

CITY OF SEBASTOPOL CITY COUNCIL
AGENDA ITEM REPORT FOR MEETING OF: March 18, 2025

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To: Honorable Mayor and City Councilmembers
From: Assistant City Manager/City Clerk
City Attorney Alex Mog
Subject: Approval of Amendments to Protocols – City Council Policy Number 3 – Role of Mayor and Vice Mayor - As Directed by the City Council at their meeting of March 4, 2025

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RECOMMENDATION:

That the City Council Approve the Amendments to Protocols – City Council Policy Number 3 – Role of Mayor and Vice Mayor - As Directed by the City Council at their meeting of March 4, 2025

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SUMMARY:

As presented at the March 4, 2025, City Council meeting, the Council discussed the protocol of the role of Mayor as it relates to being the primary spokesperson:

- Recognized as spokesperson for the City Council
- It is the Mayor’s duty to serve as the City’s primary media spokesperson in coordination with City staff. Appropriate City staff should always be alerted to media contact.
- Nothing under the Mayor’s duties shall limit any individual Council Member’s ability to interact with members of the public or media.

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION:

At the March 4, 2025, City Council meeting, after input from the community and City staff, the Council directed the removal of the following language from the City Council Protocol Number 3:

It is the Mayor’s duty to serve as the City’s primary media spokesperson in coordination with City staff. Appropriate City staff should always be alerted to media contact.

City staff have removed the language as requested and the item is now before the Council for approval.

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 scheduled 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 approval of this consent calendar item.

RESTATED RECOMMENDATION:

That the City Council Approve the Amendments to Protocols – City Council Policy Number 3 – Role of Mayor and Vice Mayor - As Directed by the City Council at their meeting of March 4, 2025.

OPTION:

1. The Council could deny the revision and provide further direction to staff.

ATTACHMENTS:

City Council Policy As Amended – FINAL

City Council Policy – Red Lined

CITY COUNCIL PROTOCOLS
ROLE OF MAYOR AND VICE MAYOR
CITY COUNCIL POLICY NUMBER 3

ADOPTED BY THE CITY COUNCIL AT THEIR CITY COUNCIL MEETING OF NOVEMBER 5, 2024

CITY COUNCIL POLICY NUMBER 3
ROLE OF MAYOR AND VICE MAYOR

The powers of the City Council to establish policy are quite broad. Essentially, the City Council may undertake any action related to city affairs other than those forbidden or preempted by state or federal law. Specifically, the City Council has the power, in the name of the city, to do and perform all acts and things appropriate to a municipal corporation and for the general welfare of its inhabitants which are not specifically forbidden by the Constitution and laws of the State of California. It is important to note that the City Council acts as a body. No member has any extraordinary powers beyond those of other members.

While the Mayor and Mayor Pro Tem have some additional ceremonial and administrative responsibilities as described below, in the establishment of policies, voting and in other significant areas, all councilmembers are equal. It is also important to note that policy is established by at least a majority vote of the City Council.

The intent of this policy is to ensure a fair and equitable policy for all Councilmembers regarding Selection of Mayor.

ROLES:

The Mayor is:

- The presiding officer of the City and of all meetings of the Council
- The official head of the City for performance of duties lawfully delegated to the Mayor
- Referred to as "chair" or "chairperson" when acting as presiding officer of legislative body meetings other than the Council; (such as the Successor Agency to the former Community Development Agency)
- Considered a member of the Council
- The Mayor or presiding officer has authority and discretion to preserve order at all Council meetings. This includes the authority to remove any person that presents a physical threat to any other person in the Council meeting, or for conduct that disrupts the meeting to prevent the orderly prosecution of the City's business. The presiding officer also has the authority and discretion to enforce these rules of the Council and to determine the order of business. The presiding officer shall have the authority to prevent the misuse of the legitimate form of motions, the abuse of privilege of renewing certain motions, or the obstruction of the business of the City Council. The presiding officer may preserve orderly business by ruling such motions out of order. In so ruling, the presiding officer shall be courteous and fair and shall presume that the moving party is making the motion in good faith.
- Entitled to make and second motions on matters before the Council and vote on actions, but shall possess no veto power over actions of the Council May establish reasonable time limits for the presentation of information to the public

Agenda Item Number: 5
CITY COUNCIL PROTOCOLS
ROLE OF MAYOR AND VICE MAYOR
CITY COUNCIL POLICY NUMBER 3
ADOPTED BY THE CITY COUNCIL AT THEIR CITY COUNCIL MEETING OF NOVEMBER 5, 2024
AMENDED MARCH 18, 2025

- Due to subject matter, number of speakers, approximate length of an item, may determine, at the meeting, the re-ordering of agenda items.
- Recognized as spokesperson for the City Council
- Nothing under the Mayor's duties shall limit any individual Council Member's ability to interact with members of the public or media.
- Participate in the preparation of the agendas of meetings in accordance with the Agenda Review Committee Policy
- Shall be elected annually from among the members of the Council, in accordance with the Selection of Mayor/Vice Mayor Protocols at the Council's first meeting in December of each year, or as soon thereafter as possible following the confirmation of the canvass of ballots by the County Clerk; or at the first regular meeting after the office of Mayor becomes vacant for any reason. The term of office of the Mayor is one year.
- In the absence of the Mayor from the City or a Council meeting, the Vice Mayor shall possess all powers of the office of the Mayor, and be subject to all prescribed duties for that office

In the absence of the Mayor and Vice Mayor from the City or a Council meeting, the Council shall appoint a member of the Council to act as Mayor Tem and shall possess all powers of the office of the Mayor

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