



STAFF REPORT	
SUBJECT: Discussion on Transitioning the City Treasurer From an Elected to an Appointed Position Via a November 2026 Ballot Measure	MEETING DATE: February 19, 2026
SUBMITTED BY: Melissa Swanson, Administrative Services Director/City Clerk	
PURPOSE OF REPORT: <input type="checkbox"/> Information only <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Discussion <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Action Item	

WHAT IS BEING ASKED OF THE CITY COUNCIL/BOARD:

It is recommended that the City Council discuss the potential transition of the City Treasurer position from an elected to an appointed office and provide direction to staff on whether to proceed with a ballot measure for the November 2026 General Election.

BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION:

Currently, the City of Clearlake maintains the City Treasurer as an elected position (Clearlake Municipal Code Section 2-5), as established by the California Government Code for general law cities (see attached Government Code Sections 41001 – 41007). In recent years, many California municipalities have moved toward appointing their Treasurers to ensure that the individual managing public funds possesses specific professional qualifications, certifications, and technical expertise.

Since 2006, the City Manager has served as Treasurer due to a lack of qualified candidates after the last elected Treasurer retired. City Manager Flora currently oversees the daily financial operations and the Finance Department, and has delegated Treasurer duties to the Finance Director. Transitioning the Treasurer to an appointed position would allow for a more streamlined integration of financial reporting and investment management under the City’s professional administrative structure.

The primary considerations for this transition include:

- **Professional Qualifications:** Elected candidates are only required to be registered voters and residents of the City. An appointed Treasurer can be required to hold a degree in finance, accounting, or public administration, and possess relevant experience in municipal investment strategies.
- **Operational Efficiency:** Under an appointed model, the City Manager can ensure the Treasurer’s activities are fully aligned with the City's long-term financial goals and internal audit controls.
- **Cost and Recruitment:** If no residents run for the elected office, the City must often appoint a qualified individual anyway, or the seat remains vacant, creating administrative hurdles.

To change an elected office to an appointed one, the City must follow the process outlined in California Government Code Section 36508 (see attached). This requires:

1. **Council Action:** The Council must vote on an ordinance to submit the question to the voters via ballot measure.
2. **Voter Approval:** The ballot measure must be passed by a simple majority of Clearlake voters during a municipal election.
3. **Timing:** If approved, the change typically takes effect at the end of the current incumbent's term. In this case, the current term ends November 3, 2026.

There is no immediate fiscal impact for the discussion. If the Council directs staff to move forward, there will be costs associated with placing a measure on the November 2026 ballot, including election services and legal fees for drafting the impartial analysis. In the long term, an appointed position may involve a salary adjustment commensurate with professional requirements, though this is often offset by increased operational oversight and reduced risk.

OPTIONS:

1. Direct staff to draft an ordinance submitting a ballot measure to Clearlake voters in November 2026 to determine if the City Treasurer position shall be changed from elective to appointive.
2. Other direction.

FISCAL IMPACT:

None \$ Budgeted Item? Yes No

Budget Adjustment Needed? Yes No If yes, amount of appropriation increase: \$

Affected fund(s): General Fund Measure P Fund Measure V Fund Other:

Comments:

STRATEGIC PLAN IMPACT:

- Goal #1: Economic Development
- Goal #2: Public Facilities and Infrastructure
- Goal #3: Celebrate Clearlake
- Goal #4: Clean
- Goal #5: Fiscal Sustainability
- Goal #6: Safe

SUGGESTED MOTIONS:

Move to direct staff to draft an ordinance submitting a ballot measure to Clearlake voters in November 2026 to determine if the City Treasurer position shall be changed from elective to appointive.

Attachments: 1) Clearlake Municipal Code Section 2-5 City Treasurer

- 2) Government Code Section 41,001 - 41007
- 3) Government Code Section 36501 - 36510