



City Council Memorandum

City of Arts & Innovation

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL DATE: JUNE 16, 2026

FROM: MAYOR PRO TEM STEVEN ROBILLARD WARDS: ALL

SUBJECT: EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENT WITH JAMES JOHNSON TO SERVE AS CITY ATTORNEY

ISSUE:

Approve the Employment Agreement between the City of Riverside and James Johnson, setting forth the terms and conditions for the Charter Officer position of City Attorney.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the City Council:

1. Approve the Employment Agreement with James Johnson for the Charter Officer position of City Attorney commencing on July 17, 2026; and
2. Authorize the Mayor and Mayor Pro Tem to execute the Employment Agreement.

BACKGROUND:

The City Council enlisted the services of an executive recruitment search firm to conduct a nationwide open recruitment for the City Attorney position in August 2025 and February 2026. After completing a thorough background check and other pre-employment screenings, a successful candidate was identified in May 2026.

DISCUSSION:

The City Council, after conducting a professional search for City Attorney candidates, has selected James Johnson to serve as the City Attorney for the City. Mr. Johnson's agreement (attached) provides for an annual salary of \$372,624 plus additional negotiated fringe benefits as well as benefits provided to the Executive Group within the Fringe Benefit and Salary Plan. Mr. Johnson passed a thorough background check, including a livescan and other pre-employment screenings as required by the City of Riverside for all new hires. Mr. Johnson brings to the City a wealth of knowledge and experience in overseeing and managing legal services in the public sector.

FISCAL IMPACT:

This agreement will result in annual salary costs of \$372,624 plus additional costs associated with negotiated fringe benefits as well as benefits provided to the Executive Group within the Fringe Benefit and Salary Plan. Due to the timing of the biennial budget cycle, the total impact of this agreement is not currently included in the proposed FY 2026-2028 Biennial Budget. Given the overall value of the increased personnel costs relative to the overall personnel budget, they will be absorbed by other personnel savings. Should personnel savings not transpire staff will return and request a budget adjustment.

Prepared by:



STEVEN ROBILLARD
Mayor Pro Tem

Certified as to

availability of funds:

Julie Nemes, Interim Finance Director

Approved by:

Edward Enriquez, Assistant City Manager/Chief Financial
Officer/Treasurer

Approved as to form:

Rebecca McKee-Reimbold, Interim City Attorney

Attachment: Employment Agreement - James Johnson