Work contract OK'd for interim treasurer

Decision is made after much council debate

By Lynh Bui

The Arizona Republic

The Scottsdale City Council has approved an employment contract for an interim city treasurer but not without debate and delay.

Councilman Ron McCullagh earlier this week wanted to postpone consideration of David N. Smith's contract to become interim city treasurer because he and City Manager John Little have not yet agreed on how to divide financial duties and staff between the two offices.

The treasurer's post has been a controversial topic, with council members disagreeing over whether a recently approved job description for the position aligns with the city charter and city code. Members of the council minority also have expressed concern that the job description would strip the city manager's power.

"I don't want to pay someone $9,000 a month to argue over the job description," McCullagh said.

The city's legal department is working to rewrite city code to conform with the recently approved job description, Mayor Jim Lane said.

McCullagh wanted to wait to hire Smith until all those details were settled, but his request to continue consideration of Smith's contract failed. Smith's contract was eventually approved by a 4-3 vote, with council members Wayne Ecton, Suzanne Klapp and McCullagh dissenting.

Smith will have to work under the current treasurer's job description and code outlined for the city treasurer until ordinance changes are made and approved.

Smith, whose contract pays him $110,000 a year, will start his first day of work Tuesday. Little and Smith said they plan to meet next week to work out the details.

Little said that he looks forward to working with Smith and that the council has "full commitment" to reach an agreement consistent with the new job description and the city charter.

Smith said the position will evolve as the treasurer's job is better defined.

Manslaughter trial nears for teen driver in fatal rollover

Teen driver in fatal rollover

By Lynh Bui

The Arizona Republic

A manslaughter trial for a 17-year-old driver involved in a December 2008 single-car crash that killed a 19-year-old men was set for this week near the city of Surprise.

The trial of Jesse F. Ferentz, 17, was scheduled to begin Monday in the Superior Court of Maricopa County.

Ferentz is charged with two counts of manslaughter in the December 2008 crash on Surprise Boulevard near the intersection of W. Bell Road.

David Adkins, 19, died in the crash when the car he was passenger in, driven by Ferentz, crossed the median onto the northbound lane and struck another car head-on.

Fire officials said Adkins, who was in the passenger seat, was ejected from the car and died at the scene.

The teenager driver was arrested on two counts of manslaughter. Ferentz was not injured in the crash.

The teenager driver, who was arrested on two counts of manslaughter, was not injured in the crash.

Ferentz was released from jail on $250,000 bond and was permitted to drive the family car with his teen driver's license.

Ferentz's attorney, Gabriel H. Gangan, Jr., said his client was not at fault in the crash and was not impaired at the time of the crash.

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