

SANTA YNEZ COMMUNITY SERVICES DISTRICT

MEMORANDUM

TO: Board of Directors
FROM: Mike LeBrun, Interim General Manager
DATE: February 16, 2022
SUBJECT: General Manager Recruitment

Recommendation

Review the attached proposed General Manager Recruitment information and provide direction.

Policy Implications

In December 2021, the Board formed an Ad-hoc committee to lead recruitment of a General Manager.

Fiscal Implications

Recruitment will be done in house with an estimated cost in the range of \$2,000 to \$5,000. This includes advertising, recruitment flyer/notice, mailings, background investigation and contract negotiations with the top candidate. Staff will perform most of this work with the exception of the background investigation and contract negotiations. Your legal counsel will create/negotiate terms of an employment agreement and perform or contract for the background investigation. A professional recruitment firm is in the range of \$15,000 to \$25,000 or more.

Alternatives

None.

Discussion

Staff has prepared the general manager recruitment process and items as outlined below. It is a difficult task and there is no guaranteed approach to find the right General Manager for the District. The goal is to attract quality qualified candidates that have the necessary experience to be successful at the District.

Santa Ynez CSD is a smaller CSD with limited customers and limited services. While a smaller District might seem a perfect fit for a first time General Manager, there are other factors working against this.

The District has a number of nuanced policy and inter-agency issues it is involved with. District's staff recently organized and the District is currently in labor negotiations with

the union. The area surrounding the District has numerous public agencies involved in providing wastewater services. Many rural areas surrounding and within District boundaries are currently unserved by sewer. The Local Area Formation Commission (LAFCO) recently initiated the process for studying Special District services levels throughout the County. The District needs to be actively ‘at the table’ through the LAFCO process and regularly represented in with other area agencies. The District provides contract wastewater services for the local Native American tribe. The District contracts with the City of Solvang for wastewater treatment services.

The District is not a member of CalPERS. CalPERS is the most common pension plan for public employees in California. A top manager or mid-level manager at another public agency that currently is in the CalPERS system and plans on working another 10-15 years is unlikely to leave the system. However, a retired manager/mid-manager that was in the CalPERS system and desires to go back to work and manage an agency again can work at SYCSD with no impact to their pension. This occurred at a local CSD recently and describes at least one former General Manager at the District.

The Ad-Hoc committee and staff considered the factors outline above and the District’s recent experience with hiring a General Manager. The Committee feels a recruitment effort focused on finding a seasoned Manager with Community Services District/Special District experience who is interested in working on a part-time basis may produce the best outcome.

Proposed Timeline

Dates	Activities
Jan. 20 - 28	Staff prepare draft advertisement/notice, recruitment process.
Feb. 8	Committee reviews and provides input on recruitment process, compensation level, job description, etc. to staff
Feb 16 Meeting	BOD review and approval of committee items
Feb 17-24	Staff makes changes as needed to recruitment process, compensation level, job description
Feb. 25 – Mar. 24	Advertise – Open recruitment
Mar 25	Recruitment close/Application deadline
Mar. 28 – April 3	Committee review of application, select top 5-7 candidates
Week of April 11	Committee interviews top 5-7 candidates
Week of April 11	Committee selects top 3-4 candidates for BOD interview
April 20 meeting or a Special Meeting week of April 27	BOD interviews top 3-4 candidates, selects top candidate and offers job pending background investigation
April 29 –May. 13	Background investigation and contract negotiations
May 18 meeting	BOD, top candidate sign contract
June - July	New GM starts work

The above timeline is for planning purposes. The recruitment process could take longer or shorter depending on several factors. If there are only a few good candidates, the Committee interview could be skipped, and the top 3-4 candidates could simply go to the Board interview process. Background investigation, contract negotiations and any potential relocation of the General Manager to the Central Coast or Santa Ynez Valley could lengthen the recruitment process.

Advertisement

A selection of print, web based, and direct mailings is proposed. Print advertisement includes local newspapers in Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo counties and at least one statewide publication. Web based includes sites that are specific to the wastewater industry, special districts and municipal agencies that perform wastewater or water services. The attached job announcement will be posted on the web site, mailed to local cities and special districts, and mailed to candidates that request information on the opening. The announcement is our best recruitment tool because it gives a good summary of the community, the SYCSD, and the job. Staff will also draft an attachment to the job announcement that provides more detailed information about the position, challenges, community, and job compensation.

