



MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Contact:

Sara Spaulding, APR
Communications & Engagement Director
970-985-8180
saras@gjcity.org

GRAND JUNCTION ANNOUNCES BENNETT AS FINALIST FOR CITY MANAGER POSITION

GRAND JUNCTION, Colo. September 16, 2024 – The Grand Junction City Council has announced the selection of Mike Bennett as the finalist for the position of City Manager.

With the announcement of the final candidate, there is a 14-day period before the formal offer of employment can be extended. During this time anyone with concerns is encouraged to bring those to city council. Interim Manager Andrea Phillips will serve in the city manager role to ensure a smooth transition for Bennett that is expected to occur in late November.

“After a thoughtful and robust national search to identify the best qualified candidates for the position of City Manager, my city council colleagues and I are very pleased to announce the selection of Mike Bennett to fill this important role for the city,” stated Mayor Abram Herman. “We believe Mike has the vision to move the city forward while also managing the day-to-day operations with a team of dedicated city staff. We are fortunate that Mike already has an understanding of the challenges facing the western part of the state to include those specific to the City of Grand Junction. We also feel Mike exudes the warmth and friendly nature of our community, and will serve as a collaborative partner in efforts to maintain productive relationships with local organizations and businesses,” continued Herman. “We were pleased to have had two outstanding final candidates and I’d like to extend my appreciation to our other finalist Scott Trainor whose experience and acumen as a City Manager for Fountain, Colorado made our decision a difficult one.”

Mike Bennett has served as the City Manager for the City of Fruita, Colorado since 2014. Prior to that time, he served the City of Hickory, North Carolina as the Director of Administrative Services (2010 – 2014), Assistant to the City Manager (2007 – 2010), and as Interim Transit Director (2006 – 2007). In 2023, he taught as an Adjunct Professor of Public Administration at Colorado Mesa University. Bennett has a Bachelor of Science degree in Journalism from Utah State University and a Master of Public Administration from Brigham Young University, where he has served on the program’s Executive Advisory Board since 2018. Bennett graduated from the Senior Executive Institute at the University of Virginia in 2013. He is a credentialed manager through the International City/County Management Association and is an active member of that organization. He is a board member of the Colorado City/County Management Association (CCMA), and in April of this year, was awarded the Colorado City Manager of the Year by members of that organization.

“I am very excited and honored to serve as the City Manager for Grand Junction with a stellar team of professional staff, with awesome local partners, a dedicated city council and an engaged community,” stated Mike Bennett. “Having worked in a neighboring town for the past 10 years, I am certainly aware of the challenges facing Grand Junction and many other communities in the western part of our state. Initially I plan to focus on learning about how those challenges impact this community and gain a better understanding of all that the city is doing to address them.”

"My first priority is to foster an environment of open communication, collaboration, and mutual respect with city council, staff and the community as we begin what I hope is a long and productive relationship. Grand Junction is an amazing city and I am proud to take on this leadership role and continue to help the city thrive," continued Bennett.

Grand Junction is a home rule municipality with a council/manager form of government. The city manager is the executive head of the city and is one of three direct reports to City Council. The city manager is hired by City Council to provide administrative leadership for the organization, direct and coordinate all city services, present information, and recommendations to the council, and implement policies and goals set by the City Council. The city manager is responsible for the day-to-day operations of city government. This includes managing city departments, implementing city policies, and ensuring that city services are delivered effectively and efficiently within the city's budget.

The city manager translates the council's directives into actionable plans and ensures that city operations align with the council's strategic plan and vision. The city manager is ultimately responsible for the city's budget and financial plans, and ensuring good stewardship of taxpayer dollars. The city manager provides advice and recommendations to the city council on various issues, including policy decisions, budgeting, and strategic planning. The city manager serves as a key advisor and provides expertise on city management matters. The city manager represents the city in building relationships with community partners and the public.

#