

CITY OF SANTA ROSA
CITY COUNCIL

TO: MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
FROM: TERESA STRICKER, CITY ATTORNEY
CITY ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
SUBJECT: ELECTION OF VICE MAYOR

AGENDA ACTION: MOTION

RECOMMENDATION

The City Attorney and City Clerk recommend that the Council elect a Vice Mayor in accordance with Section 15 of the Santa Rosa City Charter and Section XII of the City Council Manual of Procedures and Protocols. This item has no impact on current fiscal year budget.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Santa Rosa City Charter Section 15 requires the Council, at the time it selects a Mayor and November in each odd-numbered year, to select one of its members as Vice Mayor, who shall serve as Mayor Pro Tem in the absence of the Mayor. The Vice Mayor serves for a term of one year. The City Council Manual of Procedures and Protocols describes the process for election of the Vice Mayor, which is outlined below for reference.

GOAL

Although this item is not directly tied to a Council goal, it is required by Charter.

BACKGROUND/PRIOR COUNCIL REVIEW

On September 9, 2025, the City Council held a study session to discuss and provide direction to staff about possible changes to current Council policies related to voting processes Council uses to appoint (1) individuals to vacant Council seats outside of an election cycle, (2) members of certain boards, commissions and committees, and (3) Mayor and Vice Mayor.

On October 21, 2025, Council, by Resolution RES-2025-173, approved revisions to the City Council Manual of Procedures and Protocols with revisions to section XII Mayor and Vice Mayor: Election/Responsibility. The new provisions are now in place and will be used for the election of Vice Mayor.

ANALYSIS

1. Current Process for Appointment of Vice Mayor

Section XII of the City Council Manual of Procedures and Protocols provides the following process for the election of Mayor and dictates that the same process be used for the election of the Vice Mayor:

Nomination:

- a. The Presiding Officer shall call for nominations from the floor.
- b. Each nomination must receive a second and be accepted by the nominee prior to a vote on the nomination for the nomination to be valid.
- c. Each Councilmember may nominate or second the nomination of only one Councilmember, but may not both nominate and second a nomination.
- d. No Councilmember may nominate themselves but any Councilmember may second a nomination for themselves provided that Councilmember has not already nominated or seconded the nomination of another Councilmember and that nomination is determined to be valid.
- e. If a nomination is determined to be invalid, the nominator and seconder of that nomination may make another nomination or second another nomination.
- f. Application of these rules means that, for Santa Rosa's seven-member City Council, a maximum of three nominees will successfully move to the voting round.
- g. After all nominations, seconds and acceptances are received, the Presiding Officer closes nominations.

Selection Process When There is Only One Valid Nomination:

If there is only one valid nomination, the Presiding Officer shall declare that individual to be elected by unanimous consent.

Selection Process When There is More Than One Valid Nomination:

- a. Each Councilmember shall cast one vote by written ballot for one of the valid nominees. Votes cast for any other person shall be deemed invalid. For transparency purposes, the Clerk shall read ballots aloud after all votes are cast for each round of voting.
Once a valid nominee receives a majority vote of the full Council, the Presiding Officer shall declare that individual to be elected.
- b. If no valid nominee receives a majority vote, then the following rules shall be used:
 - i. **Elimination and Revote:** Nominees receiving zero votes shall be eliminated unless doing so would result in only one valid nominee remaining. If there were no nominees receiving zero votes, then nominees receiving only one vote shall be eliminated unless doing so would result in only one valid nominee remaining. If any nominee is eliminated, then Council votes by written ballot again as set forth in subsection (4)(b).

- ii. **Run-Off Vote**: If there is a 3/2/2, 3/1/1, or 2/1/1 vote, then a run-off vote shall be used to eliminate one of the two valid nominees tied with the lowest votes. The run-off vote shall be by written ballot using the process described in subsection (4)(b). Following elimination of one nominee by run-off vote, the Council shall vote again using the process in subsection (4)(b) to select one of the two remaining valid nominees.
- iii. **Circumstance Where There Is No Other Rule for Moving Forward**: If there is a completely tied vote (e.g. 3/3; 2/2; or 2/2/2), or some other circumstance for which there is no other established process for Council to move forward, then Council shall discuss and consider one of the following options:
 - Take another vote by written ballot as set forth in subsection (4)(b); or
 - Decide, by motion, with at least four affirmative votes, to use the designated random selection process of drawing names (e.g. writing the names of remaining valid nominees on slips of paper and picking one at random out of a hat).

FISCAL IMPACT

Approval of this action does not have a fiscal impact on the General Fund.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15378, the recommended action is not a “project” subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) because it does not have a potential for resulting in either a direct physical change in the environment or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment. In the alternative, the recommended action is exempt from CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15061(b)(3) because it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the recommended action may have a significant effect on the environment.

BOARD/COMMISSION/COMMITTEE REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Not applicable.

NOTIFICATION

Not applicable.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1 – City Council Manual of Procedures and Protocols

PRESENTER(S)

Teresa Stricker, City Attorney
Dina Manis, City Clerk