Compensation

A salary range can be offered depending on the experience and qualifications of the candidate. A range of \$115,000 to \$145,000 per year is suggested for consideration. Along with a statement that the District is prepared to negotiate a generous compensation and employment package with the successful candidate.

Additional Questionnaire

The completion and submittal of responses to a questionnaire is a common practice for the top manager of an agency. This supplemental questionnaire allows your Board to get other job related information from the candidates.

Application Process

Candidates must submit a cover letter, completed SYCSD job application, resume with salary requirements, and the additional questionnaire.

Attachments:

1. Job Announcement
2. Additional Position Information
3. Supplemental Questionnaire



GENERAL MANAGER

**SANTA YNEZ COMMUNITY SERVICES DISTRICT
SANTA YNEZ, CALIFORNIA**

SALARY \$115,000 TO \$145,000 ANNUALLY DOQ

DISTRICT WILL NEGOTIATE AN ATTRACTIVE COMPENSATION PACKAGE WITH SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATE

THE COMMUNITY: The Santa Ynez Community Services District Board of Directors is seeking an enthusiastic, creative and experienced leader for their new General Manager. This is an excellent opportunity to manage the wastewater services of a *true* community. Services provided by Santa Ynez CSD include wastewater collection and contract operation of a 0.32 MGD wastewater treatment plant. Santa Ynez, a small western township formed in 1882, is in the heart of the Santa Ynez valley in Santa Barbara County California. The town's western front architecture boasts a variety of shops, services, restaurants and accommodations for residents and visitors.

THE POSITON: The General Manager is the chief executive officer of the District under the direction of a five-member Board of Directors. The General Manager is responsible for the overall management and administration of the District, its services and personnel. Major functions of the position include assisting and advising the Board of Directors, providing supervision to district employees, managing the Districts' budget, contracts and programs, and representing the District at local and regional meetings.

THE IDEAL CANDIDATE: Will have experience as a Manager at a Community Services District with a strong background in policy development, customer and community relations, local agency coordination, finance, and public works administration. The Ideal Candidate can develop and maintain positive working relationships with a wide range of staff members, policy makers, constituents, and community partners. The ability to work cooperatively with neighboring agencies, the County, and the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians is important. Wastewater operation experience is desired but not required. The General Manager will maintain high ethical standards and establish trust and credibility in the management of the District.

The position is envisioned as full-time position, however, an ideal candidate with excellent applicable experience may be able to perform the job at a part time level once established. The salary range is \$115,000 to \$145,000 per year depending on qualifications. The District is prepared to offer an attractive compensation package to the successful candidate.

EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE: Any combination of training and experience that would provide the required knowledge, skills, and abilities is qualifying. A minimum of five years' experience as a Manager at a Community Services District. Work experience at a services district with wastewater collections and treatment in California is highly desirable.

APPLICATION DEADLINE AND REQUIREMENTS: To be considered for this position, a complete application package must be received at the District's offices no later than 5PM on Friday March 25, 2022. The application package must include the following to be considered: a cover letter, completed District application, resume, and supplemental questionnaire. Application and supplemental questionnaire are available at www.sycsd.com or by calling our office at 805-688-3008. The District's office is located at 1070 Faraday Street, Santa Ynez, CA, 93460. Please mail complete application package to P.O. Box 667, Santa Ynez, CA, 93460 with "Attention General Manager Recruitment" on the envelope.



SANTA YNEZ COMMUNITY SERVICES DISTRICT GENERAL MANAGER RECRUITMENT ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The Community of Santa Ynez

Santa Ynez, a small western township formed in 1882, is in the heart of the Santa Ynez Valley in Santa Barbara County, California. Santa Ynez is a 'census designated place' that is approximately five square miles. In the 2020 census, the population within the defined census area was 4,505 persons.

