



# 2026 CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE COUNTY OF SAN MATEO

## AGENDA

Tuesday, March 17, 2026 at 5:30 p.m.

500 County Center, 1st Floor

Manzanita Hall

Redwood City, California 94063

Zoom Participation: <https://smcgov.zoom.us/j/92696071550>

1. Roll Call
2. Public Comment  
*This is an opportunity for members of the public to address the Committee on any Committee-related topics that are not on the agenda. If your subject is not on the agenda, the Chair will recognize you at this time.*
3. Approval of March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2026, Minutes
4. Presentation by County Attorney's Office  
*Presentation of 2018 Charter Review Report to the Board of Supervisors and the Committee Reports. Presentation of proposed schedule of future meetings.*
5. Discussion of a proposal from Members Tom Adams and Karen Chapman regarding resilience against events of extreme weather
6. Preview of Recommendation from the "Independent District Lines Commission" Subcommittee
7. Informational Reports: Ad Hoc Committees
  - a. *Procedures for Board Appointments to Fill Vacancies in Elected Office*
  - b. *Annual Review of Board Governance Practices*
  - c. *Row Officer Consolidation / Language Access & Equity*
  - d. *Human Rights & Equity Commission*
8. Adjourn

*Meetings are accessible to people with disabilities. Individuals who need special assistance or a disability-related modification or accommodation (including auxiliary aids or services) to participate in this meeting, or who have a disability and wish to request an alternative format for the agenda, meeting notice, agenda packet or other writings that may be distributed at the meeting, should contact Kim Boverio, Assistant Clerk of the Board, at least two working days before the meeting at [kboverio@smcgov.org](mailto:kboverio@smcgov.org). Notification in advance of the meeting will enable the County to make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility to this meeting and the materials related to it.*



**San Mateo County Charter Review Committee Meeting**  
**Tuesday, March 3, 2026, 5:30 p.m.**  
500 County Center, Manzanita Hall, Redwood City, CA 94063

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**DRAFT MINUTES**

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The meeting was called to order by Chair Rosanne Foust at 5:33 p.m.

1. Roll Call

**In-Person Present:**

Committee Members: Tom Adams, Rosanne Foust, Mark Haesloop, Nathan Healy, Dana Johnson, Iliana Rodriguez

**Virtual Present:**

Committee Members: Talavou Aumavae, Liliam Perez Avila, Karen Chapman, Eddie Flores, Monica Mejia, Kathleen Wheeler, Kimberly Woo

**Absent:**

Committee Members: Jacquelyn Foust, Lynette Garcia, Daniela Jonguitud, Julie Lind, George Smith

**Staff:** Brian Pettit, Deputy County Attorney; Rocio Kiryczun, Deputy County Executive; Lena Silberman, Management Analyst, and Kim Boverio, Assistant Clerk of the Board

2. Approval of February 17, 2026 Minutes

Karen Chapman and Tom Adams intend to create a draft minority report on resilience to extreme weather for full committee to review and comment on. When it is final, they intend to request that the committee approve including their minority report with the final report on the committee's recommendations that will be submitted to the Board of Supervisors. Brian Pettit, Deputy County Attorney will reach out to advise on this proposed process.

**11 RESULT:**           **Approved**  
**MOTION:**           **Mark Haesloop**  
**SECOND:**           **Iliana Rodriguez**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Vote</b>
Tom Adams	Aye
Talavou Aumavae	Aye
Liliam Perez Avila	Aye
Karen Chapman	Aye
Eddie Flores	Aye
Jacquelyn Foust	Absent
Rosanne Foust	Aye
Lynette Garcia	Absent
Mark Haesloop	Aye
Nathan Healy	Aye
Dana Johnson	Abstain
Daniela Jonguitud	Absent
Julie Lind	Absent
Monica Mejia	Aye
Iliana Rodriguez	Abstain
George Smith	Absent
Kathleen Wheeler	Aye
Kimberly Woo	Aye

Total: Aye (11), No (0), Abstain (2), Absent (5)

