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Moraga amends employment agreement with town manager

By Vera Kochan

The town council was tasked with approving and authorizing the mayor to execute the third amendment of the employment agreement between Moraga and Town Manager Cynthia Battenberg during the May 26 council meeting.

The initial agreement was dated March 12, 2018, and provided Battenberg with an annual salary of \$197,000. It was agreed that an annual performance review would take place every April.

On May 23 of that year, the council approved a resolution authorizing a first amendment to the agreement, which would eliminate the town's payment of a portion of Battenberg's required California Public Employees Retirement System contributions in favor of increasing her salary by 4.58%.

A second amendment, effective March 12, 2019, increased Battenberg's annual salary by 8.5% to a rate comparable with other city managers such as those from Pleasant Hill, Lafayette and Orinda. An April 2020 performance review was conducted by the town council, but no salary adjustments were made at the time. In April of this year, an ad hoc subcommittee, consisting of Vice Mayor Steve Woehleke and Council Member Renata Sos, met with Battenberg to evaluate and negotiate the upcoming salary compensation, once again taking into consideration neighboring municipality benefits. A salary increase of 3% was agreed upon based on the town manager's performance over the past two years.

According to town attorney Michelle Marchetta Kenyon's staff report, part of the consideration was founded on Battenberg's "strong leadership, competency in achieving, and exceeding her defined responsibilities, resulting in significant benefit to the town, its operations, and finances."

High praise was given for Battenberg's detailed understanding of the town's overall financial situation and implementation of tracking procedures; strategic addressing of the town's infrastructural needs; reduction of Moraga's interest payments by \$175,000; participation in the successful negotiation agreement with East Bay Municipal Utility District to stabilize the hillside near Canyon Bridge at no cost to the town; and launching of a staff training program with regards to specialized work, thereby cutting costs of hiring outside contractors.

The town council unanimously (with Mayor Mike McCluer absent) to approve the third amendment to the employment agreement. Battenberg's adjusted annual salary will be \$247,983, which also includes cost of living adjustments for the years 2020 and 2021.

"It's a pleasure working for the town of Moraga," stated Battenberg. "It's a lot of work, but we're seeing great things happen that makes me proud. I would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge each and every one of the department directors for their work." She went on to thank all of the additional staff and the council members.

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