



STAFF REPORT
March 11, 2026

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Councilmembers

FROM: Best, Best & Krieger LLP, City Attorney

SUBJECT: Adopt Resolution No. 2026-15 A Resolution of the City Council of the City of Coachella Appointing Gabriel Gonzalez as Interim City Manager Pursuant to Government Code section 21221(h).

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Staff recommends that the City Council adopt Resolution No. 2026-15, A Resolution of the City Council of the City of Coachella Appointing Gabriel Gonzalez as Interim City Manager pursuant to Government Code Section 21221(h).

BACKGROUND:

The City Manager position will be vacant following the departure of its current City Manager effective March 18, 2026. The City commenced the recruitment process for a new City Manager, and it is necessary to appoint a City Manager on an interim basis.

Staff is recommending hiring Mr. Gonzalez for a single limited term appointment to perform duties of the City Manager position while recruitment for a permanent City Manager is underway. Given the need for a highly trained professional to lead the City, and Mr. Gonzalez's experience as a city manager, staff recommends hiring Mr. Gonzalez under the provisions of Government Code section 21221(h) commencing on March 18, 2026 and ending on the date immediately preceding the date on which the regular appointee to the vacant position of City Manager commences his/her employment or, if earlier, the date that this appointment is terminated by the City or Mr. Gonzalez. As a CalPERS retired annuitant, Mr. Gonzalez's hours working for the City, and any other CalPERS employer, cannot exceed 960-hours in the fiscal period from July 1 through June 30.

Since the proposed appointment of Mr. Gonzalez is to a vacancy, Government Code section 21221(h) requires that the appointment be made by the City Council.

FISCAL IMPACTS

Mr. Gonzalez will be paid an hourly rate of \$137.98 per hour, which is no less than the minimum nor more than the maximum hourly rate paid to a person serving in the City Manager position, as

reflected on the City's publicly available pay schedule. He will not be entitled to any additional compensation, benefits, paid leave or paid holidays.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

Government Code Section 21221(h) permits the City Council to appoint a CalPERS retiree to a vacant position requiring specialized skills during recruitment for a permanent appointment, and provides that such appointment will not subject the retired person to reinstatement from retirement or loss of benefits so long as it is a single appointment that does not exceed 960 hours, inclusive of hours worked for other CalPERS employers during same period, in a fiscal year. Mr. Gonzalez has significant experience in city management, including over 25 years in local government and serving as a city manager across various cities. Thus, Mr. Gonzalez has the specialized skills necessary to perform the duties of City Manager on an interim basis while the City conducts recruitment for a regular appointment to the City Manager position. Staff has worked with the City Attorney to ensure that applicable requirements for an appointment pursuant to Section 21221(h) have been met.

Included in the Council's agenda packet is the resolution to appoint Mr. Gonzalez as interim City Manager pursuant to Government Code Section 21221(h) and a proposed employment agreement.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the facts noted in this staff report and the documentation attached hereto, City staff recommends Council consider the adoption of Resolution No. 2026-__, A Resolution of the City Council of the City of Coachella Appointing Gabriel Gonzalez as Interim City Manager pursuant to Government Code Section 21221(h).

ATTACHMENT

Resolution No. 2026-15, A Resolution of the City Council of the City of Coachella Appointing Gabriel Gonzalez as Interim City Manager pursuant to Government Code Section 21221(h).