



Agenda Item #: _____

Staff Report

City of Manhattan Beach

TO: Honorable Mayor Cohen and Members of the City Council

THROUGH: Geoff Dolan, City Manager

FROM: Lindy Coe-Juell, Assistant to the City Manager
Leilani Emnace, Information Systems Manager

DATE: July 21, 2009

SUBJECT: Initial Discussion of the City Council Work Plan Item for Creating a Standardized Format for City Letters and Emails

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the City Council discuss and provide direction related to 1) the three draft options for a standardized city letterhead format provided with this report and 2) the possibility of a standard citywide email format. Based on direction from the City Council, staff will bring back a revised standard letterhead option, email format options and further information as requested.

FISCAL IMPLICATION:

Staff anticipates that the cost associated with this project would be minimal and could be accommodated by the current budget. Currently, the standard letterhead used by staff is a word document template and is printed as needed. There would be no cost involved in changing this template. Staff anticipates that a software application costing approximately \$2,000, which would be covered by the adopted IS budget, will be necessary in order to provide a technical solution to standardize an email format citywide.

BACKGROUND:

Through the 2008-2009 Workplan, the City Council asked staff to explore options for creating a standardized format for city letters and emails. The desired outcome, as captured by the Workplan, is to have a standard, recognizable look to these communications. Through this report, staff has provided examples of our current letterhead templates (Attachment 1), three draft options for a revised letterhead template that incorporates our website design (Attachment 2), and examples of styles of emails used by various employees (Attachment 3).

DISCUSSION:

City employees currently use two main letterhead templates when sending correspondence by letter. We have a citywide letterhead template (Attachment 1A) and templates that are customized for each Department (Attachment 1B). Additionally, the City Council, the Police Department and the Fire Department each have templates that are used for formal correspondence (Attachments 1C, 1D and 1E). The City Council may want to consider maintaining the formal correspondence

templates as they are currently formatted while making a change to the two main letterhead templates used by the majority of the Departments.

The letterhead templates currently in use by most staff (Attachments 1A and 1B) do have a basic standard design. However, they could certainly be updated with a consistent “branded” style. Staff has consistently received positive comments about the design of our updated website. Based on that feedback, we have provided three draft options for an updated standardized letterhead that reflects the theme used in our website design (see Attachments 2A, 2B and 2C). Upon review of these draft options, we seek City Council’s direction for an updated standardized letterhead..

Although most employees use a fairly basic email design and signature, there are creative variations, as seen in Attachment 3. In order to provide a consistent email format that would be easily identified as city correspondence, staff recommends that we explore options for a standardized email format including the background, font type and signature. Based on City Council direction, staff will bring back options for a standardized email format. Staff recommends that the City Council consider incorporating the design from the website and proposed letterhead for the email standard as well in order to provide a consistent branded look for all three media types (website, letterhead and email).

CONCLUSION:

Staff recommends that the City Council:

- 1) review the three attached options for a standardized city letterhead and provide direction for a revised option for further Council review, and
- 2) discuss and provide direction regarding a standardized citywide email format.

ATTACHMENTS:

- 1) Current City Letterhead Templates
 - a. Citywide Template
 - b. Department Template
 - c. Formal City Council Template
 - d. Police Department Template
 - e. Fire Department Template
- 2) Draft Standardized Letterhead Options
 - a. Blue Background
 - b. White Background
 - c. Faded Blue Background
- 3) Current Email Style Examples



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