



Legislation Details (With Text)

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FROM:

David P. Donery, Town Manager

SUBJECT:

Town Council Committee Assignment Discussion

RECOMMENDATION

Discuss options for appointing Council members to serve on committees and provide direction to staff.

BACKGROUND

Town Council members serve on a variety of committees, some of which are internal to the Town and some of which are regional. It has been the Council's practice to review the list of appointments each year and make new appointments as desired or needed. This is normally taken up at a meeting after the Council reorganization.

During the 2022 appointment discussion, Council member Burke requested a future agenda item to discuss whether to change the current practice for Council committee assignments. She specifically asked that the Council explore the option of rotating committee assignments to each Council member.

DISCUSSION

Staff surveyed the towns and cities in Marin to determine how committee assignments are handled in each jurisdiction. Fairfax, Belvedere, Tiburon, Larkspur, Novato and San Anselmo currently do not have a rotation policy in place. All of the aforementioned jurisdictions, except Fairfax, address committee assignments for Council consideration after the reorganization meeting. Fairfax only considers Council assignments when a new council member is sworn in.

In Ross, Corte Madera and Sausalito, the Mayor has more control over the appointment process. In Ross, the Mayor checks with each Council member to see if they want to change the committees they are on, makes any necessary changes and then brings it to a Council meeting for final approval. In Sausalito and Corte Madera, the Mayor makes appointments to committees after the annual reorganization, but normally does not change a committee assignment unless there is a vacancy.

Staff researched committee appointment policies from other cities in California and found that the available written policies are similar to Ross and Sausalito with the Mayor having more control over the selection process.

Municipality	Policy
Belvedere	Same as San Anselmo
Corte Madera	The mayor designates committee appointments after Council reorganization.
Fairfax	Only reshuffles committee assignments when a new Council Member is elected.
Larkspur	Same as San Anselmo
Novato	Same as San Anselmo.
Ross	The mayor designates committee appointments after Council reorganization.
Sausalito	The mayor designates committee appointments after Council reorganization.
Tiburon	Same as San Anselmo.

OTHER	Policy
Manhattan Beach	The mayor designates committee appointments.
Claremont	The mayor designates committee appointments.
Rohnert Park	The mayor designates committee appointments.
San Carlos	The mayor designates committee appointments.
Palo Alto	The mayor designates committee appointments.

DISCUSSION OF OPTIONS

While staff was not able to find an example of a rotation of assignments policy, Council could consider establishing a rotation among a subset of committees. The rotation would need to be divisible by five, so that each Council Member would have the opportunity to serve for one year on each committee. This rotation would be impacted by the timing of the policy's implementation and by the expiration of Council members' terms. For example, if two Council members have only two years left in their terms and they do not seek reelection, they would serve one year each on two of the five committees.

During the meeting, the committees that were named by Council Member Burke and Mayor Fineman as committees of interest are as follows:

Central Marin Police Authority (CMPA) (2 members, 1 alternate)
Ross Valley Fire Board (RVFD) (2 members, 1 alternate)
Marin Clean Energy (MCE) (1 member, 1 alternate)
Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority (MWPA) (1 member, 1 alternate)

Transportation Authority of Marin (TAM) (1 member, 1 alternate)

Please note, if the Council were to enact a rotation among these five committees, there is a chance that the committees could select chairs to their Boards based on seniority and not simply rotate through each jurisdiction. The Council may want to consider if those Board appointments would be accounted for in the rotation policy, so that someone with a Board position on a committee would remain in that position until the term of office on the Board expires.

The following options are available to the Council:

1. Keep the committee assignment process the same as has been past practice.
2. Create a policy that will allow for the mayor to appoint the committee assignments after the Council reorganization meeting.
3. Create a policy that will allow for rotation of all committee assignments at chosen intervals or after every election. The committee assignments would need to be evenly dispersed among the Council members for a rotation list to work.
4. Create a policy that will allow for rotation of specific committee assignments every year or after every election. The specific committees will need to be identified by the Council and those committees would need to be evenly dispersed among the Council members for rotation.

FISCAL IMPACT

There would be no direct fiscal impact to the Town related to this item.

CEQA AND CLIMATE ACTION PLAN CONSISTENCY

Discussing a potential committee assignment policy is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), under the “common sense” exemption, because it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment. (Cal. Code Regs. tit. 14, § 15061).

Attachment 1 - Sample resolution submitted by Councilmember Burke