

City Council Special Meeting – **Closed Session** - May 27, 2020

Agenda Item No. 1 – Public Comment

CLOSED SESSION

The City Council will meet in Closed Session for the following purpose:

1. **Public Employee Appointment** – Government Code Section 54957(b)

Title: City Manager

Email Correspondence (1)*

Fran Pavley and Louise Rishoff

**The attached email(s) were received after the printing and distribution of the regular Agenda Packet, distributed to the City Council and posted to the City's website.*

From: Fran Pavley <franpavley@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, May 25, 2020 4:05 PM
To: Kimberly Rodrigues
Subject: May 27th Close Session Agenda: City Manager
Attachments: LETTER TO COUNCIL RE CITY MANAGER APPOINTMENT.docx

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Dear City Clerk Rodrigues,

Please share the letter in the attachment below with the Mayor and Councilmembers. I had received a copy of this letter from Louise Rishoff and myself and thought it should be sent to you to include with the Closed Session material relating to the appointment of a new City Manager.

Thank you,

Fran Pavley

Date: May 25, 2020

To: Hon. Mayor Illece Buckley-Weber, Mayor Pro Tem Denis Weber,
Councilmembers Chris Anstead, Deborah Klein Lopez and Linda Northrup
Re: City Manager Appointment

Honorable Mayor Buckley-Weber and Councilmembers:

As former Agoura Hills Mayors and Councilmembers serving for a combined 30+ years, we respectfully submit our below comments and concerns related to the process for selection of our next City Manager, and request that this be a part of the record of final action whenever taken by the Council.

On Friday, May 22, the Council met briefly in Closed Session on the matter of “Public Employee Appointment” to replace current City Manager Greg Ramirez who has resigned to assume that position in the City of Camarillo. We assume that the item refers to the appointment of Nate Hamburger, current Assistant City Manager, and that the action will be taken summarily.

We want to be clear that we express no concerns as to Mr. Hamburger’s skills, service, and dedication to Agoura Hills, or his qualifications for the position. We are, however, concerned about the unexplained haste in taking this action with no apparent urgency driving it, and the lack of transparency.

In November of 2003, former City Manager Dave Adams, resigned to accept an offer to serve as City Manager of San Juan Capistrano. Greg Ramirez was then Assistant City Manager. Instead of automatically elevating Mr. Ramirez from Assistant to City Manager, the Council appointed him Interim City Manager. This allowed them the opportunity to consider options, including reorganizing from current staff and looking outside Agoura Hills for candidates who might bring new energy, ideas and experiences to our still young city. They took just 3-1/2 months to do this, and at the end, Greg was unanimously appointed by the Council, where he has served very ably for the past 16+ years.

Our concern is that the Council is not engaging in an open process this time, which means it could be decades more before the next opportunity to search outside our small city hall for the right person to fill this critical position, wherever and whoever she or he may be. We believe this closed process is a serious opportunity lost.

Mr. Hamburger could be moved seamlessly into Interim City Manager, as was done in 2003. This would also be a financial benefit to the City during the currently strained budget situation. It would show the community that new ideas and innovative thinking are always being sought to keep our city vibrant and energetic, including from outside. It would allow the Council time to do a public search inviting all qualified individuals to apply vs. what could be perceived as an “insider” decision behind closed doors. If in the end the Council does select Mr. Hamburger, such a process will have provided him, and the public, with the confidence that he, indeed, earned the position as the most qualified candidate among all others. In the end, appearance matters. Process and transparency matter.

Thank you for your consideration.

Fran Pavley, Former Mayor/Councilmember

Louise Rishoff, Former Mayor/Councilmember