



## AGENDA REPORT

**DATE:** APRIL 28, 2026

**TO:** MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

**FROM:** DONALD M. DAVIS, CITY ATTORNEY  
LAUREN PETTIT, CITY CLERK

**SUBJECT:** MAYORAL ROTATION POLICY

### OVERVIEW

The proposed action is the adoption of a formal Mayoral Rotation Policy (Policy) establishing guidelines and procedures for the annual selection of the Mayor and Mayor Pro Tempore (Tem) pursuant to the City's Municipal Code.

### BACKGROUND

Municipal Code section 2.04.020 provides as follows:

- 2.04.020 - Organization.** *The council will reorganize and select one of its number as mayor, and one as mayor pro tempore, on the following occasions:*
- A. *At the first regular meeting held during the month of December; or*
  - B. *At such times as a majority of the council may so order.*

The City Council has had an informal yet longstanding practice regarding the rotation of the Mayor and Mayor Pro Tem positions as part of the annual reorganization process. In short, that practice has been that when a newly elected Council Member is seated, that individual is typically placed in the "Seat 5" position and then moves through the various "seats" as the City Council is reorganized each year. This would normally result in that newly elected Council Member reaching the position of Mayor Pro Tem in the fourth year of their first term, and Mayor in the first year of their second term if re-elected. Exceptions to this progressive rotation could and have occurred under several circumstances. For example, if an incumbent chooses to not seek reelection or is not reelected, the progression of a Council Member who has not previously served as Mayor could occur within three or four years.

The "informal" policy on mayoral rotation was discussed at the March 30, 2026 Policy Development session. The Council directed staff to prepare a formal policy for consideration, and as part of the policy, staff was requested to present a rotation where after completing their term as Mayor, the Council Member would move to the last seat – Seat 5 – which would increase the likelihood that newly elected Council Members would be eligible to serve as Mayor during their first term.

## DISCUSSION

The Municipal Code does not assign any independent authority to the Mayor and as such, the position of Mayor is primarily ceremonial in terms of representation of the City. However, because the Mayor presides over City Council meetings, it is important that the person selected have both experience and familiarity with City administration, organization, and procedures.

The City Council's longstanding mayoral rotation practice based on seniority has ensured an modicum of such experience before an individual is eligible to be selected as Mayor or Mayor Pro Tem. The primary change in practice reflected in the proposed Policy is a shift in seat ordering after an individual serves a Mayor. Under the proposed Policy, the outgoing Mayor will move to the last "seat" so that a newly elected Council Member who may not previously have served as Mayor may have to the opportunity to fill that role during their first term (if supported by a majority of the Council) because their initial seat assignment will be at least Seat 4.

The other key "new" aspect of the proposed Policy is that when two or more new Council Members are elected, their respective seat will be assigned based on the number of votes received at the election. In short, the higher number of votes, the higher the seat assignment.

Finally, in the event of a vacancy or mid-term appointment, the Policy provides that the City Council may adjust seat assignments as necessary to maintain the intent of the Policy.

To maintain transparency and continuity of practice, the Policy provides that the City Clerk will submit the proposed sequence of rotation and seating for City Council approval at the time of reorganization each year.

## RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the City Council review the proposed Policy, suggest any revisions, and approve the Policy (as it may be revised).

### *Attachments:*

- A. *Mayoral Rotation Policy*

**CITY OF ROLLING HILLS ESTATES**  
**MAYORAL ROTATION POLICY**

**Adopted:**

**Amended:**

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**Section 1. Purpose**

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**Section 3. Mayor Rotation**

**Section 1. Purpose**

The purpose of this Mayoral Rotation Policy (Policy) is to establish a consistent and transparent framework by which the Mayor and Mayor Pro Tempore are selected in accordance with the City's Municipal Code.

**Section 2. Applicable Municipal Code Provision**

Section 2.04.020 of the Municipal Code provides as follows:

***2.04.020 - Organization.*** *The council will reorganize and select one of its number as mayor, and one as mayor pro tempore, on the following occasions:*

- A. At the first regular meeting held during the month of December; or*
- B. At such times as a majority of the council may so order.*

This Policy is established in accordance with this Municipal Code provision. As provided in the Municipal Code, the selection of Mayor and Mayor Pro Tempore is at the pleasure of the majority of the City Council. Moreover, as the Municipal Code does not assign any independent authority to the Mayor, the Policy recognizes that the position of Mayor is primarily ceremonial in terms of representation of the City but as the Mayor also presides over City Council meetings, the Policy reflects the need for the person selected to have both experience and familiarity with City administration, organization, and procedures.

**Section 3. Mayor Rotation**

It is the policy of the City Council to provide for an orderly selection of the Mayor and Mayor Pro Tempore each year. To implement such transition, the following are guidelines and procedures for the selection of the Mayor and Mayor Pro Tempore.

- A. Each member of the City Council will be assigned a "Seat" (numbers 1 through 5), which will be assigned based on length of continuous service on the City Council without having served as Mayor; or, where two or three members are elected at the same election they will be ordered by the number of votes received, from highest to lowest.
- B. The Mayor will be Seat 1 and the Mayor Pro Tempore will be Seat 2, with the remaining Seats assigned as per subsection (A) and (C).

- C. After the term of the Mayor is completed, the Mayor Pro Tempore or the Council Member in the next highest Seat if the Mayor Pro Tempore is not re-elected (and subject to approval by the majority) will become the next Mayor and move to Seat 1. The Council Member previously in Seat 3 (or the next highest Seat) (and subject to approval by the majority) will become the Mayor Pro Tempore and move to Seat 2. The outgoing Mayor will move to Seat 5, and the remaining Council Members will be in Seats 3 and 4 (or 5 if the outgoing Mayor is not re-elected). If for any reason the nominee for Mayor or Mayor Pro Tempore in the rotation order does not accept the nomination, the Council Member in the next highest Seat will be the nominee and an individual who chooses not to serve as Mayor or Mayor Pro Tempore will remain in the same Seat and will be considered for rotation in future years in accordance with this Policy..

As noted above, the purpose of this rotation by Seats generally based on seniority is to provide opportunities for Council Members to serve as Mayor or Mayor Pro Tempore during their four-year term, while ensuring that those selected also have at least one or more years of experience on the City Council before serving as Mayor or Mayor Pro Tempore.

- D. In the event of a vacancy or mid-term appointment, the City Council may adjust Seat assignments as necessary to maintain the intent of this Policy.
- E. The City Clerk will submit the proposed sequence of rotation and seating to be approved by the City Council at the time of reorganization each year.