



**CITY OF SEBASTOPOL CITY COUNCIL**

**AGENDA ITEM REPORT FOR MEETING OF:**

June 16, 2026

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To: Honorable Mayor and City Councilmembers  
 From: City Manager Mary Gourley  
 Department: City Administration  
 Subject: Calling and Giving Notice of General Municipal Election to be held on Tuesday, November 3, 2026 for the Election of Members of the City Council (Three Seats Open); and Requesting the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors to Consolidate the General Municipal Election with the Statewide General Election to be held on that date pursuant to Elections Code; and Resolution Adopting Regulations for Candidates for Elective Office Pertaining to the Candidate Statement of Qualifications and Requiring Each Candidate Filing a Candidate Statement of Qualifications Pay in Advance to the Local Agency an Estimated Pro Rate Share (\$900.00) as a Condition of Having Statement included in the Voters Pamphlet for the Municipal Election to be held on November 3, 2026

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**RECOMMENDATION(s):**

That the City Council Adopt resolutions:

1. Call and request to consolidate the November 3, 2026, General Municipal Election for the elective offices for City Council (three seats); and
2. Adopt regulations pertaining to candidate statements as required by Elections Code Sections 13307 and 13308.

**PROCESS OF AGENDA ITEM:**

If the item remains on the Consent Calendar, no presentation is required, and the item will be approved as part of the Consent Calendar.

If the item is removed from the Consent Calendar, it will be heard as a regular agenda item and will proceed as follows:

- Presentation by staff
- Council questions and discussion
- Public comment
- Council deliberation and action

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

The procedures for conducting a General Municipal Election are established by state law. Pursuant to these requirements, the City Council is being asked to consider two resolutions. The City of Sebastopol has historically consolidated its general municipal elections with statewide general elections and contracted with the Sonoma County Registrar of Voters for election services. General Municipal Elections (E.C. 10403) shall be held on the first Tuesday after the first Monday of November in each even numbered year for the election of municipal Officers and for such other purposes as the City Council may prescribe. The City of Sebastopol General Election is scheduled to be held on November 3, 2026 where three (3) members of the City Council will be elected. The three Councilmember seats that will be on the 2026 Municipal Election are as follows:

Sandra Maurer  
Jill McLewis  
Stephen Zollman

The Councilmember Seats in the 2026 Election will be for a term of four years (2026 through 2030).

**BACKGROUND:**

Pursuant to the California Elections Code, the Council must adopt certain resolutions for the conduct of municipal elections. The proposed resolutions call and give notice of the General Municipal Election, request the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors consolidate the General Municipal Election with the Statewide General Election, and adopt regulations for candidates for elective office pertaining to candidate statements.

The City of Sebastopol has historically consolidated its general municipal elections with statewide general elections and contracted with the Sonoma County Registrar of Voters for election services. The Registrar of Voters Office is currently under contract with the City to provide these services through December 31, 2027. In accordance with Elections Code Section 10403, the City Manager recommends the City Council adopt a resolution requesting the County Board of Supervisors to consolidate this year's General Municipal Election with the Statewide General Election to be held on November 3, 2026.

**DISCUSSION:**

Elections Code Section 13307 provides that the Council may adopt regulations pertaining to candidate statements. A resolution adopting such regulations has been prepared, which contains general provisions, provisions related to foreign language translation, a provision prohibiting the inclusion of additional materials other than a candidate's statement in the ballot package, and provisions regarding payment by the candidate for that person's pro rata share of the total cost of printing, handling, translating, and mailing candidate statements.

Generally, candidate statements are limited to 200 words. Section 13307 authorizes the Council to increase the limit to 400 words; however, staff recommends the word count for the candidate statements be set at 200 words per statement consistent with previous elections.

