



# REQUEST FOR COUNCIL ACTION

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**Title:** Request for Council Action – Resolution No. 20 for 2024 – Appointing a City Attorney

**Preferred Agenda:** August 27, 2024

**Submitted By:** Cecily Hope Pretty, Assistant City Manager

**Reviewed By:** Jason Ogden, Interim City Manager / Police Chief

**Type of Action:** Resolution  Motion  Roll Call  Other

**Relevant Code/Policy:** City Charter

**Towards Council Goal:** Be an Effective and Efficient Government

**Attachments:** Resolution No. 20 for 2024; Draft City Attorney Contract

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**Purpose of this RCA:**

To seek City Council approval of a new appointed City Attorney.

**Background/Context:**

The City of Sweet Home’s Charter states in Chapter II, Section 4 that the City Council shall appoint and keep in office a City Attorney. The current City Attorney, Robert Snyder, has indicated his intent to retire and has been operating under a contract extension while the City Council deliberates on appointing a new City Attorney to replace him.

**The Challenge/Problem:**

With the pending retirement of the City Attorney, the City Council must determine who will provide City Attorney services according to the City Charter. The City released two Requests for Proposal (RFPs) and two job postings for City Attorney services, which resulted in one response to the RFP and three responses to the job posting. City Council met in an Executive Session on July 9, 2024, to discuss the applications. After a review of the applicants and their proposed costs, their areas of expertise, their locales of experience, and their planned approaches to deliver City Attorney services, in addition to a review of attorney costs in several other Oregon cities, it was determined that W. Blair Larsen would be selected (pending his admittance to the Oregon State Bar). In the interim, he will continue in his current role as Community & Economic Development Department (CEDD) Director while shadowing City Attorney Snyder. Once he is in the City Attorney role, he is expected to work 30 hours weekly to support City Council, Municipal Court, and City staff.

**Stakeholders:**

1. **Citizens:** Citizens deserve competent, qualified personnel and excellence in the City’s Executive Team.
2. **City Council:** City Council will fulfill their Charter duties and select a City Attorney who can provide quality services to the City of Sweet Home.

3. **City Staff**: Staff will have continuity in attorney services.

**Issues and Financial Impacts:**

The fiscal year 2025 budget can absorb the proposed contract at \$125,000 annually with benefits. W. Blair Larsen will continue to be paid out of the CEDD fund until he is able to transition into the role. Should Mr. Larsen fail to gain entry to the Oregon State Bar, City Council will not be required to uphold his contract and can pursue other options.

**Elements of a Stable Solution:**

A fiscally responsible solution to maintain necessary City Attorney services.

**Options:**

1. Do Nothing: The resolution will not be approved and the City will continue to have a pending vacancy for the City Attorney position.
2. Amend the Resolution: Suggest an alternative to the resolution as proposed.
3. Approve the Resolution: Move to approve Resolution No. 20 for 2024 appointing a City Attorney.

**Recommendation:**

Staff recommends Option 3: Move to approve Resolution No. 20 for 2024 appointing a City Attorney.