



MEMORANDUM

TO: Hon. Mayor and Board of Commissioners

VIA: Mike Helfrich, City Manager

FROM: Clara VanBlargan, City Clerk

DATE: July 30, 2026

SUBJECT: Ordinance 2026-07, Charter Amendments Relating to Municipal Election Dates, Candidate Qualifying Periods, Term Transition Provisions, and Referendum Questions – 2nd Reading & Public Hearing

BACKGROUND

The Board of Commissioners approved Ordinance 2026-07 following first reading and public hearing on July 8, 2026.

Proposed Ordinance 2026-07, places charter amendments on the November 3, 2026 Municipal General Election Ballot relating to Municipal Election Dates, Candidate Qualifying Periods, Term Transition Provisions, and Referendum Questions.

The City Charter currently provides that municipal elections be held on the first Tuesday after the second Monday in March, with candidate qualifying occurring during the first two full weeks of December, excluding weekends. The proposed amendments would:

- Change the municipal election date from March to November to align with the State General Election.
- Change the candidate qualifying period from the first two full weeks of December to the first two full weeks of June.
- Clarify that terms of office commence following election certification and installation.
- Modify induction procedures to ensure consistency with the revised election schedule.
- Establish transitional term extensions necessary to convert from the March election cycle to a November election cycle.

In order to implement the transition from March municipal elections to November municipal general elections the terms of office for Commissioner District 1, Commissioner District 2, and Mayor-Commissioner scheduled to expire in March 2028 shall instead expire upon certification of the November 2028 municipal general election results and installation of successors. In order to

continue the staggered election cycle the terms of office for Commissioner District 3 and Commissioner District 4 scheduled to expire in March 2027 shall instead expire upon certification of the November 2027 municipal general election results and installation of successors.

The ordinance further provides that these temporary extensions shall not be treated as additional terms for purposes of the City's consecutive-term limit provisions.

VOTER PARTICIPATION ANALYSIS AND COST COMPARISON

Year	March Municipal Election	November General Election	Notes
2017	March 14, 2017 — 42.8% turnout	November 7, 2017 — 22.8% turnout	
2018	March 13, 2018 — 36.3% turnout	November 6, 2018 — 69.0% turnout	
2019	March 12, 2019 — 36.7% turnout	November 5, 2019 — November municipal elections only	March election ballot included 11 Madeira Beach Charter Amendments.
2020	March 17, 2020 — 42.1% turnout	November 3, 2020 — 80.0% turnout	March election held with Presidential Preference Primary; November ballot included 6 Madeira Beach Charter Amendments.
2021	March 9, 2021 — No election	November 2, 2021 — November municipal elections only	
2022	March 15, 2022 — 31.4% turnout	November 8, 2022 — 66.0% turnout	March election ballot included 3 Madeira Beach Charter Amendments and 1 referendum; November ballot included 2 Madeira Beach Charter Amendments.
2023	March 14, 2023 — 31.6% turnout	November 7, 2023 — November municipal elections only	March election ballot included 2 Madeira Beach Charter Amendments.
2024	March 19, 2024 — 23.9% turnout	November 5, 2024 — 79.4% turnout	
2025	March 11, 2025 — No election	November 4, 2025 — November municipal elections only	
2026	March 10, 2026 — 21.7% turnout	Not yet available	

The comparison directly illustrates the policy question before the voters: whether local elections should be held during a low-turnout stand-alone municipal cycle or during a high-turnout November general election cycle.

In addition to increased voter participation, holding municipal elections alongside the November General Election may yield administrative efficiencies and cost savings. The City would benefit from shared election infrastructure, including polling locations, election workers, voting equipment, ballot tabulation systems, vote-by-mail processing, and election administration services already used for countywide and statewide elections.

FISCAL IMPACT

Costs for public hearing advertising and for placing the referendum questions on an upcoming ballot will be included in the City's election administration budget.

LEGAL REVIEW

The City Attorney has reviewed Ordinance 2026-07 for legal sufficiency.

Pursuant to Section 14.3 of the present Charter of the City of Madeira Beach, Section 2 of the Florida Constitution, and Chapter 166, Florida Statutes, charter amendments must be approved by referendum of the electors of the City of Madeira Beach to take effect.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Board of Commissioners adopt Ordinance 2026-07, Charter Amendments relating to Municipal Election Dates, Candidate Qualifying Periods, Term Transition Provisions, and Referendum Questions, following the second reading and public hearing.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Ordinance 2026-07
2. Ordinance 2026-07, Business Impact Statement
3. Public Hearing Affidavit of Publication
4. Madeira Beach Election Invoice
5. November 3, 2026 General Election Contract
6. November 3, 2026 Canvassing Board Schedule RV 6-26