

Seaford 10/28/8.

Supervisors may relax CAO job requirements

SANTA CRUZ — If County Administrative Officer George Newell were a candidate for his job today, he might have an easier time being certified as qualified for the post.

County supervisors Tuesday tentatively adopted a revised ordinance on county administrative officer qualifications which removes the requirement that the chief administrator have five years experience in county, city or state government.

In place of this requirement, supervisors unanimously agreed to add the statement: "It is preferred the person have not less than five years of responsible managerial experience."

The amended ordinance will come up for final consideration next Tuesday. If approved then, it will go into effect in 30 days.

Newell had to work under the title of acting county administrator for three years when the county Civil Service Commission refused to certify him as qualified.

Going by the existing ordinance, commissioners believed Newell didn't have the required five years of governmental experience. They also had concerns about Newell's young age and about the way Newell was selected without any outside recruitment of candidates.

Last week, supervisors officially appointed the 37-year-old Newell as county

administrative officer after the Civil Service Commission voted 3-2 to certify him as qualified.

The deciding vote on the commission was cast by Commissioner Jack Samuelson who had refused in the past to vote for Newell's certification. Samuelson said that he believed Newell's three years of on-the-job experience qualified him for the post.

The commission sent a revised qualifications ordinance to supervisors. The ordinance tentatively passed Tuesday is similar to the one recommended by the

commission.

Supervisors removed the requirement from the commission's recommended ordinance that the county administrative officer have "five years of responsible managerial experience" and removed the commission's suggestion that this experience include "coordination of departmental functions for a moderate to large department."

The revised ordinance now simply states this experience shall include the "coordination of departmental functions."