Sonoma County has been officially designated a bilingual county due to the results of census data. This means that all candidate statements for all elections going forward will be provided in both English and Spanish. The estimated cost for candidate statements for the November 3, 2026, election is \$900.00 per Statement. In the event an estimated payment is required, the estimate is just an approximation of the actual cost that varies from one election to another election and may be significantly more or less than the estimate, depending on the actual number of candidates filing statements.

Accordingly, the Clerk is not bound by the estimate and may, on a pro rata basis, bill the candidate or additional actual expense or refund any excess paid depending on the final actual costs. In the event of underpayment, the Clerk shall require the candidate to pay the balance of the cost incurred. In the event of an overpayment, the Clerk shall prorate the excess amount among the candidates and refund the excess amount paid within 30 days of the election.

While the Council could elect to subsidize all or a portion of the cost for the candidate statements, the City Manager recommends that, consistent with previous elections, the Council continue to require each candidate to pay their full pro rata share of the cost to print the candidate statements.

**STAFF ANALYSIS:** The actions requested in these resolutions are procedural requirements under the California Elections Code and are necessary to conduct the City's November 3, 2026 General Municipal Election. Adoption of the election resolutions will formally call the election, request consolidation with the Statewide General Election, and establish candidate statement regulations in accordance with Elections Code Sections 10403, 13307, and 13308.

Consolidating the City's election with the statewide election administered by the Sonoma County Registrar of Voters provides administrative efficiencies, reduces the City's election management responsibilities, and generally lowers overall election costs compared to conducting a stand-alone municipal election. The City has historically utilized this approach and currently maintains a contract with the Sonoma County Registrar of Voters for election services through December 31, 2027.

The candidate statement regulations proposed in the attached resolution are consistent with those adopted for prior municipal elections. Staff recommends maintaining the 200-word limit for candidate statements and requiring candidates to pay their pro rata share of the costs associated with printing, handling, translating, and mailing candidate statements. This approach ensures consistency with prior City practice and minimizes additional costs to the General Fund.

Approval of the resolutions will allow the City Clerk and Sonoma County Registrar of Voters to proceed with all necessary election preparations and statutory deadlines for the November 3, 2026 General Municipal Election.

**CITY COUNCIL GOALS/PRIORITIES/ AND OR GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY:**

This agenda item represents the City Council goals/priorities as follows:

**Goal 4: HIGH PERFORMANCE ORGANIZATION**

Restore public trust, improve public communications, and strengthen collaborative partnerships with outside agencies and service providers.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** As of the preparation of this staff report, no public comments have been received on this item. Any comments received after distribution of the report will be provided to the City Council as supplemental materials. Public comment will also be accepted during the meeting.

**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 the scheduled meeting date.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** The estimated cost to have the Sebastopol Council seats on the November 3, 2026 ballot is below.

This is based on the current registration in the district of 5,747.

- Per voter cost rang – \$3.75 to \$6.25 per voter
- Total cost range – \$21,551.00 to \$35,919.00

City staff has allocated \$30,000 in the FY26 27 Budget. Funding for this expenditure based on consolidation is included in the proposed FY 2026-2027 City Clerk Budget.

**RESTATED RECOMMENDATION:** That the City Council Approve and Adopt resolutions:

1. Call and request to consolidate the November 3, 2026, General Municipal Election for the elective offices for City Council (three seats); and
2. Adopt regulations pertaining to candidate statements as required by Elections Code Sections 13307 and 13308.

**CITY COUNCIL OPTIONS:**

None.

**ATTACHMENT(S):**

Resolution to call and request to consolidate the November 3, 2026, General Municipal Election for the elective offices for City Council (three seats); and  
Resolution adopting regulations pertaining to candidate statements as required by Elections Code Sections 13307 and 13308.