### 3. General Public Comment

Speakers: None

### 4. Informational Reports: Ad Hoc Committees

- a) Procedures for Board Appointments to Fill Vacancies in Elected Office  
Commissioner Iliana Rodriguez: No new reports, have not met since last meeting. Will bring forward recommendations to larger committee at April 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting.
- b) Annual Review of Board Governance Practices  
Commissioner Eddie Flores: Met with Sup Corzo and her team and went thru the subcommittee's questions and charge. Debrief memo is in the works to come to the full committee soon after the subcommittee submits edits and will bring forward recommendations to full committee at April 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting. Possibly get a preview on March 17<sup>th</sup>.
- c) Independent District Lines Commission  
Commissioner Kathleen Wheeler: Interviewing two previous supervisors from 2021 and will interview Jim Lawrence and Brian Pettit. Have ideas on where to go for changes and will work on presentation to the full committee, will bring forward recommendations to full committee as a preview on March 17<sup>th</sup> and then longer presentation at April 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting.
- d) Row Officer Consolidation / Language Access & Equity

Commissioner Tom Adams: No new reports, have not met since last meeting.

e) Human Rights & Equity Commission

Commissioner Monica Mejia: Have not met yet and will be ready to present April 14<sup>th</sup> meeting to the full committee.

**Speakers:**

Rosanne Foust, Chair

Rocio Kiryczun, Deputy County Executive

Lena Silberman, Management Analyst

Brian Pettit, County Attorney

**Upcoming Meetings:**

- **Tuesday, March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2026 | 3/17/2026**
  - 5:30 P.M. – 8:00 P.M.
  - Hybrid (Manzanita Hall, 500 County Center, Redwood City, CA.)
- **Thursday, April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2026 | 4/2/2026**
  - 5:30 P.M. – 8:00 P.M.
  - Hybrid (Manzanita Hall, 500 County Center, Redwood City, CA.)
- **Tuesday, April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2026 | 4/14/2026**
  - 5:30 P.M. – 8:00 P.M.
  - Hybrid (Manzanita Hall, 500 County Center, Redwood City, CA.)
- **Tuesday April 28<sup>th</sup>, 2026 | 4/28/2026**
  - 5:30 P.M. – 8:00 P.M.
  - Hybrid (Manzanita Hall, 500 County Center, Redwood City, CA.)

Public Comment: None

5. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 5:59 p.m.



## **2018 CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE COUNTY OF SAN MATEO**

June 14, 2018

To: San Mateo County Board of Supervisors

From: San Mateo County Charter Review Committee

The 2018 Charter Review Committee (the "Committee") met ten times between January 30, 2018 through June 13, 2018. Board President Dave Pine attended the first meeting on January 30, 2018, to welcome and swear in the appointed Committee Members.

At its February 21<sup>st</sup> meeting, the Committee unanimously elected Rosanne Foust as Chair and Kalimah Salahuddin as Vice Chair. The Committee also unanimously recognized that it was directed to discuss and address the following three potential amendments to the Charter by the Board of Supervisors:

1. The consolidation of the offices of Controller and Treasurer-Tax Collector into a single appointed Director of Finance position, or, in the alternative, to address whether the separate offices of Controller and Treasurer-Tax Collector should be changed from elected offices to appointed offices.
2. The appointment process for the County Manager.
3. The separation of the elections functions from the Office of the Assessor –Clerk-Recorder.

The Committee decided to address these three potential amendments through a process of appointing sub-committees to analyze and gather information which would then be presented to the whole Committee before action is taken.

At its meetings on February 21, 2018; March 7, 2018; and March 21, 2018, the Committee also discussed the identification of other potential Charter Amendments for further consideration. Suggestions were made by individual Committee members as well as by members of the public during the public comment. Three additional potential amendments were discussed, and the Committee asked the County Counsel's office to provide more information to determine whether two of the three (proposals #1 and #3 below) fell within the purview of the Committee. Once the additional information was received, the Committee then voted on whether to move forward to study such potential amendments. The additional proposed amendments were as follows:

1. An amendment/addition to Article VI, Section 606 of the Charter regarding Preference to County Products. The proposed amendment would have clarified that the County's "local preference" in contracting be given to vendors physically located and doing business in San Mateo County and/or its incorporated cities, and further, that bids from local vendors within 5% of the lowest responsible bid shall be selected.
2. Removal of the term limit provision in the Charter which prohibits members of the Board of Supervisors from serving more than three consecutive terms (Article II Section 202) in office light of the fact that they are now elected by district.
3. Inclusion of section in the Charter requiring a "Rainy Day" fund as part of the County budget, similar to the State of California.

