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Hemet extends interim city manager's contract during hiring search

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By MICHAEL PERRAULT
The Press-Enterprise

HEMET - Interim City Manager Len Wood's yearlong contract has been extended three months, giving city officials more time to wrap up recruiting efforts to find a permanent replacement.

Wood, 65, signed an employment agreement last year slated to run through June 30.

On Tuesday, Hemet City Council members voted unanimously to extend the contract until Aug. 30, and it can roll over until someone is hired. The city has received 87 applications for the job and hopes to hire someone by the end of August.

Wood's extension contract calls for him to take a 5 percent salary reduction, part of a 6.7 percent reduction in overall benefits that numerous city officials have agreed to in light of the economic slowdown.

Wood's contract last year called for him to be paid $230,000, plus various benefits and use of a car.

City officials began looking for a new city manager in March 2008 when former City Manager John Davidson left after 16 months on the job. The council authorized paying Davidson $233,080 as a settlement for his departure.

Wood temporarily took on the position after he retired, having served stints as city manager at Rancho Palos Verdes and Claremont. He also was interim city manager in Colton, Bell, La Palma, Signal Hill and Goleta.

Wood has more than 24 years of experience and has authored six books on local government.

Wood was living in Rancho Palos Verdes before agreeing to take the position and live in a city-owned mobile home at Simpson Park.

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