



City of Sunnyvale

Meeting Minutes - Draft

Charter Review Committee

Thursday, November 6, 2025

5:00 PM

Online and Redwood Conference Room,
City Hall, 456 W. Olive Ave., Sunnyvale,
CA 94086

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Larsson called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

SALUTE TO THE FLAG

Chair Larsson led the salute to the United States flag.

ROLL CALL

Present: 9 - Chair Gustav Larsson
Vice Chair Kristel Wickham
Member Galen Kim Davis
Member Kathryn Filley
Member David Newswanger
Member Timothy Oey
Member Ken Olevson
Member Gail Rubino
Member Barry Vickrey
Absent: 1 - Member Martin Pyne

Committee Member Pyne's absence is an excused absence.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

No speakers.

CONSENT CALENDAR

Public Comment opened at 5:06 p.m.

No speakers.

Public Comment closed at 5:06 p.m.

MOTION: Committee Member Olevson moved and Committee Member

Newswanger seconded the motion to approve agenda item 1.A as submitted and agenda item 1.B as amended.

The motion carried with the following vote:

Yes: 8 - Chair Larsson
Vice Chair Wickham
Member Filley
Member Newswanger
Member Oey
Member Olevson
Member Rubino
Member Vickrey

No: 0

Absent: 1 - Member Pyne

Abstain: 1 - Member Davis

1.A [25-0236](#) Approve the Charter Review Committee Meeting Minutes of September 25, 2025

Approve the Charter Review Committee Meeting Minutes of September 25, 2025 as submitted.

1.B [25-0588](#) Approve the Charter Review Committee Meeting Minutes of October 23, 2025

Approve the Charter Review Committee Meeting Minutes of October 23, 2025 as amended.

PUBLIC HEARING/GENERAL BUSINESS

2 [25-1055](#) Discuss and Provide Feedback on Subcommittee Draft Report Regarding City Council Vacancies

Members Newswanger and Vickrey provided the Subcommittee report.

Committee Members provided comments or questions related to the Subcommittee report on City Council Vacancies:

- Comment that the cost of a primary election is greater than that of a general election, and questions about who incurs the cost and why there is a cost difference.
- Question about whether staff should request an election cost estimate from the

Registrar of Voters.

- Question about whether any of the scenarios in the report include an individual being appointed to a term greater than two years.

Subcommittee Members and staff provided comments or answers:

- Comment that the report references the cost to the city and that the cost of a primary election varies based on numerous factors (e.g. number of measures on the ballot).
- Comment that the Registrar of Voters provides cost estimates for specific scenario-based elections. The request would need to include parameters such as general or primary election, mayor or councilmember, and any additional parameters.
- Comment that if a seat becomes vacant immediately after the deadline to call for an election, then the appointment could be for more than two years.

Public Hearing opened at 5:34 p.m.

Zachary Kaufman spoke about the advantage of incumbency on appointees who then run for election, and voiced support for making appointees ineligible for voter-elected municipal positions while serving on Council or for some time after serving on Council.

Steve Scandalis shared a presentation related to Sunnyvale City Council vacancies between 1980 and 2025, commented that the Subcommittee report identified an illegal option that could occur, and suggested revisions for the Committee's consideration.

Public Hearing closed at 5:38 p.m.

Committee Members provided additional comments or questions:

- Question about whether appointees could be prohibited from running for election.
- Question whether the Committee could hear additional information about an "illegal option" that was referenced by a member of the public.

Staff provided comments or answered questions:

- An appointee cannot be prevented from running for election. Council can ask questions and consider the responses of potential appointees in making their appointment decision.

Public Hearing reopened at 5:42 p.m.

Steve Scandalis commented that eliminating or choosing a particular election based on which voters will turn out equates to “picking” voters based on racial identification.

Public Hearing closed at 5:45 p.m.

Subcommittee Members and staff provided comments:

- Comment that the Committee has not discussed or considered any data related to which voters turn out for elections, and that the analysis of the report covers how many voters will turn out, not which voters.
- Comments that the Subcommittee did not review any demographic data and that the Subcommittee only considered the quantity of voters at primary and special elections, not the demographics of voters.

3 [25-1056](#) Discuss and Provide Feedback on Subcommittee Draft Report
Regarding City Council Compensation

Member Davis provided the Subcommittee report.

Committee Members provided comments or questions related to the Subcommittee report on City Council Compensation:

- Question whether the American Community Survey (ACS) data is current.
- Comment that the ACS data is from 2023, and potentially the median salary may be higher because of inflation.
- Comment in support of the Committee recommending a single preferred option for Council consideration rather than multiple options.
- Comments in support of conducting professional polling on this potential Charter amendment.
- Comment in support of establishing a review committee that would evaluate the figures periodically.
- Comment in support of Option 3 that sets a fixed salary wage and indexes a specific consumer price index (CPI).
- Question whether a salary figure could be included in the Charter and later updated by a review committee/appointed body, or the changes must go before the voters.

Member Davis and staff provided comments or answers:

- Comment that the data in the ACS is the best choice for figures that are specific to

Sunnyvale.

- Comment that one can anticipate that the median salary may be 3-5% higher for 2024.
- Comment in support of the Committee recommending that Council conduct professional polling on this potential Charter amendment.
- Comment that staff recommend the Committee provide clear direction (salary figure) for inclusion in the Charter rather than referencing an index, such as ACS, because an index could cease to exist.
- Comment that a Charter provision related to a salary review committee would need to be established. The Charter language would define the committee's authority and include details such as its formation, the number of members, and its purview.

Public Hearing opened at 6:32 p.m.

Zachary Kaufman expressed concern about offering a salary significantly above neighboring cities' because it may attract career politicians.

Steve Scandalis shared a presentation outlining revisions to the draft report for the Committee's consideration.

Public Hearing closed at 6:39 p.m.

Committee Members provided additional comments or questions:

- Comment that establishing a review committee would require substantial language in the Charter since voters would be delegating their authority to a committee.
- Comments that establishing a policy and process related to a review committee is complex, and that time constraints would prevent proper research of this item by the Committee.
- Comment in support of recommending councilmember salary be set at \$60,000.
- Comment in support of salary increases commencing at the next election/beginning of the councilmember's term.
- Comment in support of resetting the salary baseline in the Charter, and no additional revisions to be made to the section.
- Comments in support of recommending the salary increase commencing after the next election for each Council district.

Chair Larsson polled the Committee on salary increases commencing when the district is next up for a general election. A consensus was not reached.

Chair Larsson polled the Committee on salary increases commencing two years (January 2028) after the 2026 Election. A consensus was not reached.

Chair Larsson polled the Committee on the salary increases commencing after the 2026 election in January 2027. A consensus was reached.

Chair Larsson polled the Committee to retain the current Charter language related to the cost-of-living adjustment. A consensus was reached.

Chair Larsson polled the Committee to recommend that the councilmember salary be set at \$72,000 and the mayor's salary at \$108,000. A consensus was reached.

The Subcommittee report will be revised to recommend:

- That the salary increases commence after the 2026 election, in January 2027;
- Retaining the current Charter language related to cost of living adjustment;
- That the councilmember salary be set at \$72,000 and the mayor's salary be set at \$108,000; and
- Professional polling on this potential Charter amendment be conducted.

NON-AGENDA ITEMS AND COMMENTS

-Committee Member Comments

None.

-Staff Comments

Deputy City Manager Connie Verceles announced that the next Committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, December 4 at 5 p.m., and that Subcommittee reports are due by Wednesday, November 19.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Larsson adjourned the meeting at 7:40 p.m.