Each of these three potential amendments did not receive the required vote for further study at the March 7<sup>th</sup> meeting. In addition, at the March 7<sup>th</sup> meeting two additional proposed amendments were brought forward as follows:

1. Consideration of changing the manner of election of the Board of Supervisors from by district to at-large; and
2. Consideration of whether the County Coroner should be appointed instead of elected?

At the Committee's March 21<sup>st</sup> meeting, neither of these two potential amendments received the required vote for further study.

### **Recommendations**

On the three remaining potential charter amendments, the recommendations are as follows:

- 1. On the consolidation of the offices of Controller and Treasurer-Tax Collector into a single appointed Director of Finance position, or, in the alternative, to address whether the separate offices of Controller and Treasurer-Tax Collector should be changed from elected offices to appointed offices,**

The Committee voted 10 to 5, with one abstention and three absences, to recommend that the offices of Tax Collector-Treasurer and Controller remain separate and elected and that no amendment to the County Charter be submitted to the voters of San Mateo County.

- 2. On the appointment process for the County Manager,**

The committee voted 13-0, with 6 absent, to recommend the following Charter revision to the Board of Supervisors:

Section 302 Appointment and Removal shall be amended and restated in its entirety to state:

- a. The County Manager shall be appointed by the Board of Supervisors on the basis of executive and administrative qualifications and experience. The County Manager is evaluated by the Board, serves at its pleasure and may be removed by an affirmative vote of three of its members.

**3. On the issue of whether the elections functions should remain consolidated with the Office of the Assessor –Clerk-Recorder**

The Committee voted 13 to 2 vote, with one abstention and three absences, to recommend that the elections function remain within the office of Assessor-Clerk-Recorder and that no amendment to the County Charter be submitted to the voters of San Mateo County.

**The Committee’s rational for each of the above-referenced recommendations is detailed below:**

**1. Consolidation of the Offices of Controller and Treasurer-Tax Collector**

Material was submitted along with statements from the currently serving Treasurer-Tax Collector and Controller and is included in the public record. The sub-committee conducted interviews either in person or by phone with the following individuals: Sandie Arnott- Treasurer-Tax Collector, Juan Raigoza- Controller, John Maltbie-County Manager, Tom Huening-Former BOS Member and Controller, Adrienne Tissier-Former BOS Member, Matthew Hymel, Marin County Administrator, and former Santa Clara County, and San Diego County representatives.

The Committee also reviewed and evaluated the 2010 San Mateo County Civil Grand Jury Report from as part of its research. The budgets of each office were reviewed and discussed including the potential impact of consolidation (or lack thereof) on the County’s General Fund. The Committee reviewed and evaluated extensive internet research regarding the benefits of appointing versus electing the Treasurer-Tax Collector and Controller positions, including research concerning of a number of California counties and their practices. In addition, the County Counsel’s office provided extensive background material on the history of elected positions in San Mateo County, the history of consolidation of elected offices in San Mateo County, and ballot measures regarding consolidation of elected offices.

The Committee voted 10 to 5, with one abstention and two absences, that the offices of Tax Collector-Treasurer and Controller remain separate and elected and that no amendment to the County Charter be submitted to the voters of San Mateo County. Attached to this document are the three position papers provided by the sub-committee members. (See pages 5-10).

**2. The Appointment Process for the County Manager**

The sub-committee interviewed Donna Vaillancourt, Director of Human Resources, and to her knowledge no other County has similar interview requirements in connection with its hiring of a County Manager in their Charter. Subsequent research by the sub-committee netted the same findings. In addition the sub-committee interviewed John Maltbie, County Manager, and David Burruto, Supervisor Dave Pine’s Chief of Staff. Three options were provided by the sub-committee to the full committee for consideration. They are as follows:

1. Removing the “middle paragraph” of Section 302 to revise that section to read:  
The County Manager shall be appointed by the Board of Supervisors on the basis of executive and administrative qualifications and experience. The County Manager is evaluated by the Board, serves at its pleasure and may be removed by an affirmative vote of three of its members. *The deleted section currently reads: Applicants for the*

*position of County Manager shall be solicited widely and shall be screened by the usual personnel procedure. The Board of Supervisors shall select a panel competent to evaluate the qualifications of candidates. The panel shall interview the screened candidates and submit to the Board of Supervisors a list of from 5-7 of the best qualified. The Board shall make its decision from this list.*

2. Changing the requirements to no less than three candidates.
3. Removing the entire reference to County Manager.

The committee voted 13-0, with 6 absences, to recommend Option 1 to the Board of Supervisors. See attached sub-committee report included in May 30<sup>th</sup> Agenda packet. (See page 11).

