



City Charter Amendments

City Charter Subcommittee:
Mayor Pro Tempore Orozco
Council Member Salcido
Council Member Dutra

June 25, 2024

Timeline

In order to place a measure on the ballot for the November 2024 Election, Council must complete the Charter Amendment Process by August 2024. Staff recommends completion of the process prior to July 2024 to provide adequate time for submitting the measure to the County.

PROPOSED TIMELINE		
February 13, 2024	First Public Hearing	Complete
March 26, 2024	Second Public Hearing (at least 30 days from 1st hearing)	Complete
April 23, 2024	Public Meeting (at least 21 days after 2nd hearing)	City Council provided direction to staff on preparation of ballot question(s)
June 25, 2024	Placement of Measure(s) on Ballot	City Council approves resolution(s) placing measure(s) on the November 5, 2024, ballot

COUNCIL DIRECTION

On April 23, 2024, the City Council considered Proposed City Charter Amendments.

Staff was directed to make the following revisions to the proposed ballot questions:

Measure #1: Rearrange the order of the language and place “clarify staff positions” and “update qualifications and duties of the City Manager” at the beginning of the ballot question.

Measure #2: Change the term “qualified elector” to “registered voter.”

PROPOSED BALLOT QUESTIONS

- 1) **Measure #1: Shall the measure amending the Charter of the City of Watsonville to clarify staff positions and references to City regulations, clarify requirements regarding ordinance publication and hiring attorneys, update qualifications and duties of City Manager, modify Council meeting requirements, allow the Council to set compensation for Planning Commissioners, make the Library Board a Commission, allow Councilmembers to receive employment benefits, adjust the Mayor's salary, and remove or revise provisions to be consistent with current law be adopted?**
- 2) **Measure # 2: Shall the measure amending the Charter of the City of Watsonville to modify the eligibility requirement for appointment to the Parks and Recreation Commission and the Board of Library Trustees from registered voter to resident of the City of Watsonville be adopted?**

PROPOSED ADDITIONAL CHARTER AMENDMENT

After the April 23, 2024, meeting, the Public Works Department presented an additional amendment to Charter Section 1117 to clarify the publication requirement for bids.

Proposed change:

Section 1117 – Public Bid Requirements.

Replace requirement that bids be published in the “official newspaper” with requirement that bids be published in “a newspaper of general circulation in the City or in accordance with State law when such a newspaper does not exist”.

Recommendation #1:

Approve Resolution Submitting a Ballot Measure to the Voters to Amend the City of Watsonville Charter to Clarify Staff Positions & References to City Regulations, Clarify Requirements Regarding Ordinance Publication & Hiring Attorneys, Update Qualifications & Duties of City Manager, Modify Council Meeting Requirements, Allow the Council to Set Compensation for Planning Commissioners, Make the Board of Library Trustees a Commission, Allow Council Members to Receive Employment Benefits, Adjust the Mayor's Salary, & Remove or Revise Provisions to be Consistent with Current Law; Ordering an Election; Requesting the Santa Cruz County Elections Department Conduct the Election & Consolidate it with the General Statewide Election to be Held on November 5, 2024

Proposed Changes

Charter Section	Summary of Changes
Section 405 - Compensation	Allow Councilmembers to receive employment benefits in addition to salary.
Section 408 – Meetings of the Council	Allow Council to hold 1 regular or special meeting per month, rather than requiring council to hold 1 regular meeting each month.
Section 409 – Participation	Strike the word “citizen” from provision regarding participation in Council meetings.
Section 502 - Salary	Mayor to receive 25% more in salary than remainder of Council.
Section 607 – Publication of Ordinances	Update language to allow publication in any newspaper or as permitted by State Law.
Section 700 – City Manager	Modify qualifications for City Manager candidates.

Proposed Changes Continued

Charter Section	Summary of Changes
Section 703 – City Manager Powers and Duties	Include requirement to meet with Council Members and assign role of City Emergency Operations Center (EOC) Director.
Section 804 – City Attorney Powers and Duties	Clarify City’s abilities to hire additional attorneys.
Section 900 - Commissions	Remove reference to Commissions and make Library Board a Commission. General cleanup of language.
Section 905 – Planning Commission Compensation	Grant Council the ability to consider compensation for Planning Commissioners.
Section 910 – Board of Library Trustees	Change Library Board to a Commission.

Proposed Changes Continued

Charter Section	Summary of Changes
Section 1001 – Competitive and General Service	Clarify General Service staff positions.
Section 1002 – Personnel Rules and Regulations	Deleted due to lack of relevance.
Section 1004 – Suspension, Demotion, and Dismissal	Add reference to City Rules and Regulations.
Section 1106 – Tax Levy	Delete due to lack of relevance.
Section 1113 – Funds: Capital Outlays Fund	Remove non-enforceable language.
Section 1117 – Public Bid Requirements.	Replace requirement that bids be published in the “official newspaper” with requirement that bids be published in “a newspaper of general circulation in the City or in accordance with State law when such a newspaper does not exist”.

Proposed Changes Continued

Charter Section	Summary of Changes
Section 1118 – Contracts for Official Advertising	Remove entire section as it is unnecessary and impractical.
Section 1122 – Tax Limits	Remove Section 1122 (a) and Section 1122(b)(1) as not authorized post Proposition 13.
Section 1202 – Franchise Terms, Condition, and Procedures	Remove requirement to establish general terms and conditions for franchises through ordinance and instead consider franchises individually.
Section 1504 – Violations	Replace “shall” with “may” to allow flexibility in imposing violations.
Section 1506 – Publicity of Records	Include language to refer to State policy regarding public records requests.

Recommendation #2

Approve Resolution Submitting a Ballot Measure to the Voters to Amend the City of Watsonville Charter to Remove Voter Registration Requirements for Service on the Board of Library Trustees & the Parks & Recreation Commission; Ordering an Election; Requesting the Santa Cruz County Elections Department Conduct the Election & Consolidate it with the General Statewide Election to be Held on November 5, 2024

Charter Section	Summary of Changes
Section 900 - Commissions	Create a ballot question to allow residents not registered to vote to be appointed to Board of Library Trustees and Parks and Recreation Commission.

Ballot Arguments

- The voter information guide includes the ballot question, an argument in favor, argument against, and rebuttal arguments to both.
- Up to five individuals or organizations may sign each argument.
- Maximum 300 words.
- Who may draft the argument:
 - Council, or individual Councilmembers authorized by the Council, may draft.
 - A voter, group of voters, or association may draft. If so, they submit arguments to the Clerk, who selects the argument that will appear on the ballot using this priority:
 - The City Council, or authorized members of the Council;
 - The voter or association who are sponsors or proponents of the measure;
 - Bona fide associations of citizens;
 - Individual voters who are eligible to vote on the measure.

Rebuttal Arguments

- **The Clerk sends a copy of the argument in favor and argument against to the authors of each.**
- **The author may prepare and submit a rebuttal argument, or authorize another person (in writing) to submit the rebuttal argument.**
- **Maximum 300 words.**
- **May be signed by up to five persons or organizations.**
- **If the Council drafts the argument in favor of the measure, the Council may (at tonight's meeting) "release" the ability to draft the rebuttal argument to the public.**

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