**APPROVALS:**

Department Head Approval:	Approval Date: 6-8-2026
CEQA Determination (Planning):	Approval Date: NA

*The proposed action is not a project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15378, the recommended action is not a “project” subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) because it does not have a potential for resulting in either a direct physical change in the environment or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment. In the alternative, the recommended action is exempt from CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3) because it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the recommended action may have a significant effect on the environment.*

General Plan Goal (Planning):	Approval Date:
Administrative Services (Financial)	Approval Date:
Costs authorized in City Approved Budget: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	
Account Code (f applicable)	_____
City Attorney Approval:	Approval Date:
City Manager Approval:	Approval Date:

**RESOLUTION NO. XXXX-2026**

A Resolution of the City Council of the City of Sebastopol Calling and Giving Notice of a General Municipal Election to be held on Tuesday, November 3, 2026 (The first Tuesday after the first Monday in November of each year) for the Election of Members of the City Council as required for a Four Year Term;

and

Requesting the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors to Consolidate the General Municipal Election with the Statewide General Election to be held on that date pursuant to Elections Code and Authorizing the Sonoma County Registrar of Voters to Canvass the Election Results for the November 3, 2026 Election

WHEREAS, under the provisions of the laws relating to General Law cities of the State of California, a Municipal Election shall be held on Tuesday, November 3, 2026 for the election of Municipal Officers; and

WHEREAS, the California Statewide General Election will be held on Tuesday, November 3, 2026; and

WHEREAS, Elections Code Section 10400 provides that the City Council may request that the County Board of Supervisors consolidate said General Municipal Election with the Statewide general election; and

WHEREAS, it is desirable that the General Municipal Election be consolidated with the Statewide General election and any other election held on the same day, in the same territory, or in territory that is in part the same, to be held on the same date; and that within the City, the precincts, polling places and election officers of the two elections be the same; and that the County Election Department of the County of Sonoma canvass the returns of the General Municipal Election and that the election be held in all respects as if there were only one election; and

WHEREAS, the terms of three (3) members of the City Council will expire and the positions must be filled.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT Pursuant to California Elections Code Section 10400, 10402, and 10403, it is in the best public interest to consolidate the Sebastopol General Municipal Election with the Statewide Election to be held on November 3, 2026; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT:

SECTION 1. Pursuant to the requirements of Section 10403 of the Elections Code, there is called and ordered to be held in the City of Sebastopol, on Tuesday, November 3, 2026, a General Municipal Election, and the Board of Supervisors of the County of Sonoma is hereby requested to consent and agree to the consolidation of a General Municipal Election with the Statewide General election on Tuesday, November 3, 2026, for the purpose of the election of three (3) members of the City Council of the City of Sebastopol for the full term of four years.

SECTION 2. The County Election Department is authorized to canvass the returns of the General Municipal Election. The election shall be held in all respects as if there were only one election, and only one form of ballot shall be used. All other rules and regulations governed by the Elections Code for the conduct of the General Municipal Election on November 3, 2026, not specifically cited in this Resolution, shall be applicable to the Election.

SECTION 3. The Board of Supervisors is requested to issue instructions to the County Registrar of Voters/County Election Department to take any and all steps necessary for the holding of the consolidated election.

SECTION 4. The County Registrar of Voters/Elections of Sonoma County is authorized to specify the location for the tally of ballots and certify the results to the City Clerk of the City of Sebastopol.

SECTION 5. The recitals provided in this resolution are true and correct and are incorporated into the operative part of this resolution. That in all particulars not recited in this resolution, the election shall be held and conducted as

provided by law for holding municipal elections.

SECTION 6. If any section, subsection, sentence, clause or phrase of this resolution is, for any reason, held to be invalid or unconstitutional, such decision shall not affect the validity or constitutionality of the remaining portions of this resolution. The City Council hereby declares that it would have passed this resolution, and each section, subsection, sentence, clause or phrase hereof, irrespective of the fact that any one or more sections, subsections, sentences, clauses or phrases be declared invalid or unconstitutional.

SECTION 7. The City of Sebastopol recognizes that additional costs will be incurred by the County by reason of this consolidation and agrees to reimburse the County for such costs as listed in the Agreement Between the City of Sebastopol and the County Elections Department of the County of Sonoma.

