



WASHOE COUNTY

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STAFF REPORT

BOARD MEETING DATE: *December 12, 2023*

DATE: November 17, 2023

TO: Board of County Commissioners

FROM: Kate Thomas, Assistant County Manager
775-229-2875, kathomas@washoecounty.gov

THROUGH: Eric P. Brown, County Manager

SUBJECT: Recommendation to appoint Ryan Gustafson as Director of Human Services Agency effective December 12, 2023, with an annual salary of \$203,819.20 (All Commission Districts.) FOR POSSIBLE ACTION

SUMMARY

On August 15, 2023, the Board accepted the resignation of former Director Human Services, Amber Howell, and approved the County Manager's recommendation to appoint Division Director Ryan Gustafson to the position of Interim Director, Human Services Agency. Following a recruitment process for screening and selection of a new Director Human Services Agency, approved by the Board in February 2023, this agenda item seeks the Board's appointment of Ryan Gustafson as the Washoe County Director Human Services Agency, effective December 12, 2023, with an annual salary of \$203,819.20.

Washoe County Strategic Objective supported by this item: Vulnerable Populations

PREVIOUS ACTION

On August 15, 2023, the Board accepted the resignation of former Director Human Services, Amber Howell, and approved the County Manager's recommendation to appoint Division Director Ryan Gustafson to the position of Interim Director, Human Services Agency until a recruitment was conducted for the position of Director Human Services.

On February 28, 2023, the Board approved the process for the recruitment and appointment of non-elected, unclassified management employees. The process which was approved by the Board is outlined below.

BACKGROUND

Pursuant to Washoe County Code 45.050 and 45.050.2 the Director Human Services position is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the Board of County Commissioners.

AGENDA ITEM # _____

On June 9, 2015, the Board interviewed three candidates for Social Services Director and appointed Amber Howell effective immediately.

On February 28, 2023, the Board approved the process for the recruitment and appointment of non-elected, unclassified management employees. The process which was approved by the Board is outlined below.

On August 15, 2023, the Board accepted the resignation of former Director Human Services, Amber Howell and approved the County Manager's recommendation to appoint Division Director Ryan Gustafson to the position of Interim Director, Human Services Agency.

The resignation of Human Services Director Amber Howell necessitated the appointment of an interim staff member to oversee the office. The County process for appointing an interim/acting department head is based on past practice. The process for appointing interim/acting department heads is summarized as follows:

- The County Manager receives notification that a Board appointed department head is vacating his/her position.
- Together the County Manager and Assistant County Manager who supervises the department selects an employee to serve as interim/acting department head to oversee the management and day-to-day operations of the department during the recruitment/selection process for the permanent appointment of the department head.
- The County Manager makes a recommendation for the Board to approve and accept the interim/acting appointment. The person appointed as the interim/acting department head serves in that role from the date that the department head vacates his/her position to the date that a permanent department head is appointed.
- The interim/acting appointment ends on the date that the Board approves the permanent appointment of the newly selected department head.

Due to the resignation of Human Services Director Amber Howell, the County Manager recommends that the Board of County Commissioners appoint Ryan Gustafson, Division Director, as Interim Human Services Director. The Interim Human Services Director will serve in that role until a permanent Human Services Director is appointed by the Board.

In accordance with the Board's approved process for recruitment and appointment of unclassified management positions, the process and timeline for the recruitment/appointment of the permanent Human Services Director is summarized as follows:

Job Announcement Advertised September 19, 2023	August 15 –
Screening Committee Reviews/Ranks Qualified Applicants October 2, 2023	September 25 –
1 st Round of Interviews by Panel & Recommendation to County Manager 2023	Week of October 16,
2 nd Interview of Top Candidate 2023	Week of October 30,
Chair & Vice Chair of the Board Meet Top Candidate 6,2023	Week of November
Required Background Investigation 13, 2023	Week of November
Recommendation to the Board for Formal Appointment by the BCC	December 12, 2023,

Human Resources advertised the position in the following ways: Nevada State Board of Social Workers; ICMA; of Nevada Nevada Department of Employment Training & Rehabilitation (DETR); Governmentjobs.com; LinkedIn, LinkedIn Recruiter, Facebook, Twitter, Indeed.

Human Resources received 37 applications for the position of Director Human Services Agency. Five candidates were forwarded to the Screening Committee, four candidates were recommended to move forward to in the first round of interviews. One candidate withdrew from the process and three candidates were interviewed. Two candidates were recommended to move forward to the final round of interviews.

The Screening Committee was comprised of representatives from the Nevada State Board of Social Work, Catholic Charities, and the Food Bank of Northern Nevada.

The first interview panel included Deputy District Attorney Herb Kaplan, District Court Administrator Alicia Lerud; Washoe County Sheriff's Office Chief Deputy Ralph Caldwell; Pastor Yanus Nelson from Grace Church and Leslie Colbrese Community Services Agency

The final interview panel included Washoe County Commissioner Garcia, Washoe County Manager Eric Brown, and Assistant Washoe County Manager Kate Thomas. The interview panel recommends Ryan Gustafson to the Board of County Commissioners to be appointed Washoe County Director of Human Services.

Mr. Gustafson received his Bachelor's Degree in Psychology/Criminal Justice from the University of Nevada Reno. He received his Master's Degree in Counseling and Educational Psychology. He is licensed Marriage and Family Therapist in the State of Nevada. He was the Deputy Administrator for the State of Nevada Division of Child and Family Services. He is currently a Division Director at the Human Services Agency.

FISCAL IMPACT

The Human Services Director position is authorized and included in the FY24 adopted budget.

No fiscal impact related to this agenda item.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Board of County Commissioners appoint Ryan Gustafson as Director of Human Services Agency effective December 12, 2023, with an annual salary of \$203,819.20.

POSSIBLE MOTION

Should the Board agree with the recommendation, a possible motion would be:

“Move to appoint Ryan Gustafson as Director of Human Services Agency effective December 12, 2023, with an annual salary of \$203,819.20.