

Agenda Report



MEETING DATE: Tuesday, January 14, 2025

TO: CITY COUNCIL

FROM: CITY CLERK ORTIZ

SUBJECT: COMMISSION VACANCY APPLICATION PROCESS

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Approve a resolution establishing a process for acceptance/review of applications for City Commissions.

BACKGROUND:

In 2024, the City Council placed a measure on the November 5, 2024, General Municipal Election to amend the Charter to allow residents of Watsonville who are not registered to vote the opportunity be appointed to City commissions. The Measure (Measure V) passed by a majority vote, paving the way for City residents to be considered for appointment to all City commissions without the need to register to vote. City Charter Section 900 now states:

“SECTION 900. Commissions: Intents and Purposes.

Except as otherwise provided in this Article, the appointive commissions established by or pursuant to this Charter are intended to serve as advisory bodies to the Council and the City Manager in carrying out their respective duties. Membership on such bodies shall be representative of the entire community insofar as that is possible, and members on such commissions shall be willing to serve as a civic responsibility. No member of any advisory commission shall hold any paid office or employment in the City Government. In order to be eligible for appointment to any commission, a person shall be a resident of the City...”

Prior to this change, the City Clerk verified applicant addresses by contacting the County Clerk to make sure the applicant was a registered voter for the City of Watsonville.

Some of the Council expressed concerns with removal of the registered-voter requisite as it could lead to challenges in verifying that applicants were truly residents of Watsonville. As a result, the City Clerk would return to the City Council for direction on how to proceed with acceptance/verification of applications.

DISCUSSION:

City Clerk Ortiz surveyed many cities in California on their process for verifying an applicant’s address. We received 14 responses, and the majority of cities did not request

backup documentation or proof of residency when accepting applications. In most cases, cities had the applicant sign an affidavit affirming that they live within City limits.

Staff seeks direction from the Council on the verification of residency of applicants. The Council could choose any or a combination of the following:

1. Do not require proof of residency or a signed affidavit
2. Require a signed affidavit of residency
3. Require proof of residency:
 - a. Proof of Registered Voter Status
 - b. Provide a driver's license or State issued Identification
 - c. Property Tax Receipt
 - d. Utility Bills (electricity, water, gas)
 - e. Cable or Telephone Bill

STRATEGIC PLAN:

This project supports Strategic Plan Goal:
5-Community Engagement & Well-Being
7-Efficient & High Performing Government

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

None

ALTERNATIVE ACTION:

Do not implement a policy and direct City Clerk on how to accept/review applications.

ATTACHMENTS AND/OR REFERENCES:

- 1) Verification of Residency Poll