### **3. Should the elections functions remain consolidated in the Office of the Assessor –Clerk-Recorder or be separated out?**

The sub-committee interviewed Assessor-Clerk-Recorder (Elections) Mark Church along with Assistant Assessor-Clerk-Recorder Jim Irizarry. Detailed information was provided by the Office of Assessor-Clerk-Recorder-Elections (ACRE) specifically on the Registration and Elections Division which is included in the public record. In addition, ACRE provided a written summary of questions raised by the Charter Review Committee regarding this office which included three sections: Historical Background, Efficiency of Operations and Elections Quality Control. The sub-committee also received the Board of Supervisors commissioned Mejorando Report from 2016, the initial two-page response from ACRE, the subsequent 32 page response from ACRE and an additional binder of information on May 16<sup>th</sup> from ACRE containing above stated material, newspaper articles and ACRE's response to Item 7b. on the May 16<sup>th</sup> Charter Review Committee Agenda.

The sub-committee presented to the full committee their recommendation to specifically identify Election Services within the Charter as follows:

*The elections officer shall be part of the Assessor-County Clerk-Recorder responsibilities and shall provide all election services as provided by General Law.*

After a lengthy discussion on the topic of elections being specifically referenced in the Charter the full Committee, in a 13 to 2 vote, with one abstention and three absences, recommended that the Elections Function remain within the office of Assessor-Clerk-Recorder and no amendment to the County Charter be submitted to the voters of San Mateo County. See attached sub-committee reports included in the May 30<sup>th</sup> Agenda Packet. (See pages 12-14).

It was also discussed that both Election Services and Assessor Services are important County functions and how could their importance be better communicated to the public. In addition, the Charter Review Committee discussed why there has never been an analysis of the basis for the decision in 1993 to combine the Assessor-Clerk-Recorder with the Elections functions and should the Board consider an analysis in the future. (See pages 15-16).

**Subcommittee on the Controller/Treasurer Consolidation  
& Election/Appointment Questions  
Position #1**

**QUESTION:** Should the elected offices of Controller and Treasurer/Tax Collector be combined into a single appointed Director of Finance position?

**POSITION:** The offices should remain as is - separate and elected by the voters of San Mateo County

**JUSTIFICATION:**

*CONSOLIDATION WOULD:*

- reduce segregation of duties (collect, hold and invest vs. distribute and report)
- reduce checks and balances as well as accountability and transparency (which cannot be overstated)
- have no cost savings as offices have no overlap of responsibilities
- reduce focus on individual essential duties
- effectively circumvent Government Code and Revenue & Taxation Code that specifically identifies the distinct responsibilities of each office
- create an environment ripe for fraud

*BENEFIT OF ELECTION VS. APPOINTMENT:*

- Ensured taxpayer oversight and provision of transparency and accountability
- Provision that these important fiscal offices remain independent of BOS and CMO direct control
- Both offices provide critical financial services for agencies not under the jurisdiction of the BOS, such as school districts. As elected officials rather than appointed staff, they can serve those clients independently without BOS direction.
- Responsiveness – appointed officials are far less likely to be responsive to their constituency (the taxpayers) than those that are elected
- Will of the electorate – the voters have been asked many times throughout the years about converting elected offices (Including the Controller position as recently as 2012) to appointed offices and have consistently voted it down. In this current environment that is highly unlikely to change. People like the accountability of the ballot box.

*ADDITIONAL POINTS OF RELEVANCE:*

- Qualifications – unlike the majority of elected offices where the only requirement is that the candidate be a registered voter in the district in which they're choosing to run, both the Treasurer and Controller's professional requirements are delineated in CA Government Code. You must be an experienced professional in the field to seek the position.

- No achieved efficiencies identified or quantified in any of the jurisdictions that have chosen to consolidate
- Cost savings contention – even if the Treasurer and Controller offices were no longer elected, other County level offices would remain on the ballot and the cost of the election would be the same. As it pertains to salary, hiring a Director of Finance, whose salary would be far higher than the (discussed in a public forum) salaries of the current office holders and who would receive sick leave and vacation could actually *increase* cost.