Santa Ynez is located near Lake Cachuma, the Los Padres National Forest, and hundreds of wineries. The Santa Ynez area is known for beautiful weather year-round. The area experiences warm, but not hot, summer weather. Even during summer the average monthly temperature is below 72 degrees. While winter can see freezing temperatures, snow is typically limited to mountain ridges.

The town's western front architecture houses a variety of shops, services, restaurants and accommodations for residents and visitors. The town is located along the old stagecoach route between Santa Barbara and destinations north. The Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians have a reservation adjacent to the community that includes housing, cultural facilities, and a casino.

The Cities of Solvang and Buellton are five miles west of Santa Ynez. Both cities have a population of about 5,000 and offer additional services. The City of Santa Barbara is 30 miles south of Santa Ynez, has a population of ~80,000 people and is the seat of County government. Santa Barbara and the surrounding area offer shopping services and many other activities and attractions such as museums, music venues, and a zoo. The City of Santa Maria is 35 miles north of Santa Ynez, has a population of ~100,000. Santa Maria offers a full range of community and retail services.

Santa Ynez and the surrounding areas offer many residential subdivisions, and rural homes on acreage providing a wide variety of housing types and price ranges.

The District & Operations

Citizens in the area formed the Santa Ynez Community Services District (SYCSD) in 1971 for the purpose of obtaining and providing community sewage disposal services in the Santa Ynez area (approximately one square mile). In January 1974, State and County health departments determined a health hazard existed due to onsite wastewater systems (septic systems), and a building moratorium was placed on the area.

The original SYCSD wastewater collection system was completed in 1981. Subsequent to this, there have been extensions of the mainline to make public sewer available to residents who have come to the District requesting service. The current collection system has 718 connections, approximate 15 miles of collection and force main lines and two lift stations. There are still hundreds of parcels within the SYCSD boundaries that remain on septic systems.

In 1984, the SYCSD entered into an operating agreement with the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians (The Chumash Tribe) to maintain and operate the wastewater collection system on their reservation. The Chumash Tribe subsequently constructed a tertiary wastewater treatment plant with a capacity to treat 320,000 gallons of reservation generated wastewater daily. The District has expanded its roll to include operation of this plant.

The District owns 20% of the capacity in the City of Solvang's wastewater treatment plant (0.3 MGD of the 1.5 MGD plant) to provide treatment and disposal of wastewater collected from District customers.

SYCSD is organized as an independent Special District under California law. In addition to sewer collection services, the District maintains a small lighting district. The District is accountable to its customers and governed by a five member Board of Directors that is elected at-large to staggered four-year terms.

The District is supported by a dedicated staff of six, including the General Manager. The District's approved 2021/22 operating budget is \$1.1 million with a \$335K capital improvement budget. \$1 million of the operating budget is funded by fees with the remaining portion funded by taxes and assessments.

Opportunities

- Directors are engaged and interested in District operations. The Manager will be working with the Board to define the District's future vision and priorities.
- The five person staff organized in 2018. There are two bargaining units, one for operations staff and for the administrative staff person. Negotiations to update the MOU are ongoing.
- Wastewater collection and treatment services are compartmentalized throughout the Santa Ynez Valley. The County's Local Area Formation Commission recently commenced a Municipal Service Review of area water and wastewater service providers. The District desires to play an active role in defining how and when wastewater services will grow within current services boundaries and within the region.
- The City of Solvang is undertaking a \$20 million upgrade to their wastewater treatment plant (WWTP), of which the District is contractually obligated to pay 20 percent. The General Manager will represent the District's interest with Solvang staff and consulting engineers regarding the WWTP upgrade and ongoing operation.
- Expansion of the collection system to unserved parcels remains a challenging topic. Both costs of expansion and potential for increasing development potential are areas of concern to the Board and community. The Manager will work with the Board and community to define a vision, schedule, and funding approach for any extension of the collection system.

