

CITY OF PALM DESERT STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: March 28, 2024

PREPARED BY: Anthony J. Mejia, City Clerk

REQUEST: RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING PROCEDURES FOR THE SELECTION
OF THE MAYOR AND MAYOR PRO TEM

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt a Resolution entitled "A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PALM DESERT, CALIFORNIA, ESTABLISHING PROCEDURES FOR THE SELECTION OF THE MAYOR AND MAYOR PRO TEM."

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS:

On September 30, 2021, the City Council adopted Resolution No. 2021-61 establishing a policy for the selection of the Mayor and Mayor Pro Tem. This resolution established a seniority-based selection process with provisions addressing situations in which two or more members in the same district are sworn into office on the same day as well as when two or more members are sworn into office on the same day from different districts. These provisions no longer apply to a five-district electoral system; therefore, it is necessary to establish new procedures.

On February 15, 2024, the City Council confirmed the appointment of Mayor Pro Tem Harnik and Mayor Quintanilla to a City Council Ad Hoc Committee on the selection procedures for the Mayor and Mayor Pro Tem.

On March 11, 2024, the Ad Hoc Committee met with City staff to discuss potential options for the selection of the Mayor and Mayor Pro Tem. The Committee reviewed methods for selecting a Mayor and Mayor Pro Tem and has recommended adoption of the attached Resolution establishing a district-based rotation process.

Procedure Highlights:

- In December 2024, the Mayor Pro Tem shall succeed to the position of Mayor and the longest serving Councilmember, without having previously served as Mayor, shall be Mayor Pro Tem.
- In December 2025, the Mayor Pro Tem shall succeed to the position of Mayor. To commence a district-based rotation, the Councilmember representing District 3 shall be appointed Mayor Pro Tem.
 - District 3 was selected to commence the district-based rotation because Karina Quintanilla, representing District 1, and Jan Harnik, residing in District 2, were the immediately preceding Mayors and Districts 4 and 5 have not yet been elected.
- In December 2026 and thereafter, the Mayor Pro Tem shall succeed to the position of Mayor and the Councilmember representing the next sequential district shall be appointed Mayor Pro Tem.

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 Resolution – Selection of Mayor and Mayor Pro Tem

- A Councilmember shall not serve as Mayor during their first year on the City Council.
- The City Council by four-fifths (4/5th) vote may remove the Mayor or Mayor Pro Tem.

Furthermore, this policy includes provisions addressing situations in which the current Mayor Pro Tem is not re-elected, a Councilmember would be serving as Mayor during their first year, resignation or inability to serve as Mayor or Mayor Pro Tem, partial terms, and declining to serve. If these procedures result in no Councilmember being eligible to fill either position, then the City Council may vote anyone of its members to serve in an open nomination process.

Chart 1: Forecast of Mayor and Mayor Pro Tem Appointments

| | Mayor | Mayor Pro Tem |
|----------|-------------------------------|----------------------|
| Nov-2024 | Election: Districts 1, 2, & 3 | |
| Dec-2024 | Harnik | Trubee |
| Dec-2025 | Trubee | District 3 |
| Nov-2026 | Election: Districts 4 & 5 | |
| Dec-2026 | District 3 | District 4 |
| Dec-2027 | District 4 | District 5 |
| Nov-2028 | Election: Districts 1, 2, & 3 | |
| Dec-2028 | District 5 | District 1 |
| Dec-2029 | District 1 | District 2 |
| Nov-2030 | Election: Districts 4 & 5 | |
| Dec-2030 | District 2 | District 3 |
| Dec-2031 | District 3 | District 4 |
| Nov-2032 | Election: Districts 1, 2, & 3 | |
| Dec-2032 | District 4 | District 5 |
| Dec-2033 | District 5 | District 1 |
| Nov-2034 | Election: Districts 4 & 5 | |
| Dec-2034 | District 1 | District 2 |
| Dec-2035 | District 2 | District 3 |
| Nov-2036 | Election: Districts 1, 2, & 3 | |
| Dec-2036 | District 3 | District 4 |
| Dec-2037 | District 4 | District 5 |

Alternative Models:

Seniority Based Rotation: Alternatively, the City Council could choose to select the Mayor and Mayor Pro Tem based on a seniority rotation and below listed are the procedural highlights:

- A Councilmember must have one or two years of service on the City Council before being eligible for service as Mayor and/or Mayor Pro Tem.
- The Mayor and Mayor Pro Tem shall be the most senior Councilmembers, who have not yet served or have not served in the role for the longest period.
- If two or more Councilmembers have the same number of years on City Council, a tie shall be determined by the number of votes received at the last election or coin toss.

Open Nominations: Multiple cities select a Mayor and Mayor Pro Tem utilizing a traditional nomination and voting procedure. Usually, these cities utilize an informal seniority-based system, such as the next senior member that has not yet served as Mayor Pro Tem and Mayor or have not served in the role for the longest period.

Legal Review:

This report has been reviewed by the City Attorney's office.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact associated with the action.

ATTACHMENT:

1. Draft Resolution