



## CITY COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

**Meeting Date:** March 21, 2024

**From:** Clay Holstine, City Manager

**Subject:** Report back from Council Subcommittee evaluating various Election Issues

### COMMUNITY GOAL RESULTS

Community Building

#### Purpose

The purpose of this agenda item is to get a sense of the City Council so that we can have as much clarity as possible on next steps as well as determine Councilmembers' ideas and concerns.

#### Recommendation

City Council review and discuss election issues and seek guidance from the City Attorney.

#### Background

The City Council appointed a subcommittee of Davis and Lentz to review three election issues.

- Term Limits for Councilmembers
- District Elections for City Council races
- Directly elected Mayor.

The Subcommittee met and reviewed these items and discussed next steps. City Council has had a policy that if an issue is taking more than two hours of staff and/consultant resources an estimate of potential staff time and consultant cost be brought back to the Council as Whole for discussion.

At our meeting we discussed the need to do the following:

- Have the City Clerk review **term limits** in other cities in San Mateo County and compile an analysis. Staff believes this may take up to 10 hours of time as responses from various cities often require follow-up to clarify data and input. Term limits must be approved by the voters.
- **District Elections** is a complicated issue requiring the use of outside subject matter experts. An inquiry was made by a firm that conducted a study of the Town of Woodside. Step 1 of the process includes developing a Demographic Analysis that would include total population and voting population by counts of race and ethnicity. Step 2 would be an analysis of feasibility of drawing one or more majority-minority

districts. This analysis may be complicated by the fact that Brisbane has only one census tract. Data will have to be teased out. This analysis would then provide information as to whether the Council wants to continue to evaluate different District options. Step 1 would cost \$6,500. Step 2 would cost approximately \$ 12,500. Additional cost for publicizing and community engagement would be on top of this cost. Staff oversight of the consultant is anticipated to take upwards of 20 hours for Step 1.

- **Directly elected Mayor.** A directly elected mayor is an option for California General Law cities like Brisbane. Whether to pursue this is a question for the City Council. Brisbane voters must approve of having the mayor directly elected.

## **Discussion**

City Council review and discuss above information and seek guidance from the City Attorney, specifically on the following questions:

- What is the legal framework and issues related to Term limits.
- What is the legal framework and issues related to District Elections.
- What is the responsibility and authority of an elected Mayor contrasted with the responsibilities and authority of a Mayor selected by members of the City Council? Does having an elected Mayor alter the responsibilities and authority of the City Manager?

It is anticipated that each of these items will take no more than five hours of legal research and analysis, probably less.

After the City Council reviews and discussion there are several potential next steps. The Council could do any of the following:

- Direct staff to move forward with one or more of the three items or request additional information. Additional information could be brought back to the Council as Whole or sent to the Subcommittee.
- Council could set a Workshop to focus on one or more of these issues.

## **Fiscal Impact**

It's important to note that elections costs are difficult to estimate since no two elections are alike with costs and the number of registered voters vary considerably from election to election. Cost estimates can also vary based on the number of jurisdictions participating in an election. The estimated cost to place 1 ballot on an even-year election is between \$19,000 to \$27,000.

*Clay Holstine*

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Clayton Holstine, Interim City Manager