



# City of Huntington Beach

**File #:** 21-564

**MEETING DATE:** 7/26/2021

## REQUEST FOR CITY COUNCIL ACTION

**SUBMITTED TO:** Honorable Mayor and City Council Members

**SUBMITTED BY:** Oliver Chi, City Manager

**PREPARED BY:** Travis K. Hopkins, Assistant City Manager

**Subject:**

**Filling an unscheduled vacancy on the City Council (continued from July 19, 2021)**

**Statement of Issue:**

On June 1, 2021, Mayor Pro Tem Jacob "Tito" Ortiz abandoned and resigned his City Council seat. Pursuant to Section 312 of the Huntington Beach Charter, unscheduled vacancies on the City Council are to be filled by an appointment of the City Council within 60 days. Further, the Charter stipulates that if the City Council fails to fill the vacancy within that specified timeframe, a special election must then be held to fill the vacated role.

After coordinating an overall application and assessment process, a total of 105 final candidates were identified for possible appointment to the vacant seat. On July 19, the City Council held a Special City Council Meeting to consider making an appointment, and following considerable discussion, the City Council voted to adjourn and continue the conversation at a subsequent Special City Council meeting, which was coordinated to occur on July 26.

**Financial Impact:**

There is no fiscal impact associated with appointing a candidate to fill the current vacant City Council seat. However, if the City Council fails to reach consensus on an individual to appoint to the abandoned City Council seat, the subsequent Special Election will cost an estimated \$885K - \$1M.

**Recommended Action:**

Select a candidate for appointment to the vacated City Council seat.

**Alternative Action(s):**

Provide direction to hold a Special Election to fill the vacant City Council seat.

**Analysis:**

A Special Meeting of the City Council was held on June 10, 2021 to consider the vacancy, at which time the City Council directed that an appointment process be coordinated to include an application period, introductory interviews with eligible applicants, and a final deliberation to identify an individual

to fill the vacant City Council seat.

Pursuant to that direction, applications were accepted from June 11, 2021, through June 18, 2021. Subsequently, a Special City Council Meeting was held on July 9 - 10, 2021, for the introductory candidate interviews. During the overall assessment process, applications received were as follows:

- 190 applications were received prior to the close of the application process on June 18, 2021.
- 131 applicants accepted an interview time slot with the City Council on either July 9 - 10, 2021.
- A total of 105 applicants participated in the introductory interviews that were held July 9 - 10, 2021.

On July 10, as part of the Special City Council meeting, the appointment process was further defined to include the following parameters:

- A Special City Council meeting would be held on July 19, 2021, at which time the City Council would deliberate and attempt to identify an applicant to fill the vacant City Council seat.
- To facilitate the assessment process, each City Council member will be able to initially nominate up to 3 candidates for consideration of appointment to the vacated role.
- Once the finalist candidates are identified by the City Council, a process consisting of selection rounds will be engaged in an attempt to identify an individual for appointment to the vacant seat.
  - During each assessment round, Council Members would identify their top candidate for filling the vacancy.
  - After each round, the candidate that receives the least amount of support would be removed for consideration during the future rounds.
  - The assessment process would be continued until one candidate receives support of at least 4 Council Members.
  - Ultimately, if no candidate received support from a majority of the City Council by the July 30, 2021 deadline, then a special election would then be required.

On July 19, a Special Meeting was held to consider appointment of one of the 105 final applicants to the vacant seat. After discussing potential candidates, and after considering a special election to fill the seat, the City Council voted to adjourned and continue the meeting at a future date. To that end,

the City Council will be reconvening on July 26 to discuss a possible appointment to the vacated City Council seat.

**Environmental Status:**

Not Applicable

**Strategic Plan Goal:**

Non Applicable - Administrative Item

**Attachment(s):**

1. July 10<sup>th</sup> Special Council Meeting "Filling Our Current City Council Vacancy" Presentation