



STAFF REPORT – CITY COUNCIL MEETING

July 17, 2024

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council Members

FROM: Keira Vink, Human Resources/Administrative Services Director

PREPARER: Keira Vink, Human Resources/Administrative Services Director

DATE: June 12, 2024

TITLE: 1) Appoint Merritt Perry as City Manager; and 2) Approve the Agreement for Employment, City Manager.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Council:

- 1) Appoint Merritt Perry as City Manager for the City of Arcata effective August 19, 2024; and
- 2) Approve the Agreement for Employment, City Manager.

INTRODUCTION:

The City of Arcata Municipal Code, Article II Section 2100, states the City Council shall appoint a City Manager to be the administrative head of the government of the City. The City Manager serves at the sole pleasure of the Council. The City Council hereby appoints Merritt Perry as the new City Manager for a term of August 19, 2024, through August 18, 2027. The attached employment agreement outlines the terms of the employment commitment.

BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION:

The City of Arcata conducted an executive recruitment for the City Manager position after learning from the current City Manager of their intent to retire. The recruitment led to qualified candidates being interviewed, and the final candidate was vetted by Department Directors, Community Members, and the Arcata City Council. After the vetting process and a thorough background, Merritt Perry was selected as the best individual to lead the City of Arcata and carry out the Council's priorities and goals.

Mr. Perry is a thirty-year resident of Humboldt County and understands the area's strengths and challenges. He received his Bachelor's in Environmental Resources Engineering at Humboldt State University and went on to have a successful career as a Civil Engineer and Project Director for a private engineering firm. In 2014, Mr. Perry took an employment opportunity in the public sector as a Public Works Director and City Engineer. He transitioned to a City Manager position in 2018 and has served as a City Manager in a neighboring City for six years. Mr. Perry is recognized for his work on capital projects, partnerships with businesses, redevelopment of existing land such as a Pacific Lumber Company mill, and partnerships with key community groups such as the return of

250 acres of Wiyot Ancestral Territory on the Eel River to the Wiyot people. His demonstrated ability to create the necessary partnerships to accomplish objectives which are good for the City but also good for the community at large is a key attribute which led to his selection to be the next City Manager for the City of Arcata.

The employment agreement for the City Manager outlines the salary and benefits of this position and the terms under which Merritt Perry will serve. The City Manager would not be eligible to receive any other cost of living or salary adjustments that may be otherwise given to senior management employees.

BUDGET/FISCAL IMPACT:

The City Manager's salary for fiscal year 2024/2025 is approximately \$169,500. The City Manager's Office will make budget adjustments, as necessary, at fiscal year 2024/2025 mid-year budget. Future step increases will be included as part of the City's regular budget process.

ATTACHMENTS:

A. City Manager Contract Merritt Perry (PDF)