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Moraga takes steps toward recruiting new town manager

By Vera Kochan

After Town Manager Cynthia Battenberg gave written notice on Oct. 4 of her impending late December resignation, the town council wasted no time creating an Ad Hoc Committee during its Oct. 12 meeting in order to find her successor.

Mayor Steve Woehleke and Vice Mayor Renata Sos, the two committee members, followed up on the meeting's decision to use an executive recruitment firm to help in the process. All council members agreed that it would be in the town's best interests to employ an executive search firm for multiple reasons: access to a wider net of talent thanks to experience and contacts in the industry; recruitment firms are better equipped to cast a wider net when advertising positions; these firms can save the town time by performing background and reference checks; and recruiting firms can interview stakeholders in order to identify a candidate's characteristics with respect to the town's needs.

The Ad Hoc Committee received written proposals from three top recruiting firms and, after interviews, decided to recommend to the council, during its Oct. 26 meeting, Gary Phillips from Bob Murray & Associates, who among other things has had experience in recruiting personnel for communities much like Moraga. The recruiter's fees of \$28,000 are in line with other agencies.

Also discussed during the town council meeting was a timeline of next steps to be taken with the assistance of a recruiter in order to fill the town manager's position. First is to develop recruiting materials by interviewing council members, senior town staff and key stakeholders with regards to the prospective candidate's attributes which will help to develop a profile; next is to advertise the position through various means; once applications have been received preliminary interviews with the recruiter begin; and, finally, the top candidates meet with council members for in-person interviews.

The town council approved an agreement with Bob Murray & Associates and stipulated that the recruitment process will include a community survey to allow for public input. The council also agreed to continue with the Ad Hoc Committee during the development of recruiting materials and in bringing forth potential Interim/Acting Town Manager candidates after Battenberg's resignation date becomes effective, until a permanent town manager is seated.

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