

CITY OF SANTA ROSA
CITY COUNCIL

TO: MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
FROM: TERRI A. GRIFFIN, CITY CLERK
SUBJECT: PROTOCOL FOR ELECTION OF MAYOR

AGENDA ACTION: MOTION

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended by the City Clerk that the Council, by motion, (1) establish protocols for the election of Mayor; and (2) direct the City Clerk to incorporate the protocols into the Council's Manual of Protocols and Procedures for approval by the City Council.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

City Charter Section 15 requires the Council to select one of its member as Mayor at the meeting at which Council members are installed following a general or special municipal election or when there is vacancy in the office of Mayor. Section XII(C) of the Council's Manual of Procedures and Protocols establishes the procedure for election of the Mayor, wherein the Mayor calls for nominations from the floor. However, the Council's Manual of Procedures and Protocols does not establish a procedure for election of Mayor in the event there is no presiding officer present to call for nominations. This situation arose following the installation of newly-elected Council members on December 2, 2014. At that meeting, the Council voted to authorize the City Clerk to conduct the election for Mayor and accept nominations by a random draw of names.

On June 2, 2015, the Council directed staff to bring forward proposed written protocols for the election of Mayor in the event there is no sitting Mayor or Vice Mayor to conduct the election.

BACKGROUND

City Charter Section 15 requires the Council to select one of its member as Mayor at the meeting at which Council members are installed following a general or special municipal election or when there is vacancy in the office of Mayor. Section XII(C) of the Council's Manual of Procedures and Protocols establishes the following protocol for election of the Mayor:

“At the same meeting and immediately following the installation of newly-elected Councilmembers, the Mayor shall call for nominations from the floor for Mayor. The nomination must receive a second and be accepted by the nominee prior to a vote on the nomination. Nominations will be voted upon in the order made. Once a nomination receives a majority vote of Councilmembers present, no further action will be taken on subsequent nominations. The Mayor shall then pass the gavel to the newly-elected Mayor, who shall assume the role of Presiding Officer. Immediately following election of the Mayor, the same procedure shall be followed for election of the Vice Mayor.”

The Council's protocol for election of the Mayor does not outline a process for conducting the election for Mayor in the absence of a presiding officer, as was the case following the November 4, 2014, election.

On December 2, 2014, the Council directed the City Clerk to conduct the election and accept nominations for Mayor from the floor in the order determined by a random draw of Council Member names.

PRIOR CITY COUNCIL REVIEW

On May 12, 2015, Vice Mayor Coursey requested a future agenda item to discuss development of a written policy for election of a Mayor in the event there is no sitting Mayor or Vice Mayor. Council Member Combs concurred with the request.

On June 2, 2015, the Council by unanimous vote (Mayor Sawyer absent) directed staff to bring forward proposed written protocols for the election of Mayor in the event there is no sitting Mayor or Vice Mayor to conduct the election.

ANALYSIS

Following certification of the 2014 election results and installation of the newly-elected Council members, then Mayor Bartley, Vice Mayor Swinth, and Council Member Ours stepped down from the dais as departing Council Members. As a result, no presiding officer remained on the Council to conduct the election of Mayor. After discussion by the Council as to how the election for Mayor should proceed in the absence of a presiding officer, the City Clerk was authorized to conduct the election and accept nominations from the floor in the order determined by a random draw of Council Member names. Council Members then voted on the nominations in the order received in accordance with the Council's Manual of Procedures and Protocols.

To avoid future uncertainty regarding the process for the election of Mayor in the absence of a presiding officer, Council has directed staff to bring forward proposed written protocols for election of the Mayor in the absence of a presiding officer on the Council. Following Council's direction to place this matter on a future agenda, the City Clerk conducted a poll of other cities to ascertain other processes used for the election of a mayor. Based on this research, the City Clerk has provided options for the

Council's consideration as outlined below. Options are presented for both portions of the process: (1) acceptance of nominations; and (2) voting on the nominations.

Acceptance of Nominations	
Current Protocol	The incumbent Mayor or Vice Mayor in the absence of the Mayor calls for nominations from the floor for Mayor. The nomination must receive a second and be accepted by the nominee prior to a vote on the nomination.
Option 1	Same as current protocol. In the absence of an incumbent Mayor or Vice Mayor, the Council Member with the longest period of continuous service will function as presiding officer for the election of Mayor. If there are two or more members of equal length of service, a drawing conducted by the City Clerk prior to the meeting will be used to determine the presiding officer.
Option 2	Same as Option 1 except the highest number of electorate votes received will determine the presiding officer if there are two or more members of equal length of service.

Council may also wish to consider an alternate method of voting that mirrors the ballot process used by Council when there are multiple applicants seeking appointment to a City board or commission. The voting process would apply to the election of Mayor and Vice Mayor.

Voting on Nominations	
Current Protocol	Nominations are voted on in the order received. Once a nomination receives a majority vote of Council Members present, no further action is taken on subsequent nominations.
Option 1	If there is more than one nomination, Council will vote by ballot using the same process employed for voting on board and commission applicants.

FISCAL IMPACT

Not applicable.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

This action is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) because it is not a project which has a potential for resulting in either a direct physical change in the environment, or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment, pursuant to CEQA Guideline section 15378

BOARD/COMMISSION/COMMITTEE REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Not applicable.

NOTIFICATION

Not applicable.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1 – Santa Rosa Charter Section 15 (Mayor)
- Attachment 2 – Council Manual of Procedures and Protocols Section XII(C) (Mayor and Vice Mayor: Election)
- Attachment 3 – Section H(3) of Council Policy 000-06, Appointments to Boards / Commissions / Committees

CONTACT

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