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City hires recruitment firm, will seek public engagement on new city manager hire

By Pippa Fisher

The Lafayette City Council signed an agreement at its Feb. 11 meeting with the recruitment consulting company Avery & Associates, as a first step to finding a replacement city manager. The search is likely to take around four and a half months.

An ad hoc committee of Vice Mayor Mike Anderson and Council Member Teresa Gerring worked with City Administrative Services Director Tracy Robinson to review proposals from four firms.

With an emphasis on the need for public engagement and transparency Gerring said that, although all firms allowed for convening community forums, conducting online surveys and meeting with key community stakeholders as a way to solicit input from the community, only one firm, Avery & Associates, included such measures in its initial fee - a total cost of \$26,900.

Paul Kimura of Avery & Associates explained to the council that he was aware of the value and premium being placed on community engagement and transparency. He explained that he anticipated meeting with each of the council members and reaching out to the community by phone, community Town Hall meetings and online surveys to seek input.

Once public input has been gathered, a search done and preliminary interviews completed, Kimura anticipates bringing roughly five to seven candidates to the city for its consideration.

Members of the city council, city staff, the interim city manager and the former city manager will conduct interviews, which will likely be done in private. Kimura noted the importance of candidate confidentiality and explained that he has seen qualified candidates withdraw rather than risk their name becoming public during the process.

Mayor Cam Burks has confidence in the selection of Avery & Associates.

"I'm very pleased with the firm we selected and thank Vice Mayor Anderson and Council Member Gerring for their hard work in selecting a company with a strong track record," said Burks after the meeting.

Burks explained, "What excites me most about our selection is that I believe we have chosen a firm that will utilize the right tools, process and methodology required to collect comprehensive public input; input from our community that is absolutely critical as we form the basis of the position description and select a city manager that will meet the identified needs of the people of our city."

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