

COUNCIL POLICY MANUAL

Policy 7.3.10 Vice Mayor Selection

POLICY PURPOSE:

Section 608 of the City Charter provides that the City Council shall select one of its members to serve as Vice Mayor. The Vice Mayor can be removed by super majority of the total membership of the Council (five votes). The Vice Mayor serves at the pleasure of the Council. The Charter does not specify the method of selection. Section 616 of the Charter provides that the Council shall establish rules of conduct of its proceedings. This policy specifies the time and method of Vice Mayor selection. It is intended to supplement Sections 608 and 616 of the City Charter and in no way conflict with those provisions.

POLICY STATEMENT:

The City Charter provides the terms of office and certain procedural requirements for the selection and removal of the Vice Mayor, and these Charter provisions are incorporated into this policy. The City Council recognizes the need to establish an orderly process of selection of the Vice Mayor.

1. Should the Vice Mayor's office become vacant during a term for whatever reason (i.e. resignation, death, disability, Council vote), the Councilmember selected to fill the vacancy shall serve the remainder of the unexpired term.
2. Agenda for Selection of Vice Mayor
 - A. During Election Years:
 - (I) Between Election Day and the first meeting in January, Council shall schedule a study session during which Councilmembers and Councilmembers-elect shall have the opportunity to express interest in the position of Vice Mayor.
 - (II) At the first regular meeting in January, the City Council shall certify the election results following each General Municipal Election.
 - (III) The certification of the election results shall directly follow approval of minutes as a Special Order of the Day.
 - (IV) After results are certified, Councilmembers leaving office shall be excused and newly elected members shall be seated.
 - (V) The next item of business shall be selection of the Vice Mayor.
 - B. During Non-Election Years:
 - (I) Between November 1 and the first regular meeting in January, Council shall schedule a study session during which Councilmembers shall have the opportunity to express interest in the position of Vice Mayor.

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3. Nomination and Selection Process for Vice Mayor.

A. Councilmembers shall select a Vice Mayor who best exhibits the following criteria:

- (I) Leadership. The candidate has a vision for the City and clearly defined goals that other Councilmembers support. The candidate recognizes Sunnyvale's role in regional issues as well.
- (II) Executive skills. In the absence of the Mayor, the candidate can run public hearings efficiently so that as many members of the public as possible are able to provide input on Council decisions. The candidate works well with City staff but does not take direction from staff.
- (III) Integrity. The candidate maintains the highest possible ethical standards, works well with all Councilmembers, has the courage to take an unpopular position if it is best for the City, rises above petty disputes, remains calm in a crisis, and seeks recognition for the City more than personal acclaim.
- (IV) Commitment. The candidate is willing and able to devote sufficient time to the role of Vice Mayor in order to perform it properly, is supportive of the community and is supported by the community. The candidate's past actions have been for the City's benefit rather than being self-serving.

B. Nominations:

The Mayor shall ask the Council for nominations for the position of the Vice Mayor. Any of the other Councilmembers may nominate someone other than themselves (including the incumbent) for the position. The Mayor shall ask each nominated Councilmember if they are willing to serve before declaring that person nominated. If there are no nominations, the Mayor may make a nomination. When it appears that no further nominations will be made, the Mayor shall announce that the nominations are closed.

C. Candidate Statements

If more than one Councilmember has been nominated, the Mayor shall allow each nominated candidate to speak briefly on their own behalf. Nominees shall speak in the order in which they were nominated.

D. Voting:

All Councilmembers are strongly urged to be present for this vote.

- (I) Only One Candidate

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If only one Councilmember has been nominated, the Mayor shall declare that individual to be elected Vice Mayor by unanimous consent.

(II) More than One Candidate

- (a) Each Councilmember is entitled to vote for only one candidate. If more than one Councilmember has been nominated, the Mayor shall call for a vote of the first one nominated. If that candidate has received four or more votes, the Mayor shall declare that candidate elected and the voting concluded. If not, the Mayor shall call for a vote for the second candidate in the same manner. The candidate receiving four or more votes shall be declared the Vice Mayor.
- (b) In the case of a tie, a vote shall be held among all Councilmembers and the Mayor to break the tie. For example, in the case of three candidates, if candidate A gets three votes, candidate B gets two votes, and candidate C gets two votes, all Councilmembers and the Mayor vote on Candidates B and C. If candidate C gets the most votes, the final vote will be held between Candidates A and C.
- (c) The election process shall continue until one candidate has at least four votes and is declared to be elected.

E. Public Record for Ballots Cast

The City Clerk shall announce all votes cast by each Councilmember for the record. The votes of each Councilmember shall be included in the minutes of the meeting.

4. Mid-Term Vacancies.

If the Vice Mayor position becomes vacant during the course of the Vice Mayor's term, the City Clerk shall place an agenda item to select a new Vice Mayor on the agenda of the meeting when such vacancy is declared to exist.

(Adopted: RTC 81-602 (10/6/1981); Amended: 87-593 (11/10/1987), 95-165 (5/16/1995), 96-041 (2/27/1996); (Clerical/clarity update, Policy Update Project 7/2005); New Policy Adopted 12/11/2007; Amended 4/27/2010; Clarity Update based on 1/6/15 Council Meeting); Amended: RTC 20-0872 (12/8/20); Amended: RTC 23-1087 (11/28/23)

Lead Department: Office of the City Manager