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City Council

Approval of a Resolution Approving an Increase in City Staffing by Three Full-Time Positions to Support the Implementation of the Citywide Strategic Communications Recommendations

Agenda Date: 7/13/2021
Agenda Item Number: 6.A
File Number: 21-0700

Type: resolution **Version:** 1 **Status:** Passed

Title

Approval of a Resolution Approving an Increase in City Staffing by Three Full-Time Positions to Support the Implementation of the Citywide Strategic Communications Recommendations

Recommended Action

Committee Recommendation:

Not referred to a committee.

City Manager Recommendation:

Move to approve the Resolution approving an increase in City staffing by three full-time positions to support the implementation of the Citywide Strategic Communication Recommendations.

Report

Issue:

Whether to approve a resolution increasing City staffing by three full-time positions to support the implementation of the Citywide Communication Strategic Recommendations.

Staff Contact:

Kellie Purce Braseth, Strategic Communications Director 360.753.8361

Presenter(s):

Kellie Purce Braseth, Strategic Communications Director

Background and Analysis:

The City Council has indicated that a Citywide communications strategy is one of their highest priority issues. In late 2020, City staff launched an in-depth analysis of Communication Services to ensure that it is positioned as a high-performing, high-functioning communications department.

The work involved gathering data from an array of internal and external stakeholders; conducting a material review/communications audit; conducting an organizational analysis of the communications

department and making recommendations to ensure it is effectively and fully staffed to deliver best practices in strategic communications, and that it is providing excellent, sustainable, 21st Century strategic communication support to the City of Olympia.

As the State capital and largest City in Thurston County, the City of Olympia faces 'big city' communication challenges with demands for both services and issues requiring immediate attention. The analysis found that Communication Services is greatly under resourced and that the City has an urgent and critical need to expand Communication Services so it can execute work proactively, consistently and with high quality.

The research concluded that Communication Services should have between seven and 13 full-time staff. Currently, communication services employs four full-time staff. The immediate need is to produce a proactive City narrative; create and maintain a robust website; prioritize social media content; support crisis communication; develop employee communication and expand visual design and production capacity.

This Resolution approves the hiring of a Deputy Public Information Officer, a Social Media/Content Strategist and Graphic Designer. An additional \$150,000 will be allocated through the second quarter budget amendments for on-call contract services for crisis communication, photography, videography, graphic design, and professional writers.

A briefing on the final report will be scheduled in the Fall.

Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):

The consultant team engaged with local businesses, business leaders, and representatives of the City's non-profit organizations as well as our residents through the 2021 Community Survey and Public Opinion Poll reported that respondents.

The overwhelming feedback was for the City to provide more frequent communication, especially around issues of public concern like homelessness, public safety or climate. Although all modes of communication were ranked as valuable, there was a preference to receive communication over social media, email and the City's website.

Options:

1. Approve the Resolution approving an increase in City staffing by three full-time, positions to support the Citywide Strategic Communication Recommendations
2. Direct staff to make changes to the Resolution based on feedback from Council and approve an amended Resolution approving an increase in City staffing by three full-time positions to support the Citywide Strategic Communication Recommendations.
3. Do not approve the Resolution and direct staff to develop an alternative staffing solution to implement the Citywide Strategic Communication Recommendations

Financial Impact:

Funding for the three positions for five months is approximately \$150,000 and will come from General Fund fund balance for 2020 with a commitment to identify permanent funding through the 2022 budget process. The additional \$150,000 for on-call contract services for crisis communication, photography, videography, graphic design, and professional writers will be allocated through the 2nd

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quarter budget amendments.

Attachments:

Resolution