**Subcommittee on the Controller/Treasurer Consolidation  
& Elections/Appointment Questions  
Position #2**

**Argument for Consolidation:**

1. Streamlined processes:
  - a. There is only one office that constituents need to consult
  - b. One leader means having a clearer direction for entire department
  - c. Clarity in the processes of actions can lead to more efficient roadways in order to serve residents
  
2. Savings:
  - a. When there is only one head of the department, there will only be one salary
  - b. Means money will be available to be appropriately re-allocated
  - c. New reorganization of department dictates how much can be saved
  
3. Independence and accountability still upheld:
  - a. Consolidation does not mean ambiguity or corruption is inevitable
  - b. All governmental roles hold accountability no matter what
  - c. In order to have a cohesive, functional government, there needs to be trust and competency in all branches, not just one

Links:

- The Mercury News: <https://www.mercurynews.com/2010/04/20/san-mateo-county-grand-jury-consolidate-controller-treasurer-tax-collector/>
  
- Marin Independent Journal: <http://www.marinij.com/article/zz/20110915/NEWS/110919029>
  
- Marin County FY 2017-2018 Proposed Budget: <https://www.marincounty.org/depts/ad/divisions/management-and-budget/budget-overview>
  
- Marin County BOS Meeting Memo: [http://marin.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view\\_id=33&clip\\_id=4535&meta\\_id=483008](http://marin.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=33&clip_id=4535&meta_id=483008)
  
- Marin IJ: <http://www.marinij.com/article/zz/20120210/NEWS/120219155>
  
- Marin IJ: <http://www.marinij.com/article/zz/20131013/NEWS/131018612>
  
- Patch: <https://patch.com/california/sanrafael/marin-county-finance-department-receives-national-award>
  
- MarinFair.org: <https://www.marinfair.org/-/media/files/departments/ad/press-releases/2012/20120209dofcafr.pdf>
  
- Marin IJ: <http://www.marinij.com/article/ZZ/20081006/NEWS/810069972>

## Interview with Matthew Hymel, County Administrator of Marin

Interviewed 5/30/18

Background: Matthew was a key player in recommending the merger to the BOS and also implementing it after the passage of Measure B. He is able to give key insights into the transition of the TTC and C offices into the singular Department of Finance and explain how it has affected Marin.

1. **Three main arguments in support of consolidation mentioned in the Marin Civil Grand Jury report pertaining to Measure B were:**
  - a. **More efficient service**
  - b. **More career opportunities**
  - c. **Savings**

**Has Marin County experienced these projected benefits since the consolidation? And if so, can you give specific examples?**

Yes. Mr. Hymel acknowledged that there would be some cost-savings with the consolidation when he recommended it to the Board, but since the consolidation, they've adjusted their budget accordingly, so there is no concrete way of knowing how much money has been saved overall. He did state that he believes the projected savings of \$100k/year, as mentioned in the Civil Grand Jury report, is accurate for that time.

What he has noticed mostly since consolidation is the efficiency of the system. The biggest benefit from this merger, he seemed to suggest, is having the clarity of one leader. He mentioned how constituents need only to consult one finance department. If there is clarity in the process, there should be efficiency in the execution.

2. **How long did it take for the Department of Finance to train the combined offices' staff to comfortably work under one department?**

He claims that it felt like a seamless transition. There wasn't a lot of disruption to the overall financial processes of the county and estimated that it took a year for the department to work at its fullest capacity.

Some context he gave as to why the consolidation made sense for Marin County was that the county's finance departments implemented an integrated system which was not compatible with the way the departments were then organized. He also stated the timing of a possible merger would be appropriate because the positions of Auditor-Controller and Treasurer-Tax Collector would need to be filled within the few coming years. We know this because in the Civil Grand Jury report, it states in its arguments in favor of appointment that "the current Auditor-Controller intends to retire at the end of 2008, and the current Treasurer-Tax Collector does not intend to seek re-election at the end of his current term in 2010." (pg. 6)

Another key reason Mr. Hymel pointed out as to why the transition was fairly easy was because of the person who ultimately became the Director of Finance, Roy Given, who still holds the position today. Mr. Given had worked under both departments in his career and was knowledgeable in both fields. Because of Mr. Given's experience in both offices, Mr. Hymel states that there was no "winner and loser" mentality during the transition. What he means by that is neither office felt shorted, or was left with less responsibility or gained more power because of the consolidation.

