Iraheta, Alba

From: airaheta@cityofpasadena.net
To: cityclerk
Subject: RE: Letter to the Mayor and City Council — the City Manager search and this weekend's closed sessions

From: Victor Caballero < >
Sent: Saturday, October 31, 2026 3:54:24 PM (UTC-08:00) Pacific Time (US & Canada)
To: cityclerk
Subject: Letter to the Mayor and City Council — the City Manager search and this weekend's closed sessions

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Dear Clerk Jomsky,

Please distribute the letter below to Mayor Victor M. Gordo and all members of the Pasadena City Council, and include it in the public record regarding the City Manager search. The letter is also published on my blog:
https://gcc01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fvictorcaballero.com%2Fthree-days-of-closed-sessions-on-the-city-manager-and-the-november-3-council-meeting-is-cancelled%2F&data=05%7C02%7Cairaheta%40cityofpasadena.net%7C68494bd76ce6403cc0c408df37a2030f%7C82d9fc002c664402a28fc6bcdc32e491%7C1%7C0%7C639290841150222475%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWUsIlYiOiIwLjAuMDAwMCIsIlAiOiJXaW4zMiIsIkFOIjoiTWFpbCIsIldUIjoyfQ%3D%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=Ft7KGzrDO9pQgFj%2B%2Blzjgk%2FVxwansOHXG%2BhoRI5GUvw%3D&reserved=0

Thank you,
Victor Caballero
Pasadena resident

October 30, 2026

Mayor Victor M. Gordo and Members of the Pasadena City Council City of Pasadena
100 N. Garfield Avenue

Pasadena, CA 91101

Dear Mayor Gordo and Members of the Council:

Re: The City Manager search — a process that failed in public and is now finishing in secret

I am writing as a Pasadena resident about the search for our next City Manager — the most important hiring decision this Council will make — and about a process that has become a fiasco from beginning to end.

Consider the record. Miguel Márquez announced his retirement in November 2025 and left the city in April 2026. Pasadena has been run by an interim city manager ever since — through the Eaton Fire recovery, through an adopted budget, through decisions that will shape this city for a generation. The Council's first chosen successor, Riverside City Manager Mike Futrell, withdrew in April, days before he was scheduled to start, leaving Pasadena embarrassed and back at square one. Residents never received a real explanation for how that selection unraveled.

The search was relaunched on September 11, and applications closed on October 16. The public was promised input into the recruitment. What the public actually got was a brochure and, since then, silence.

Now the finish: three consecutive days of closed session meetings — Saturday, October 31 at 7:30 a.m., Sunday, November 1 at 9:00 a.m., and Monday, November 2 — on top of the same session held October 26.
And the regular Council meeting of November 3 has been cancelled. Four closed sessions in eight days, each listing a single item — "public employee employment, Position: City Manager" — and each naming the Mayor as the Council's designated representative, language ordinarily used when a representative is authorized to negotiate terms. No finalist names. No public forum. No community introduction. Nothing.

Let me be clear: the Brown Act permits closed sessions on personnel matters, and no resident expects to sit in the interview room. But the law permitting closed deliberations does not require a closed process.
Cities across California introduce their finalists to the public, hold community receptions, and take questions before a contract is signed.
At every step where Pasadena could have chosen openness, this Council chose secrecy instead.

I therefore ask the Council to do the following:

1. Report out promptly. As soon as a selection is made, announce who was chosen and the vote — and publish the full proposed employment contract, including salary, benefits, severance provisions, and term, before final approval, not after the ink is dry.

2. Introduce the candidate publicly. Hold a public introduction of the selected candidate, with an opportunity for residents to hear from them and ask questions, before the contract is finalized.

3. Explain the Futrell failure. Put on the public record what went wrong with the first selection, and what was done differently this time to make sure it does not happen again.

4. Vote in the open, at a regular meeting. Commit that the final vote on the City Manager's contract will take place at a regular, properly noticed open meeting — not a special meeting called on short notice.

The next City Manager will oversee a budget of roughly $1.5 billion and some 2,200 employees, will lead the ongoing Eaton Fire recovery, and will set the tone of this city's government for years. A hire of that weight, made entirely behind closed doors after a failed first attempt, asks residents to trust a process that has not earned it.

Pasadena deserves better than a done deal. Announce the choice, publish the terms, and let the public be heard before — not after — the decision is final.

Respectfully,

Victor Caballero
Pasadena resident