SECTION 8. The City clerk is authorized and directed to compensate the County for the cost of conducting the General Municipal Election for the City.

SECTION 9. The consolidated election shall be held and conducted in the manner prescribed in Section 10418 of the Elections Code of the State of California.

SECTION 10. Pursuant to Section 10551 and 15651 of the Elections Code of the State of California, the method of determining the winner or winners in the event of a tie vote shall be by lot.

SECTION 11. The City Clerk is hereby directed to file a certified copy of this resolution with the Board of Supervisors and the Registrar of Voters of the County of Sonoma and enter this resolution into the book of original resolutions.

This resolution shall take effect immediately upon adoption by the City Council, and the City Clerk shall certify the vote adopting the resolution.

IN COUNCIL DULY PASSED, APPROVED AND ADOPTED this 16<sup>th</sup> day of June, 2026.

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of a Resolution passed and adopted by the City Council of the City of Sebastopol by the following roll call vote:

**VOTE:**

Ayes:

Noes:

Absent:

Abstain:

APPROVED:

Mayor Jill McLewis

ATTEST:

Mary Gourley, City Manager

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Alex Mog, City Attorney

RESOLUTION NUMBER XXXX-2026

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SEBASTOPOL ESTABLISHING ESTIMATED COSTS FOR PRINTING, HANDLING, TRANSLATING AND MAILING THE CANDIDATES' STATEMENTS FILED FOR THE CONSOLIDATED GENERAL ELECTION TO BE HELD IN THE CITY OF SEBASTOPOL ON NOVEMBER 3, 2026 AND ADOPTING REGULATIONS FOR CANDIDATES FOR ELECTIVE OFFICE PERTAINING TO CANDIDATES STATEMENT OF QUALIFICATIONS AND REQUIRING EACH CANDIDATE FILING A CANDIDATE STATEMENT OF QUALIFICATIONS PAY IN ADVANCE TO THE LOCAL AGENCY AN ESTIMATED PRORATED SHARE AS A CONDITION OF HAVING CANDIDATE STATEMENT INCLUDED IN THE VOTERS' PAMPHLET FOR THE MUNICIPAL ELECTION TO BE HELD NOVEMBER 3, 2026

WHEREAS, Section 13307 of the Elections Code of the State of California provides that the governing body of any local agency adopt regulations pertaining to material prepared by any candidate for a municipal election, including the costs of the candidates' statement; and

WHEREAS, Pursuant to Section 13307 of the Elections Code, each candidate for elective office to be voted for at the General Municipal Election on November 3, 2026, may prepare a candidate statement on an appropriate form provided by the elections official. The statement may include the name, age and occupation of the candidate and a brief description of no more than 200 words of the candidate's education and qualifications expressed by the candidate. The statement shall not include party affiliation of the candidate, nor membership or activity in partisan political organizations. The statement may be withdrawn, but not changed, during the period for filing nomination papers and until 5:00 p.m. of the next working day after the close of the nomination period; and

WHEREAS, No candidate will be permitted to include additional materials in the sample ballot package; and

WHEREAS, the City of Sebastopol and the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors have authorized the County of Sonoma Registrar of Voters to conduct the Consolidated General Election in the City of Sebastopol on November 3, 2026 and the City of Sebastopol has agreed to pay its pro-rated share of the costs of such election; and

WHEREAS, Sonoma County was officially designated as a "bilingual county" by the U.S. Department of Justice after the 2020 Census, and all statements are required to be printed in both languages; and

WHEREAS, the County of Sonoma has provided an estimate of costs for the printing, handling, translating and mailing of candidates' statements on the November 3, 2026 ballot for printing in both English and Spanish; and

WHEREAS, Section 13307(c) of the California Elections Code provides that the City may estimate the total cost of printing, handling, translating and mailing Candidates' Statements for nonpartisan elective office, and may require each candidate filing a statement to pay in advance to the City his or her estimated pro-rated share as a condition of having his or her statement included in the voter's pamphlet.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

1. That pursuant to Section 13307 of the Elections Code of the State of California, each candidate for elective office to be voted for at an election to be held in the City of Sebastopol on November 3, 2026 may prepare a candidate's statement on an appropriate form provided by the City Clerk.