Note: Mr. Given is out of his office til June 3<sup>rd</sup>, so I wasn't able to interview him today.

- 3. Before Measure B's passage, the issues of accountability and independence were major arguments for those against consolidation. Have these concerns still been an issue after all these years since the passage of the resolution?**

Mr. Hymel believes that there has been more accountability since the merger. On a day-to-day basis, there is still a person in power, in this case an appointed Director of Finance, who must answer to the residents of Marin County and the BOS.

In terms of the issue of elected vs. appointed, he mentioned that in Marin County there has not been a lot of competition in elections for certain positions, such as the Auditor-Controller. So even if there was performance dissatisfaction, there was little chance of an actual change in leadership.

He gave an example in the past that they had the same Controller for 16 years. He didn't give hard examples of his performance and whether it was satisfactory or dissatisfactory, but did mention that he wasn't "hands on enough" when Marin County's TTC and C offices transitioned to the integrated system in 2006.

(Side note: This is my opinion, but I believe that Mr. Hymel is suggesting what we have already discussed, which is that there are cons to both elected and appointed officials, but that it is ultimately up to the people who hold the positions of power to maintain the role's integrity.)

**Mr. Hymel's final thought:**

Marin County has achieved the projected benefits that were discussed when proposing the consolidation and the change has benefitted the residents of Marin County.

**Subcommittee on the Controller/Treasurer Consolidation  
& Elections/Appointment Questions  
Position #3**

**ARGUMENT FOR APPOINTING**

1. Ability to ensure candidate qualifications
  - a. Electorate not as familiar with job requirements as would be the executive recruiters (or others) who will advise the Appointing Authority
  - b. Appointed manager would be a pure-play professional, not distracted by future political aspirations nor interested in taking time from the job to campaign.
  - c. Job requirements can be made stronger through the rigors of resumes, vetting, interviews, etc., whereas election requirements have traditionally not be as stringent nor do they provide the flexibility and latitude needed in the hiring process.
  - d. Electorate tends to vote for whom they are familiar. With incumbents often running unopposed, and with long tenure, the same manager continues to be elected.
  
2. Concern for independence and potential loss of checks and balances is overstated
  - a. Executive decisions and Policy determinations within the Controller function are not significantly independent from BOS influence, even when elected. In practice, the Controller function is largely influenced by access to resources and budgets. Because budgets are controlled by BOS, the Controller tends to focus on direction provided by the BOS, and tends not to act independently, or in opposition.
  - b. Executive decision and Policy determination for the T/TC are largely influenced by State Law, Financial Protocol, Government Oversight Groups, and traditional SMC practices. The T/TC does not gain "independence" over significant matters through the election process.
  - c. Regarding transparency and accountability, malfeasance is found in both Appointed and Elected County models, and there is no evidence that elected Controllers avoid corruption any more than do Appointed Controllers. Sacramento, Santa Clara, and Marin have not reported any issues.
  - d. Policy is set by BOS. If the electorate desires a policy change in any County body, they elect a BOS that will accomplish that. By electing heads of multiple government bodies, we establish multiple fiefdoms where the public may receive conflicting viewpoints and varied responsiveness.
  
3. Enable smoother internal processes
  - a. Elected managers have traditionally not been held to same standards of daily participation in departmental functions as are those Appointed.
  - b. Appointed managers easier to remove and replace. It eliminates the cost and complications of calling for an election when replacing an elected manager in mid-term.
  - c. Trims election process and reduces the volume of names on the ballot (there are over 100 names on the current ballot).

## San Mateo County Charter Review Subcommittee

Topic: Subcommittee: **Recruitment Process for the County Manager**

Subcommittee members: Marilyn Ezrin (chair) , Ernie Schmidt, Janet Borgens

**On May 2, 2018,**

Recommendations:

- 1-Removing the middle paragraph
- 2-Changing the requirement to no less than three candidates
- 3-Removing the entire reference to county manager.

