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**Sequim council gives city manager raise
Huish praised for ‘standout efforts’**

By Matthew Nash

SEQUIM — Sequim City Council members say they like what City Manager Matt Huish is doing after more than a year and a half on the job. They unanimously agreed last Monday to give him a 5 percent raise, or \$9,000 more a year on top of his \$180,000 salary. “I think he’s worth it,” said council member William Armacost. “We’re very fortunate to have him on board.”

Council members discussed Huish’s performance in an April 10 executive session. It was his first review since he began work in November 2021. Consulting firm Kenbrio’s David Mercier was paid \$4,000 by the city to conduct individual interviews with council members and lead the April 10 executive session.

The meeting was intended to merge members’ individual perspectives and “create corporate observations of positive attributes and opportunities for the evolution of the City Manager’s and the organization’s performance,” said Emily Stednick, Sequim’s human resources director.

Mercier’s report said the council appreciated Huish’s “standout efforts in keeping it up to date on what is happening in city government and in relevant civic organizations.” from May 13, 20 They asked him to “proactively present them with the challenges that he feels the city faces, and a plan and/or direction to address them,” according to Mercier’s report.

They also asked for a review of the organization and the current duties assigned to staff as their job descriptions evolve. Individual scores/reviews were not available, Stednick said.

Armacost said Huish inherited a staffing issue, particularly with several department leader positions vacant. He commended him for the amount of time he puts into the work, and for hiring a staff member to successfully seek out grants and alleviate the duties from senior management.

Council member Vicki Lowe said she appreciated “going through the review process and really having a good conversation.” She praised Huish for a number of changes at the city, citing “a lot of efficiencies” and staff hires. “A lot of good things [are] happening under your leadership,” she said.

“I appreciate your support,” Huish said. “I really appreciate the opportunity to work with you. Your generosity was not needed on any level. So thank you. I love our senior management team. They’re what makes things get done.”

Mayor Tom Ferrell initially recommended the staff recommendation of a 4 percent raise going back to May 1. Armacost recommended 5 percent for Huish’s efforts.

According to the city staff report, Huish “expressed an interest in having his increases tied to the increases provided to non-represented staff” with those staff receiving a 4 percent increase agreed upon starting Jan. 1.

Huish will be evaluated on an annual basis, Stednick said. He succeeded current deputy city manager/director of community and economic development Charisse Deschenes, who served as interim city manager from January 2021 through October 2021.

She took on the interim role after former city manager Charlie Bush was asked to resign by a majority of council members for reasons still not publicly stated. Armacost remains the only council member to call for his resignation who remains on the council.

Huish was one of five finalists for the city manager position, including Deschenes. He last worked as chief administrative officer for Sandy, Utah.