



Legislation Text

File #: 22-0930, **Version:** 1

Recommendation to adopt resolution requesting the Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk to call, provide, and give notice of a General Municipal Election to be consolidated with the Statewide General Election to be held in the City of Long Beach (City) on Tuesday, November 8, 2022, and include the proposed Charter amendment to a vote of the qualified electors of the City relating to consolidating the City's public utilities under Article XIV; directing City Attorney to prepare an impartial analysis of the Charter amendment; and, providing for the filing of primary and rebuttal arguments and setting rules for the filing of written arguments regarding a proposed Charter amendment to be submitted at said election. (Citywide)

The City Council and the Charter Amendment Committee concluded two joint public hearings to discuss a proposed Charter Amendment that would consolidate the City's natural gas utility with the City's water and sewer utilities. The meetings were held on June 14, 2022 and July 19, 2022, respectively; and a third and final public meeting was noticed for August 9, 2022.

This third meeting fulfills the requirements in City Charter §1903 and California Government Code §34458 for placing a City Charter amendment on the November 8, 2022 ballot for voter for consideration.

Upon meeting the requirements of City Charter §1903 and California Government Code §34458, it recommended the proposed Charter Amendment to consolidate the City's utilities be placed on the November 8, 2022 ballot. This action requires the City Council to adopt a Resolution that:

- Requests the Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk to call, provide and give notice of a General Municipal Election to be consolidated with the Statewide General Election to be held in the City on Tuesday, November 8, 2022 and include the proposed charter amendment to a vote of the qualified electors of the City relating to consolidating the city's public utilities under Article XIV;
- Directs the City Attorney to prepare an impartial analysis of the Charter amendment;
- Provides for the filing of primary and rebuttal arguments; and
- Sets rules for the filing of written arguments regarding a proposed Charter amendment to be submitted at said election.

A copy of Resolution described above, inclusive of the text of the proposed Charter Amendment, is attached (Attachment A).

If approved by voters, the City Charter Article XV (Department of Public Utilities) will be melded with Article XIV (Water Department), effectively merging regulatory oversight, management, and operations of the City's Gas and Water departments.

Expectations are that a merger of the existing water, sewer, and gas utilities into a single publicly-owned utility will:

- Improve customer service by coordinating street pipeline and infrastructure repairs;
- Reduce impacts to streets through coordinated utility pipeline street repairs;
- Eliminate duplicative costs and operations;
- Achieve costs savings through greater economies of scale; and,
- Allow both utilities to maximize usage and flexibility in staffing and equipment.

This matter was reviewed by Deputy City Attorney Taylor Anderson on July 27, 2022 and by Budget Analysis Officer Greg Sorensen on July 26, 2022.

City Council action is requested on August 9, 2022.

The fiscal impact of this item will become part of the City's overall November 8, 2022 ballot measure costs. It is estimated each ballot measure question will cost approximately \$100,000. The Proposed Fiscal Year 2023 budget includes funds to support election and ballot measure related costs. If election and ballot measure related costs exceed proposed budgeted funds, additional funds will need to be identified. This recommendation has no staffing impact beyond the normal budgeted scope of duties and is consistent with existing City Council priorities. The local job impact associated with this recommendation is unknown at this time.

Approve recommendation.

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THOMAS B. MODICA
CITY MANAGER