2. That the statement may include the name, age and occupation of the candidate and a brief description of no more than two hundred (200) words of the candidate's education and qualifications expressed by the candidate himself or herself.
3. That the statement shall not include any party affiliation of the candidate, nor membership or activity in partisan political organizations.
4. That the statement shall be filed in typewritten form and block style in the Office of the City Clerk at the time the candidate's nomination papers are filed and will be printed exactly as submitted by the candidate.
5. That the statement may be withdrawn, but not changed, during the period for filing nomination papers and until 5:00 pm of the next working day after the close of the nomination period and that Statements shall remain confidential until the expiration of the filing deadline.
6. That the Sonoma County Register of Voters has estimated for printing, handling, translating, and mailing the candidate's statements filed pursuant to this section, including costs incurred as a result of complying with the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (as amended). The candidate shall be required to pay the cost of translating the candidate's statement into any foreign language if translation is required by state or federal law. At the time of filing the Candidate's Statement, the candidate shall submit a fee in the amount of \$900.00 to cover Candidate pro-rated share of the cost of having Candidate Statement included in the voter's pamphlet and will pay the cost of translating the Statement into Spanish and the City Clerk shall require each candidate filing a statement to pay in advance to the City his or her estimated pro-rated share as a condition of having his or her statement included in the voter's pamphlet.
7. That Pursuant to State law, the Candidate's Statement must be translated and printed in English and Spanish as Sonoma County was officially designated as a "bilingual county" by the U.S. Department of Justice after the 2020 Census, and all statements are required to be printed in both languages.
8. That the estimate is just an approximation of the actual cost that varies from one election to another election and may be significantly more or less than the estimate, depending on the actual number of candidates filing statements.
9. That the City Clerk is not bound by the estimate and may, on a pro-rated basis, bill the candidate for additional actual expense or refund any excess paid depending on the final actual cost. In the event of underpayment, the clerk may require the candidate to pay the balance of the cost incurred within 30 days of receiving the invoice for payment from the Sonoma County Registrar of Voters. In the event of overpayment, the clerk shall prorate the excess amount among the candidates and refund the excess amount paid within 30 days of receiving Election invoice for payment from the Sonoma County Registrar of Voters.

10. That the taxpayers of the City of Sebastopol should not be responsible for costs of individual candidate statements.
11. That if a candidate alleges to be indigent, the candidate shall pay the actual pro-rated share of the cost after the election, plus interest and administration fees if applicable.
12. That the City Council of the City of Sebastopol has determined that the candidate shall bear the costs of the statement as allowed in California Elections Code Section 13307.
13. That no candidate will be permitted to include additional materials in the sample ballot package.
14. That the City Clerk shall provide each candidate or the candidate's representative a copy of this Resolution at the time nominating petitions are issued.
15. That all previous resolutions establishing council policy on payment for candidates' statements are repealed.
16. That this Resolution shall apply only to the Consolidated General Municipal Election to be held within the City of Sebastopol on Tuesday, November 3, 2026.
17. That the City Clerk shall certify to the passage and adoption of this resolution and enter it into the book of original resolutions.

This resolution shall take effect immediately upon adoption by the City Council, and the City Clerk shall certify the vote adopting the resolution.

IN COUNCIL DULY PASSED, APPROVED AND ADOPTED this 16<sup>th</sup> day of June 2026.

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of a Resolution passed and adopted by the City Council of the City of Sebastopol by the following roll call vote:

**VOTE:**

Ayes:

Noes:

Absent:

Abstain:

APPROVED:

Mayor Jill McLewis

ATTEST:

Mary Gourley, City Manager

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Alex Mog, City Attorney