

DATE: August 3, 2026

TO: PublicComment@yville.com: To the Yountville Town Clerk for Yountville Town Council Members and Yountville Attorney

FROM: Jill Turner

SUBJECT: SEVERANCE PACKAGE OF THE FORMER TOWN MANAGER

Recent accusations from several sources have reminded me of this troubling question: Why did former Town Manager Brad Raulston receive a six-figure severance package when he was the one who quit?

Let's start with some facts – all of these in the public domain (see links below).

On June 6, 2023, Bradford Raulston was selected as Town Manager of the Town of Yountville, effective June 30, 2023. His generous [employment contract](#) featured an annual base salary of \$248,000; a minimum increase of 3% with a satisfactory performance evaluation after one year; health insurance; life insurance; retirement; administrative and vacation leaves; automobile allowance; a one-time relocation reimbursement of up to \$25,000; deferred compensation of \$30,000; and other benefits, stipends, expense reimbursements, leaves and paid expenses (pages 1-4, # 5-18).

On September 17, 2024, through the [First Amendment](#) to his employment contract (Resolution Number 24-4306), he was granted a \$24,800 performance bonus based on a successful performance review.

On July 15, 2025, the [Second Amendment](#) to his employment agreement established his new base salary of \$286,440. In addition, beginning in calendar year 2026 through calendar year 2030, following a successful, annual performance evaluation with a satisfactory rating or above, the Town Manager's annual base salary would increase by 5%, effective at the next payroll.

However, if the Town Manager were to be separated from his position, the [initial employment agreement](#) details several scenarios:

1: If he were to be terminated without cause (page 5, # 22), he would be entitled to a severance benefit of six months of the Town Manager's current base salary, plus payment of accumulated vacation leave.

2: If he were terminated with cause (pages 5-6, # 23), the Town has no obligation to provide any severance compensation, except for payment of the value of accrued vacation leave or other payments required by law.

3: If the Town Manager voluntarily terminates his employment, by resignation or retirement, at any time during the term of this Agreement, he would be subject to at least 30 days' written notice by the Town Manager to the Town, unless the Town Council and the Town Manager agree otherwise. "... In such case, Town shall have no further obligation to provide payments and benefits, including severance payments and benefits, upon the effective date of termination of employment, other than payment of accrued vacation leave or other payments required by law." (Page 6, # 25)

On April 30, 2026, Mr. Raulston [resigned from his position](#) of Yountville Town Manager for personal reasons, "... effective on Monday, August 31, 2026, with administrative leave until that date."

However, we have learned that, while Mr. Raulston resigned on April 30, 2026, he not only was put on administrative leave for four months (until August 31), but he was also given severance of six months – for a total of 10 months. A low estimate of this severance package of \$238,700 reflects only 10 months of his extant salary – not accrued vacation leave or other benefits. Moreover, this severance package was awarded despite the fact that the Town Manager was NOT terminated without cause, but, we are told, chose to resign.

We know that the majority of Town Council members approved of this rich resignation package, which would be signed by the Mayor. However, this seems on the surface a ridiculous amount for someone who QUIT. I would like to understand the reasoning of the Town Council members who voted for this payout, which on judgment may be around \$250,000 or more.

We Yountville taxpayers deserve to know how and why this came about. It is not the Town Council's money that was spent on this agreement, it is OUR money. We are owed an explanation.

It is not enough to hide under the cover of closed sessions. [Per the Brown Act](#) (page 42), "It is incumbent upon all those attending lawful closed sessions to protect the confidentiality of those discussions." While I am indifferent to these conversations per se, I do want to know why this severance package decision was made, since Mr. Raulston voluntarily terminated his employment – and why in this enormous amount?

Per the Brown Act (page 41, regarding settlement agreements that must be provided upon request), a California Public Records Act request can make the severance agreement between Mr. Raulston and the Town of Yountville available to all. Thus, with the public availability of that information, here are some specific questions:

1. If Mr. Raulston quit, why was he given this substantial severance package? What exactly is the Town Council's rationale? If there's a good reason, what is it?
2. In fact, since he quit, why did he receive anything at all, aside from accrued vacation leave? As mentioned above (# 3), his employment contract states: "...Town shall have no further obligation to provide payments and benefits, including severance payments and benefits, upon the effective date of termination of employment, other than payment of accrued vacation leave or other payments required by law."
3. Given the puzzling circumstances of this matter, did Mr. Raulston really quit – or was he terminated with (or without) cause? If the latter: a) Why were we told otherwise by the Town Council? and b) What are the ramifications of this untruth for us taxpayers who are footing the bill?
4. What was the total dollar amount of his severance package?
5. Has the severance package been paid out? All of it?
6. If not, is there any recourse to suspend the remaining payments and/or claw back any of these monies?

As a long-time YV resident and taxpayer, I believe these questions deserve answers. I am sure many other stakeholders do, too.

Please respond. Thank you.

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