



City of Morro Bay
595 Harbor Street
Morro Bay, CA 93442
(805) 772-6200
Online: www.morrobayca.gov

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Yvonne Kimball, City Manager

Email: ykimball@morrobayca.gov

December 2, 2024

Harbor Vitality Director Selected to Lead the City of Morro Bay's Harbor Department

New role emphasizes economic vitality in the harbor and embarcadero

Morro Bay, CA – The City of Morro Bay announces the appointment of Chris Munson as its new Harbor Vitality Director, bringing over 11 years of experience in harbor management and a proven track record of enhancing waterfront operations and community engagement. Chris will officially step into the role on December 3, 2024. He was chosen from a competitive pool of twenty-eight applicants, and after a rigorous selection process that consisted of several intensive interview panels with key city staff, a Harbor Advisor Board member, and the US Coast Guard.

Mr. Munson will be the first to hold the title of the Harbor Vitality Director, a role previously known as the “Harbor Director.” The new title reflects the ongoing City Council strategic goal of economic vitality while honoring traditional expectations of the role, explained City Manager Yvonne Kimball.

As the director for the Harbor Department, Mr. Munson will be charged with overseeing all aspects of the Department operations, including harbor patrol, safety and business activities; leading the management and negotiation of tideland leases to optimize property value and compliance, developing and executing long-term infrastructure and capital improvement plans; improving the economic vitality of the harbor, and fostering collaboration with federal, state and local agencies to align harbor initiatives with community goals.

Mr. Munson's extensive experience at Port San Luis Harbor District, highlights his ability to achieve these goals. In his previous role as Facilities Manager at Port San Luis Harbor District, he led transformative projects such as rehabilitating Avila and Harford Piers, developing the Flying Flags campground, replacing critical boating infrastructure, facilitating dredging, maintaining facilities for both recreational boating and commercial fishing uses. Additionally, Mr. Munson filled in as the Interim District Director during their absence. As a long-term leader for the District, Mr. Munson has led efforts to enhance departmental efficiency, securing over \$4 million in grant funding, reducing costs, and increasing revenue through management of lease sites.

Fire Chief Daniel McCrain has been serving as the interim Harbor Director and played a pivotal role in the selection process. “Chris was selected because he brings a diverse skillset and work experience to address the many challenges facing the harbor department. He has experience with grant management, capital project development, lease

management, and extensive experience working with regulatory agencies such as the Coastal Commission, and the US Army Corps of Engineers. He has demonstrated an ability to find creative solutions to address the concerns of different stakeholders to ensure the success of complicated projects. I believe Chris is just the right person to lead the harbor department at this important time,” said Chief McCrain.

City Manager Yvonne Kimball expressed her gratitude for Chief McCrain’s interim leadership while looking forward to Mr. Munson coming aboard. “I deeply appreciate Chief McCrain for stepping in as interim Harbor Director. He did a tremendous job and paved the path towards success with the Harbor,” said Ms. Kimball. “With the new Harbor Vitality Director, we look forward to the drive and the strategic economic vision that the City Council, the Community, and I have been focusing on, which I believe Mr. Munson is poised to implement and amplify. His experience in waterfront land use issues will serve the community well as we engage stake holders in critical dialogues surrounding the waterfront master plan update and tideland lease negotiations.”

“I’m committed to serving the community of Morro Bay and looking forward to engaging with the local community and businesses to support our waterfront. I’m honored to take on this new challenge and grateful for the trust of the community, the City Manager, the Fire Chief, and the devoted Harbor staff. I see an incredible opportunity in this position to contribute to the vitality of the waterfront and preserve its historical character,” said Chris Munson.

A long-time resident of San Luis Obispo County, Chris Munson first came to the area as a student at Cal Poly and has called the Central Coast home for over 25 years. He resides in Templeton with his spouse and three children, enjoying music, outdoor activities, and community involvement. The Harbor Department office is located at 1275 Embarcadero, Morro Bay, CA 93442. The Director can also be reached by phone at 805-772-6254.



#####