

CITY OF SEBASTOPOL CITY COUNCIL  
AGENDA ITEM REPORT FOR MEETING OF: March 4, 2025

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**To:** Honorable Mayor and City Councilmembers  
**From:** Councilmember Hinton  
**Subject:** Amendment to Council Protocols to Include on Regularly scheduled City Council Meetings an Item to allow Councilmembers to place an agenda item at an identified Regular Scheduled Council Meeting with an Affirmative Vote of Two Councilmembers

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

That the City Council Consider Approval of Amendment to Council Protocols to Include on Regularly scheduled City Council Meetings an Item to allow Councilmembers to place an agenda item at an identified Regular Scheduled Council Meeting with an Affirmative Vote of Two Councilmembers

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**SUMMARY:**

The City of Sebastopol has adopted City Council Policy Number 6, Agenda Review Committee/Agenda Preparation/Placement of Items onto an Agenda in November 2024. The item tonight is to seek Council approval to amend the protocols related to placement of items on an agenda by affirmative vote of two Councilmembers.

**BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION:**

Listed below are excerpts related to the placement of agenda items requested by City Councilmembers. The full policy is attached for reference.

Councilmembers Agenda Item Requests – Staff Support: If the Agenda Request is being submitted by a councilmember, the councilmember may request limited assistance from staff with obtaining copies of existing materials and/or data, or research related to their Agenda Item Request, provided said assistance does not require any new work or independent analysis to be performed. If the Agenda Request is submitted after the deadline the City Clerk shall notify the Agenda Review Committee of any agenda item request submitted by councilmembers upon receipt of the request.

Councilmember Agenda Item Requests

The Agenda Review Committee determines if the Request is:

- A minor work task that is consistent with prior Council direction or policy and can be accomplished with minimal resources and does not need further evaluation; or
- A more substantial work task that could affect established priorities and needs further evaluation. If it is a more substantial work task that could affect established priorities and needs further evaluation, the Councilmember making the Agenda Item Request may either:
  - Request that the Agenda Review Committee place the item on the Agenda, or
  - Request that the Agenda Review Committee refer the proposal to the City Manager for a brief evaluation of the resources required to prepare an agenda item, how doing so could affect existing priorities, projects, and operations, alternatives to the proposal, and any other issues the City Manager and Council members should consider.

It is recommended that the Staff Department tasked and the City Councilmember work together to determine tasks/resources.

The Agenda Review Committee sets the item for placement on the Agenda and the City Clerk informs the requesting Councilmember.

If the item is a more substantial work task that has been referred to the City Manager for evaluation, when the Item is placed on the Agenda for full Council consideration, a brief staff evaluation is provided and the Council determines if the proposal should be returned to Council with a full work task, identification of its relative priority, and request for allocation of budget or other resources necessary to address the proposal. As stated above, it is recommended that the Staff Department tasked by the City Manager and the City Councilmember work together to determine tasks/resources.

The provisions here do not limit the discretion of the Agenda Review Committee to decide the timing/Council meeting date of Agenda items.

If the Agenda Review Committee does not place a City Council or City Manager requested agenda item onto a City Council Agenda within 90 days of consideration of item at an Agenda Review Committee meeting, said item will be placed onto a City Council Meeting Agenda within 30 days of the 90 days deadline.

**COUNCILMEMBER REQUEST:**

I would like to adjust our policy to give 2 councilmembers the ability to add an Agenda item on regular meetings to upcoming agenda's. I have spoken to our City Attorney Alex Mog and he said this is a common solution to allow other councilmembers the ability to bring up and vote to add agenda items by affirmative vote of two Councilmembers.

I truly believe within approval of our new policies this was an oversight in our new policy protocols. This policy gives two (2) (the current Mayor and Vice Mayor) out of 3 councilmembers unfair advantages over other elected officials. I do not believe the intent of the new policy was to give the Agenda Setting Review Committee this power while the other 3 councilmembers have no way to disagree. The other 3 elected councilmembers should be able with a majority vote at a noticed Public Meeting, by a Vote of 2- should be able to add an agenda item to an identified Regular Scheduled Council Meeting as a set agenda item.

When scheduling agenda items, it's important to factor in the time and resources that staff will need to prepare the agenda item.

**COMMUNITY OUTREACH:**

This item has been noticed in accordance with the Ralph M. Brown Act and was available for public viewing and review at least 72 hours prior to schedule meeting date. The City has also used social media to promote and advertise the City Council Meeting Agenda Items.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** There is no fiscal impact associated with the approval of this item other than staff time to amend the protocols.

**RESTATED RECOMMENDATION:**

That the City Council Consider Approval of Amendment to Council Protocols to Include on Regularly scheduled City Council Meetings an Item to allow Councilmembers to place an agenda item at an identified Regular Scheduled Council Meeting with an Affirmative Vote of Two Councilmembers

**OPTION:**

1. The Council could deny the request to amend the protocols and retain current protocols that a

- Councilmember(s) can request placement of an agenda item through the Agenda Review Committee; or
2. That the Council can direct the Ad Hoc Committee on Council protocols to review the policy and return with additional recommendations

**ATTACHMENTS:**

City Council Policy Number 6