

CITY OF PALM DESERT STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: July 10, 2025

PREPARED BY: Anthony J. Mejia, City Clerk

SUBJECT: INTRODUCTION OF AN AMENDING PALM DESERT MUNICIPAL CODE
SECTION 2.34.050 RELATED TO ADVISORY BODY OFFICERS

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Introduce an ordinance entitled, "AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PALM DESERT, CALIFORNIA, AMENDING PALM DESERT MUNICIPAL CODE SECTION 2.34.050 RELATED TO ADVISORY BODY OFFICERS."
2. Direct the City Clerk to immediately implement the policy establishing an annual rotation of advisory body chairperson and vice chairperson positions using a numeric seat-based system.

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS:

At its meeting of June 26, 2025, the City Council introduced an ordinance amending Palm Desert Municipal Code Section 2.34.050 to require annual rotation of advisory body Chair and Vice Chair positions. The intent of this change is to ensure broader participation in leadership roles

Since introduction of the ordinance, the City Council Subcommittee has expressed support for establishing a clear and equitable process to implement the policy. In reviewing current practices, it became apparent that allowing a member to serve consecutively in different officer roles (for example, serving as Chair and then as Vice Chair the following year) could result in effectively holding the Chair position in back-to-back years. To promote transparency and avoid this outcome, staff was asked to develop a rotation framework that would provide clarity and consistency for all advisory bodies.

Staff considered adopting a seniority-based model similar to the system used by the City Council. However, this approach would require tracking each member's prior service history, maintaining a queue of deferred appointments, and applying tie-breakers on a recurring basis. Due to these complexities, staff does not recommend the seniority model.

Instead, staff recommends implementing a numeric seat-based rotation system that assigns each member a seat number and uses this sequence to establish the annual rotation schedule. This system is straightforward to administer and ensures that all members have an equal and predictable opportunity to serve in officer positions.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDED SYSTEM:

- Staff will assign numbered seats to members (Seat 1–Seat 7), with the current Chair designated as Seat 7 (end of the rotation) and the current Vice Chair designated as Seat 1 (start of the rotation). All remaining members will be assigned seat numbers in alphabetical order.

- Each seat will have a predetermined schedule for rotating into the Chair role in sequential order (e.g., Seat 1 in July 2025, Seat 2 in July 2026, Seat 3 in July 2027).
- The member occupying a given seat inherits that seat's scheduled turn.
- If a member is in their first year of service when their seat's scheduled turn occurs, their appointment will be deferred to the end of the rotation sequence, and the next eligible seat will advance.
- Members may serve as Vice Chair in any year, regardless of their length of service.
- Members may defer serving as Chair or Vice Chair when their scheduled turn occurs; in such cases, their appointment will be moved to the end of the rotation sequence.

If the City Council concurs, staff recommends immediate implementation to ensure consistency for advisory body meetings occurring prior to the ordinance's effective date.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

There is no financial impact associated with this action.

ATTACHMENT:

1. Draft Ordinance