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City of Ashland



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City Manager Joseph L. Lessard Resigns from the City of Ashland

City Manager, Joe Lessard, began working for the City on January 3, 2022, following the City's adoption of the Council-Manager form of local government. Lessard's departure from the City was effective Friday, October 27, 2023.



Joseph L. Lessard

In a memo to Ashland City Council dated October 23, 2023, Lessard stated, "I am proud of . . . the achievements of the City organization and the partnership City staff has with you in making them a reality."

Lessard went on to say, "Looking forward, I see the need for a period of organizational calm or stability and focus on internal operation improvements. . . . While I expect there will be new challenges you will need to address, I believe the organization needs to retrench its internal service capacities by adopting new operational approaches, particularly with the introduction of automation and modernized operational procedures. This will require a shift in managerial focus to accomplish."

"I believe I have accomplished the original goals that the Council charged me with at my hiring and now think my skill set and strategic orientation may not be the best fit going forward for Ashland. I believe it is time the Council and I jointly discuss whether a possible transition of City Management should be considered that accounts for the changed organizational needs of the City. With that in mind I request we discuss your interests and possible joint next steps to assure the City continues

to be well served by its City Manager's Office," Lessard added.

Two Special Meetings of the Ashland City Council were held the evening of October 27. An Executive Session took place at 6 p.m. for Council to review Mr. Lessard's proposed resignation terms. The Executive Session was followed by a Business Meeting at 6:45 p.m. during which the City Council voted unanimously to accept those terms. According to the agreement, Mr. Lessard will be on paid leave through January 31, 2024, at which time he will receive a 4-month severance payment.

"The City of Ashland has been well-served by Mr. Lessard's experience and focus on organizational systems and strategic planning, as well as his strong work ethic. Under Mr. Lessard's guidance, we have fully transitioned to the Council-Manager form of government. He has helped the Council identify the highest priorities of the Ashland community and set the course to implement them. Having reached that important milestone, it is now time to transition to management focused leadership to take the next steps in serving the people of Ashland. I appreciate all that Mr. Lessard has brought to the City of Ashland and wish him well," stated Ashland Mayor, Tonya Graham.

#end

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