



# REQUEST FOR COUNCIL ACTION

---

**Title:** Authorization to Fill Vacant Positions

**Preferred Agenda:** February 22, 2022

**Submitted By:** Brandon Neish, Finance Director

**Reviewed By:** Blair Larsen, City Manager Pro Tem

**Type of Action:** Resolution \_\_\_\_\_ Motion  X  Roll Call \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Relevant Code/Policy:** Sweet Home Charter Chapter VI, Section 20 (E)

**Towards Council Goal:**

**Attachments:**

---

**Purpose of this RCA:**

To review vacant positions and authorize the City Manager Pro Tem to appoint employees to fill the vacancies.

**Background/Context:**

Currently there are five positions vacant across the City. These positions include four (4) Police Officers and one (1) Collections Crew Leader. The vacancies are due to the resignations of Police Officers to pursue other opportunities (in many cases outside law enforcement) and the Collections Crew Leader accepted a development opportunity with another municipality. Existing searches are ongoing to fill these vacancies but staff and the City Attorney have concluded that there is no authority to hire these replacements under the rules of the Sweet Home City Charter.

The charter states that “the council shall appoint a manager pro tem who shall possess the powers and discharge the duties of the manager during such absence or disability only; provided, however that a manager pro tem shall have no authority to appoint or remove any city officer or employee except with the approval of five members of the council.” While the City Manager is out, the City Council has appointed Blair Larsen, Community & Economic Development Director to serve as City Manager Pro Tem. As Pro Tem, Mr. Larsen has the authority of the City Manager but is unable to hire or fire based on the language above.

Staff is seeking authorization for the Manager Pro Tem to fill these positions based on recommendations from the appropriate Department Heads (Chief of Police and Public Works Director).

**The Challenge/Problem:**

During the interim period, how does the City replace departed employees to ensure continuity of operations?

### **Stakeholders:**

- City of Sweet Home citizens – The citizens and businesses in Sweet Home rely on these positions to access vital services. A fully staffed police department ensures a continued focus on public safety within Sweet Home and an employee in the Collections division of Public Works aids in the continued transport of waste from various homes and businesses.
- City of Sweet Home staff – Maintaining adequate staffing levels ensures that essential functions can continue without interruption and limits burnout of existing employees who are facing mandatory overtime and limited capacity to complete projects, investigations, etc.
- City of Sweet Home City Council – The City Council reviews and adopts the annual budget which outlines what full staffing is for the organization. Additionally, the Council has placed a specific emphasis on investing in staff stability and improving community safety and police services.

### **Issues and Financial Impacts:**

Each of these positions is budgeted for the 2022 fiscal year due to end on June 30, 2022. The vacancies create salary savings of approximately \$510,000 annually. These savings do not consider any necessary overtime costs incurred by existing employees to fill the gaps. Too much overtime can lead to burnout in employees potentially reducing retentions and ensuring the cycle of vacancies continues over time (more than “standard” turnover).

### **Elements of a Stable Solution:**

The City needs to complete the existing searches and fill these five positions as candidates are identified. This requires an authorization to fill these positions from five (5) or more City Councilors.

### **Options:**

1. Do Nothing – Council could choose not to authorize the City Manager Pro Tem to appoint candidates to budgeted vacancies.
2. Move to authorize the City Manager Pro Tem to appoint up to four Police Officers and one Collections Crew Leader as recommended by respective hiring managers – This option allows the City Manager Pro Tem to appoint new employees as identified through employment searches and selections.
3. Authorize the City Manager Pro Tem to hire only specific budgeted positions – The City Council could limit the Pro Tem to hiring only specific positions until such time that additional positions are authorized by the City Council or the request is no longer necessary.
4. Authorize the City Manager Pro Tem to appoint any and all employees necessary – The City Council could chose to allow the Pro Tem to appoint employees as needed determined by the Pro Tem and respective Department Heads. This authority would expire with the expiration of the appointment of the existing Manager Pro Tem and would need a new authorization in future Pro Tem situations.

### **Recommendation:**

Staff recommends option 2, move to authorize the City Manager Pro Tem to appoint up to four Police Officers and one Collections Crew Leader as recommended by respective hiring managers. These positions are budgeted positions and will aid in meeting Council goals and ensuring our staffing keeps up with operational needs.