



City of Grass Valley
City Council
Agenda Action Sheet

Title: Amendment to Legal Services Agreement with Colantuono, Highsmith & Whatley, PC

CEQA: Not a project

Recommendation: Approve Amendment to the Agreement for Legal Services with Colantuono, Highsmith & Whatley, PC, designating David J. Ruderman as City Attorney and Michael G. Colantuono as Assistant City Attorney, and adjusting rates for litigation, labor and employment, other specialized legal services, and reimbursable services.

Prepared by: Timothy M. Kiser, City Manager

Council Meeting Date: 03/10/2026

Date Prepared: 03/04/2026

Agenda: Consent

Background Information: Colantuono, Highsmith & Whatley, PC (“CHW”) has provided legal services to the City of Grass Valley since October 2011. Over the course of the last fifteen years, CHW has continued to deliver a high level of responsive legal services and advice to the City.

This amendment reflects a transition in designated legal staffing within the firm. The amendment formally designates David J. Ruderman as City Attorney and Michael G. Colantuono as Assistant City Attorney. Under the amendment, Mr. Ruderman will attend regularly scheduled Council meetings as he has been, supervise all legal services provided under the agreement, and ensure continuity of representation. The agreement also maintains provisions allowing the firm to assign qualified attorneys as necessary to support City operations and ensure consistent attendance at Council meetings

This amendment also raises the fee for special counsel work CHW performs, but does not change the retainer for general counsel services. CHW last raised the fees charged to the City in September of 2023. In recognition of the fact that over the last three years inflation has aggregated approximately 8%, City staff recommends an increase in special counsel and reimbursable rates to ensure the City has access to CHW’s full suite of attorneys to support City operations. Effective with the new fiscal year, rates will be as follows:

Level of Service	Current Rate	New Rate
Legal Retainer (monthly)	\$6,500	\$6,500 (<i>no change</i>)
4% for Costs (monthly)	\$260	\$260 (<i>no change</i>)
Special Projects	\$260 / hr	\$285 / hr
Labor, Litigation & Specialized Services	\$285 / hr	\$325 / hr
Reimbursed	\$310 / hr	\$360 / hr

Should the City Council approve this Amendment, upon full execution, the designation of Mr. Ruderman as City Attorney will be effective and the City Clerk will administer the Oath of Office to Mr. Ruderman. The rate adjustment, however, will not be effective until July 1, 2026 to allow the City to include the change in its FY 2026-2027 budget.

Council Goals/Objectives: The execution of this action attempts to achieve Strategic Goal #5 - High-Performance Government and Quality Service.

Fiscal Impact: There is no immediate fiscal impact with this proposed action, and the long-term fiscal impact can be addressed in future budgets.

Funds Available: Yes

Account #: General Fund, Water Fund,
Sewer Fund

Reviewed by: City Manager

Attachments: Amendment to Legal Services Agreement