The Position

The General Manager is the chief executive officer of the District under the direction of a five-member Board of Directors. The General Manager works 'at the will of the Board'. The General Manager is expected to plan, organize, coordinate and supervise all District functions and activities related to collection of wastewater and other contract functions of the District. The position is envisioned as full-time 40hr/week position. However, an ideal candidate with excellent applicable

experience may be able to perform the job at a part time level once established. A summary of the General Manager responsibilities include:

- Work with the Board of Directors to develop a strategic plan and vision for the District.
- Participate and support the Board of Directors with labor union negotiations.
- Represent the District's interests in regional wastewater planning efforts.
- Prepare and administer the annual budget.
- Work with District engineer in the management of capital improvement and maintenance projects through all phases including planning, design, construction, and close-out.
- Insure the financial stability of the District through rate adjustments and cost control.
- Recruit, train, and supervise District employees either directly or through subordinate supervisory staff.
- Manage District contracts and programs representing the District at local, regional and State meetings.
- Assure the Board is kept informed of all financial, legal, social, and economic issues that may affect District activities and operations.
- Monitor changes in laws, regulations, and technology that may affect District operations and work with the Board to implement policy and procedural changes as required.

The Ideal Candidate

We are seeking candidates with many of the following attributes:

- High ethical standards to establish trust and credibility in the management of the District.
- Experience as a manager at a Community Services District/Special District.
- Experience representing a Special District interfacing with LAFCO, County Government and other Special Districts. Experience with Santa Barbara County and other Santa Ynez Valley public agencies is a plus.
- Experience with Agency strategic planning and regional coordination.
- Experience serving an elected Board of Directors.
- Experience in growing wastewater collection services in a community.
- Strong background in financial management and public works projects.
- Ability to manage limited financial resources to meet goals.
- Thorough knowledge of public sector budgeting as well as wastewater practices and capital construction projects, human resource issues and contract administration.
- Progressive leader and strong administrator with the ability to develop and maintain positive working relationships.
- Excellent writing ability.
- A strategic thinker, with excellent interpersonal and communication skills.
- Strong management and leadership skills.
- Adhere and implement policy decisions.

Education and Experience

A minimum of five years previous experience as a Manager at Community Service District/Special District, serving an elected Board of Directors is highly desirable. Equivalent knowledge, skills, and abilities is qualifying. Work experience in the wastewater collections and treatment is desirable.

Employee Compensation and Benefits

A generous compensation and employment package will be negotiated with the successful candidate. A range of \$115,000 - \$145,000 per year is envisioned.

Application Deadline and Requirements

To be considered for this position, your application submittal must be received at the District office by Friday March 25, 2022 at 5PM. Postmarks will not be accepted.

The submittal must include the following items:

- Cover letter
- Completed District application
- Resume
- Completed supplemental questionnaire

Application and supplemental questionnaire are available on our website at www.sycsd.com. You may also call our office at 805-688-3008 to request a detailed brochure and application materials.

Mail may be sent to Santa Ynez Community Services District, Attn: General Manager Recruitment Committee, P.O. Box 667, Santa Ynez, CA 93460 and must be received by March 25, 2022. Postmark is not accepted.

Selection Timeline:

- Application deadline: March 25
- Preliminary Interviews Week of April 11
- Final Interviews Week of April 20
- Target Hire Date: June 2022

SANTA YNEZ COMMUNITY SERVICES DISTRICT
GENERAL MANAGER RECRUITMENT
SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONNAIRE

February 16, 2022

Please briefly respond to each of the following questions by attaching sheets with responses keyed to these items. Please print or type responses and attempt to keep each response to one-half page, or less. Answers to all the questions are to be included with your completed job application and professional resume.

1. Briefly describe the organization in which you work (or most recently worked), including its size, makeup, and major issues facing it, together with your role.
2. Detail your experience in the areas of Special District management.
3. In your opinion, what are the three areas in which a good General Manager focuses his/her attention on an ongoing basis?
4. Please attach a copy of a recent staff report you have prepared on an important and substantive issue to give us an example of how you communicate with the Board of Directors/City Counsel. Please limit your sample to no more than five pages.
5. Detail your past roles serving an elected Board.
6. Detail your role in developing, justifying, and controlling agency budgets.
7. Describe your management and supervisory philosophy.
8. Detail your experience in assembling (hiring) and leading a small employee team. How many employees do you currently supervise?
9. Summarize your experience representing a Special District working with community groups, the County and other local agencies.
10. How do you deal with being at odds with your Board?
11. Outline your three major accomplishments during your applicable work history.

