



CITY OF

NEWPORT BEACH

City Council Staff Report

October 14, 2025
Agenda Item No. 18

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF THE CITY COUNCIL

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TITLE: Appointment of Lena Shumway as City Clerk and Approval of
Employment Agreement

ABSTRACT:

Concurrent with the retirement of former City Clerk Leilani Brown in June of this year, the City of Newport Beach initiated a recruitment process, with the assistance of an executive search firm, to identify and hire a new city clerk. For the City Council's consideration is the appointment of Lena Shumway as city clerk effective October 20, 2025, and a proposed employment agreement between the City of Newport Beach and Ms. Shumway.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- a) Determine this action is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Sections 15060(c)(2) and 15060(c)(3) of the CEQA Guidelines because this action will not result in a physical change to the environment, directly or indirectly;
- b) Pursuant to Charter Section 600, appoint Lena Shumway as City Clerk for the City of Newport Beach effective October 20, 2025; and
- c) Approve and authorize the Mayor and City Clerk to execute an employment agreement between the City of Newport Beach and Lena Shumway, subject to the terms and conditions approved by the City Council.

DISCUSSION:

City Clerk Position

Pursuant to Article VI, Section 600 of the Newport Beach City Charter, the city clerk is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the City Council. The city clerk's responsibilities are listed in Charter Section 603. They include attending Council meetings and maintaining official meeting records; maintaining other important records such as ordinances, resolutions and contracts; administering oaths of office; overseeing municipal elections; and serving as custodian of the City seal.

Recruitment Process

Last spring, former City Clerk Leilani Brown announced that she would retire in June of this year and the City commenced a recruitment process to identify her successor.

The process was led by an executive recruitment firm, which managed the recruitment's marketing and outreach, the vetting of applications, and selecting which candidates would be interviewed. Candidates were first interviewed by panels of City staff members. Those that successfully passed that stage were invited to interview with the City Council. Lena Shumway emerged as the top candidate. The City Council directed staff to negotiate an agreement with Ms. Shumway for its consideration.

Proposed Appointment and Employment Agreement

Staff recommends the City Council appoint Lena Shumway as city clerk effective October 20, 2025, and approve the proposed employment agreement between the City and Ms. Shumway. Key points of the proposed employment agreement are as follows:

- **Term of Employment:** October 20, 2025, through December 31, 2028
- **Compensation and Benefits:**
 - Annual Base Salary: \$200,977
 - Adjustments to Base Salary – Cost of Living: Same as Key & Management employees.
 - Deferred Compensation: Effective the pay period that includes October 20, 2025, a bi-weekly contribution of 3% of employee's base salary to employee's City-sponsored 457 deferred compensation account.
 - Annual Physical Exam: Reimbursement for an annual physical exam of up to \$1,000.
 - Phone Allowance: A phone allowance equal to the phone allowance provided to management employees.
 - Auto Allowance: An auto allowance of \$400 per month.
 - Administrative Leave: Effective October 20, 2025, employee will receive 40 hours of paid administrative leave. Effective January 1, 2026, employee will receive 80 hours of administrative leave per calendar year. Unused administrative leave hours do not carry over at the end of the calendar year.
 - Flex Leave: Employee will accumulate flex leave as provided for in the Key & Management Compensation Plan, executive management category at the rate designated for employees with years of service in the "15 and over" category.
 - Flex Leave Cap: 400 hours
 - Severance Benefit: A severance of up to 6 months of base salary and medical benefits (See Section 7 of Employment Agreement.)
 - Additional Benefits: Unless otherwise provided for in the agreement, employee will receive the same benefits as those provided to executive management employees under the Key & Management Compensation Plan and/or the Employee Policy Manual.

Lena Shumway's Professional Experience and Education

Ms. Shumway has more than 15 years of experience serving municipal governments in administrative and city clerk roles. She is currently employed by the City of Commerce as its city clerk and director of administrative services. In that role, she oversees council and commissioner support services, administrative services, customer service, public information and the City Clerk's Office. Ms. Shumway previously served as the assistant city clerk for the City of Lomita and city clerk / municipal court administrator for the City of Fernley, Nevada. She holds a master's degree in political science with an emphasis on public administration and earned the master municipal clerk certification from the International Institute of Municipal Clerks.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The adopted budget includes sufficient funding to cover the cost of the proposed Employment Agreement.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:

Staff recommends the City Council find this action is not subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Sections 15060(c)(2) (the activity will not result in a direct or reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment) and 15060(c)(3) (the activity is not a project as defined in Section 15378) of the CEQA Guidelines, California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 3, because it has no potential for resulting in physical change to the environment, directly or indirectly.

NOTICING:

The agenda item has been noticed according to the Brown Act (72 hours in advance of the meeting at which the City Council considers the item).

ATTACHMENT:

Attachment A – Employment Agreement