



COUNTY OF SONOMA

575 ADMINISTRATION
DRIVE, ROOM 102A
SANTA ROSA, CA 95403

SUMMARY REPORT

Agenda Date: 8/13/2024

To: Board of Supervisors

Department or Agency Name(s): County Clerk-Recorder-Assessor-Registrar of Voters

Staff Name and Phone Number: Deva Marie Proto, (707) 565-1877

Vote Requirement: Majority

Supervisorial District(s): Countywide

Title:

Consolidate All Future Elections Called By Municipalities and Local Districts in Sonoma County Provided Certain Conditions Are Met

Recommended Action:

Adopt the resolution preauthorizing all future requests for election consolidation passed by governing bodies of municipalities and local districts provided certain conditions are met.

Executive Summary:

California Elections Code Sections 10400, 10401 and 10403 authorize the consolidation of federal, state, county, municipal and local district elections if the jurisdictions overlap geographically and the governing body of each jurisdiction files a resolution with the county elections official calling an election be held on the same date and requesting consolidation at least 88 days prior to that date.

In an attempt to streamline processes and increase efficiency, the Registrar of Voters is requesting that the Board automatically authorize all future requests for consolidation from municipalities and local districts in Sonoma County if the following conditions are met:

- The governing bodies of the municipalities and local districts request election services that comply with state law and the election model utilized by the county (in Sonoma County, this is currently the Voter's Choice Act election model).
- The governing bodies of the municipalities and local districts agree to reimburse the County of Sonoma for their pro-rata share of the costs incurred throughout the conduct of the election.
- The Registrar of Voters Office agrees to render the requested election services.

Discussion:

California Elections Code Sections 10400, 10401 and 10403 authorize the consolidation of federal, state, county, municipal and local district elections if the jurisdictions overlap geographically and the governing body of each jurisdiction files a resolution with the county elections official calling an election be held on the same date and requesting consolidation at least 88 days prior to that date.

Past practice at the Registrar of Voters Office (ROV) has been to bundle consolidation requests of municipalities and local districts going to election into a single packet and submit them to the Board with a new, broad, all-inclusive consolidation resolution. This was how consolidation was handled for the March 5, 2024, Presidential Primary Election (see Resolution Number 24-0023). This requires drafting of the board item,

and multiple stages of review by staff from ROV management, County Counsel, and the County Administrator's Office, as well as review and a determination by the Board itself.

Due to the Board of Supervisors agenda timelines, the consolidation request is often before the Board for consideration several weeks after the actual work has already begun on the election. Due to mandated timelines related to the election, there is no feasible way for the work on the consolidated election to be delayed until the Board officially approves the consolidation. As an example, the consolidation efforts for the March 5, 2024 election began on December 13, 2023. However, the resolution authorizing the consolidation was not heard by the Board until January 23, 2024, over a month later. Simply stated, the election calendar and deadlines cannot always be reconciled with the Board of Supervisor's meeting schedule.

Several California counties (Lassen, Orange, San Joaquin, Siskiyou) have passed resolutions preauthorizing consolidation of future elections called by municipalities and local districts. Election administrators in these counties reported that this led to bureaucratic efficiencies because staff no longer had to draft a separate consolidation resolution for each election.

Based on experiences in other counties, the Registrar is asking that the pre-approval of consolidations specify that consolidation requests from municipalities and local districts will only be preauthorized when they request election services that comply with state law and the election model currently employed by the County. This language gives the Registrar of Voters the option to decline to conduct an election, particularly if it is one the Office does not have expertise or experience in running (such as a landowner district election). The Board of Supervisors does have the authority pursuant to Elections Code 10402.5 to deny any request for consolidation if the ballot style, voting equipment or computer capacity is such that additional elections or materials cannot be handled.

Accordingly, three preconditions for preapproval have been included in the resolution.

- The governing bodies of the municipalities and local districts request election services that comply with state law and the election model utilized by the county.
- The governing bodies of the municipalities and local districts agree to reimburse the County of Sonoma for their pro-rata share of the costs incurred throughout the conduct of the election.
- The Registrar of Voters Office agrees to render the requested election services.

Adopting the attached resolution will achieve greater efficiencies regarding election timelines and authority and reduce the administrative burden on staff involved in drafting and reviewing board agenda items. Upon approval by the Board, the ROV will consolidate all future elections on behalf of the requesting cities or districts as specified in their requests in accordance with the provisions of California law, as long as the established preconditions are met.

Strategic Plan:

N/A

Racial Equity:

Was this item identified as an opportunity to apply the Racial Equity Toolkit?

No

Agenda Date: 7/23/2024

Prior Board Actions:

On January 23, 2024, the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors authorized consolidation of the March 5, 2024, Presidential Primary Election (Resolution Number 24-0023).

FISCAL SUMMARY

Expenditures	FY24-25 Adopted	FY25-26 Projected	FY26-27 Projected
Budgeted Expenses			
Additional Appropriation Requested			
Total Expenditures			
Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF			
State/Federal			
Fees/Other			
Use of Fund Balance			
General Fund Contingencies			
Total Sources			

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

Very slight reduction in staff costs devoted to drafting consolidation resolutions.

Staffing Impacts:			
Position Title (Payroll Classification)	Monthly Salary Range (A-I Step)	Additions (Number)	Deletions (Number)

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

N/A

Attachments:

Resolution

Related Items "On File" with the Clerk of the Board:

N/A