



Office of the City Manager

CONSENT CALENDAR

January 22, 2024

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Dee Williams-Ridley, City Manager

Submitted by: Mark Numainville, City Clerk

Subject: Temporary Hiatus for City Council Policy Committees

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a Resolution enacting a temporary hiatus for City Council policy committee meetings from January 22, 2024 to March 1, 2024, with certain exceptions, due to the vacancy in District 7 and the special election to fill the vacancy.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

None.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

Former District 7 Councilmember Rigel Robinson resigned from office on January 12, 2024. This created an immediate vacancy in the office of District 7 Councilmember. A special election to fill the vacancy is proposed for April 16, 2024.

During the period of the vacancy, the effectiveness of the committees with only two members will be diminished and the residents of District 7 will not have any representation on the two committees with a vacancy.

The unexpected resignation of Former Councilmember Robinson, and the resulting special election created an unexpected, unplanned, and significant new initiative for the City Clerk Department. The special election is a high-impact, critical initiative that must be implemented and executed on a very compressed timeline in order to meet the requirements of the City Charter.

Reallocation of staff resources in the City Clerk Department is required for election-critical tasks such as preparation of election materials, candidate filing appointments, candidate assistance, ballot material proofing, campaign committee assistance, public financing transactions, ballot material proofing, and campaign filing processing. As stated above, these tasks are occurring on a compressed timeline, and in some cases, overlapping with similar tasks for the November 5, 2024 General Election.

The proposed hiatus will not apply to the Agenda & Rules Committee due to its mandated responsibilities under the Rules of Procedure. The Budget & Finance committee may also

meet as needed for critical items only. The deadlines for passing items out of policy committee will be tolled during the hiatus.

The strong preference by staff is for the hiatus to extend through Election Day on April 16, 2024. However, some important relief will be afforded to the City Clerk Department by scheduling the hiatus through the month of February to Friday, March 1. Staff acknowledges the important role of policy committees, however, the demands of the special election, coupled with regular baseline duties will result in reduced service in other areas and extended response times from City Clerk Department staff.

Currently, there is a City Council meeting scheduled for April 16. After the election is called for that date, staff will submit an item to Council to reschedule the April 16 meeting as the Council does not meet on the day of a City election. Both April 9 and April 23 are unavailable due to religious holidays (Eid-al-Fitr and Passover). Thus, the likely rescheduling date is April 2, 2024, resulting in the spring recess starting on April 3.

BACKGROUND

The City Charter Article V, Section 12 prescribes the timeline for holding a special election to fill a vacancy on the City Council. The Council must call the election within 10 days of the date of the vacancy, and the election must be held no less than 60 days and no more than 90 days after the Council calls the election. The special election is proposed for April 16, 2024.

Pursuant to the City Council Rules of Procedure and Order, City Council policy committees are comprised of three members and the Mayor and each Councilmember serve on two policy committees. Policy committees have 120 days to act on items referred to them for review.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE IMPACTS

The reduction in the number of meetings held by policy committees may result in fewer vehicle trips to the Civic Center Building by Councilmembers, public attendees, and staff.

RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

To allow for fair representation and effective membership on the policy committees and accommodate the reallocation of City Clerk Department staff resources to election-critical tasks.

CONTACT PERSON

Mark Numainville, City Clerk, (510) 981-6900

Attachments:

1: Resolution

RESOLUTION NO. ##,###-N.S.

ENACTING A TEMPORARY HIATUS FOR CITY COUNCIL POLICY COMMITTEES

WHEREAS, there is a vacancy in the office of City Council District 7; and

WHEREAS, during the period of the vacancy, the effectiveness of the committees with only two members will be diminished and the residents of District 7 will not have any representation on the two committees with a vacancy; and

WHEREAS, and the special election to fill the vacancy resulted in an unexpected, unplanned, and significant new initiative for the City Clerk Department; and

WHEREAS, the special election is a high-impact, critical initiative that must be implemented and executed on a very compressed timeline in order to meet the requirements of the City Charter; and

WHEREAS, staff resources in the City Clerk Department are required to be reallocated for election-critical tasks in order to meet statutory requirements and mandates.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Berkeley that a temporary hiatus for City Council policy committee meetings from January 22, 2024 to March 1, 2024, with certain exceptions, is hereby enacted.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the policy committee hiatus will not apply to the Agenda & Rules Committee due to its mandated responsibilities.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Budget & Finance committee may meet during the hiatus as needed for critical items only.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the deadlines for passing items out of policy committee will be tolled during the hiatus.

