



# MEMORANDUM

Agenda Item #: 5  
Meeting Date: June 9, 2015

**TO:** HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS

**THRU:** ANTON DAHLERBRUCH, CITY MANAGER

**FROM:** SHERI REPP LOADSMAN, PLANNING & BUILDING DIRECTOR *SR*  
RUSSELL MORREALE, FINANCE DIRECTOR *R*  
KARINA BANALES, HR ADMINISTRATIVE ANALYST

**SUBJECT:** RESOLUTION NO. R15-22; ESTABLISHING A JOB DESCRIPTION AND SALARY RANGE FOR URBAN FORESTER

**DATE:** JUNE 9, 2015

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## The Issue

Shall the City Council adopt Resolution R15-22 establishing a job description and associated salary for a full-time Urban Forester?

## Background and Analysis

Currently, the City has an Arborist/City Forester position that is provided on a contract basis with Charles Abbott Associates, Inc. In line with the proposed FY 15-16 Budget, the subject Urban Forester position would create an in-house position to replace the contract position. The proposed Urban Forester position would administer specified professional-level activities associated with the City's urban forest, parks, medians, landscaped area and public trees. The position would also provide support to the Parklands Committee pertaining to parklands, grounds and landscaped portions of rights-of-way of the city, including all matters affecting policy, procedures, management and use of such public property

On May 12, 2015, the City Council discussed the role of an arborist and general need for forestry services. Staff explained that the tree trimming contract required the provision of a certified arborist. If deemed appropriate, the specifications for the tree trimming contract could expand upon the role of the tree trimming contractor's certified arborist to provide a comprehensive assessment of tree conditions for health, structure and disease

and to provide the necessary investigation and technical reports to support the Parklands Committee. Utilizing this approach, determinations related to trimming and removal would rest solely with the tree trimming contractor without providing either a City contract or in-house certified arborist. Additionally, staff advised that a tree inventory could be considered as a bid alternative to provide more information on the location, type and condition of trees.

Upon discussion, the City Council recognized a broader need for arborist and forestry services. The City Council supported the inclusion of a bid alternate for preparing a tree inventory. Additionally, the City Council requested that the City retain a certified arborist to augment the tree trimming contract services. This individual would be required to provide focused attention on the City's urban forest and not have dual loyalties to other clients. Staff was instructed to bring additional information to the City Council for consideration of an in-house or contract arborist/forester position.

As discussed on May 12, 2015, there are different models utilized by cities to provide contract and/or in-house arborist and city forestry services. Both contract and in-house options were discussed with the JPIA to determine best practices to meet the City's objectives. The JPIA advised that a contract model would allow for the use of a contractor with or without separate insurance. The JPIA noted that cities routinely provided an in-house position with a certified arborist job qualification. The JPIA would cover the City, as appropriate, for any claims associated with either a contract or in-house position. A review of potential certified arborist consulting costs indicate a range of \$95-\$175 per hour. Given the diverse needs related to the Parklands Committee and the City's urban forest, staff concluded that an in-house position would be cost effective and provide for a more responsive approach to meeting day to day needs. There is an ongoing and consistent need for an Urban Forester position. The in-house position provides closer oversight and control of the arborist and city forestry function. It is also noted that the City could not provide supervision of a consultant and it may be unlikely to find a contract arborist willing to work for only one client.

A job description has been prepared for an Urban Forester. This position will oversee and monitor operations and activities related to the City's urban forest, parks, medians, landscaped area and public trees. This professional level position will also provide staff support to the Parklands Committee. The proposed job description incorporates the responsibilities currently being performed by the contract employee provided by Charles Abbott Associates, Inc. Additional duties, responsibilities and expectations are included to provide more coordination and input for the maintenance and upgrade of public landscape areas, enhanced technical advice and recommendations for water-efficient practices and participation in efforts to improve ordinances and policies for the public use of parklands and open spaces.

If approved, the Urban Forester position will be a member of the Professional and Supervisory Employees' Group. The current contract with Charles Abbott Associates, Inc. will expire on July 13, 2015. The intent is to start recruitment immediately so there is not a significant lapse in providing forestry services.



### **Fiscal Impact**

The fiscal impact of establishing a full-time Urban Forester position is dependent upon the starting salary. The proposed salary range is between \$75,000 to \$91,164 based upon a review of similar positions. Assuming a mid-range starting salary, the fiscal impact is \$126,000 with total compensation. This total compensation amount is included in the Proposed Budget also presented this evening. Furthermore, additional one-time costs are anticipated in a total amount of \$27,000 comprised of a green, energy efficient vehicle (to be used as a shared pool vehicle), computer equipment and equipment. With Council's approval, this position will be appropriated within the FY 2015-16 budget. As a point of comparison, a full time contract certified arborist would be in excess of \$200,000 per year. Currently, the contract City Forester position is budgeted for \$102,000 for approximately 3 days per week.

### **Notification**

This matter has been agendized and posted in the routine manner.

### **Alternatives Available to the City Council**

1. Adopt Resolutions R15-22
2. Make modifications to the resolution and adopt,
3. Decline to adopt the Resolution

### **Recommendation**

It is recommended that the City Council adopt Resolution R15-22 establishing a job description and salary range for a full-time Urban Forester.

### **ATTACHMENTS:**

- A – Resolution R15-22 and Urban Forester Job Description
- B – City Council Staff Report dated May 12, 2015