demand. The City was fortunate to receive an application from a highly qualified candidate for the position named Shari Meads. Ms. Meads was interviewed by other City Department Heads and conducted a second interview with the City Manager and Human Resources Director. Ms. Meads also visited the City and reviewed many of the planning projects in progress with the City Manager.

Ms. Meads has a bachelor's degree from Sonoma State University in Environmental Studies and Planning with a minor in Geography. Most recently, Ms. Meads worked for the City of Santa Rosa as a Senior Planner and worked on several high profile planning projects including their general plan update, climate action planning, environmental quality act compliance for development projects, urban water management plan, and as the City's zoning administrator. Ms. Meads has also worked on hazard mitigation plans, development of ordinances, historic resource evaluation, and as a part of bay area Equity working group. Ms. Meads also played a key role in assisting those rebuilding from the devastating fires that struck the City in 2017.

The Council authorized the City Manager to extend a conditional offer to Ms. Meads in closed session on December 18, 2023 including compensation at the top step of the pay rate schedule for that position, and the accumulation of vacation upon start consistent with an employee that has worked for the City for four years. The Council also authorized the City Manager to approve direct expenses for Ms. Mead up to \$6,000 for moving and other related expenses. Ms. Meads accepted the offer and has cleared the necessary background and physical required to be appointed for the

position and is expected to start work on January 29, 2024.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The total pay and benefits cost of the Community Development Director contract have been included in the Fiscal Year 2023-2024 budget.

RECOMMENDED COUNCIL ACTION:

Approve the selection of the Community Development Director. Consent Agenda vote.