### **Motion by committee:**

We recommended option 1--**removing the middle paragraph in section 302 of the County Charter—**

*Applicants for the position of County Manager shall be solicited widely and shall be screened by the usual personnel procedure. The Board of Supervisors shall select a panel competent to evaluate the qualifications of the candidates. The panel shall interview the screened candidates and submit to the Board of Supervisors a list of from 5-7 of the best qualified. The Board shall make its decision from this list.*

This appeared to be a good compromise to achieve our goal of addressing concerns from the Charter Commission itself, removing the constraints placed on the Board of Supervisors in the hiring process of the county manager and maintaining a reference to the county manager in the Charter.

Motion carried

### **Discussion points and meetings:**

**Donna Vaillancourt**

**David Burruto Assistant to David Pine**

**Communication with County Manager Maltbie**

May 23, 2018

To: San Mateo County Charter Review Committee

From Ann Draper  
Steve Okamoto (Chair of Sub-committee)  
Sharifa Wilson

Subject Consideration of function of Election Services within County Charter

### RECOMMENDATION

Modify the County charter to specifically identify Election Services within the Charter as follows:

**XXX Elections Officer**

The elections officer shall be part of the Assessor-County Clerk-Recorder responsibilities and shall provide all election services as provided by General Law.

### CONSIDERATIONS

The sub-committee reviewed written materials provided by The Assessor-County Clerk-Recorder and County staff. We heard testimony at meetings and met with community members to hear their thoughts. On-line materials from other counties related to election services were reviewed. The sub-committee was also asked to consider materials which were provided in the May 16 packet and provided by County Counsel and by Mark Church. The response to the May 16 materials is at the end of this report. After doing this research, the sub-committee reviewed and discussed the information and based on our considerations, we make our recommendation based upon the following factors.

- **Status within the organization.** We believe that election services are vital and central to our democracy. Election services are not shown or mentioned within the Charter. General Law includes election services within the duties of the County Clerk. However, the average citizen most likely would not know where or how election services are provided.
- We recommend that election services be specifically identified within the Charter so that the average citizen would be able to know the County provides these services through the Assessor-County Clerk-Recorder. We also believe that the elections officer should be a leadership level position to provide the highest reasonable status within the organization.
- **Cost.** Governance within San Mateo County is very complex due to its many special and school districts as well as the cities and the County. Fundamental information regarding the governance and tax boundaries are maintained and up-dated by the Assessor's office. Now and in the future this information is in a digital format. Technology support for election services is currently fully integrated with the Assessor- County Clerk-Recorder's office. By in large, the sub-committee believes technology support functions well as is. The sub-committee was concerned that if election services is separated from its current organization, there could be significant cost in

replicating the technology support within a separate organization and/or there could be a measure of dysfunction in a separation. One community person commented to the sub-committee that there will need to be a significant future cost in upgrading and maintaining the voting apparatus to assure the integrity of the voting process. The sub-committee agrees this cost will be essential for the County and the voters. This future cost will be present regardless of organizational structure.

Cost considerations provided a factor in maintaining the current organizational structure and believing that the Elections Officer should be specifically named as a leadership level position within the County.

- **Education.** Unlike other fields (e.g. public finance or administration) there is not a college or university that provides a specific field of study for election services or the technology that supports the voting process. The California Association of Clerks and Election Officials does provide training in election services for people already employed by an agency. Most knowledge is learned on the job. It appears that several counties have a difficulty in recruiting election staff with specific elections knowledge. Rather, the candidates have other transferable skills and then learn the specific election requirements after hired. The Sub-committee thought that it would be unlikely that a resident of the County would be specifically knowledgeable of election services if this position were to be recommended as a separate elected office. The sub-committee believes that the current consolidation of functions with the Assessor-County Clerk-Recorder was agreeable for the future and no change to this structure was warranted at this time.
- **Process.** The sub-committee did hear comments from the community regarding past errors or past requests for expanded services. The County acknowledged the errors and described how they had addressed the specific errors. The County also stated it analyzes its processes and improves them where needed. The sub-committee did not find documentation of an error rate of concern and believes that any organization will have some unfortunate level of error. What is important is how the organization deals with the errors. The sub-committee did note that the San Mateo County election process was positively noted by the Secretary of State. The County is in the vanguard within the State in terms of all mail balloting. We did hear that some community members wanted expanded potential for voting with the 2018 primary election. The sub-committee received information that the process for voting will be assessed after the June election vote and changes will be made where warranted. If modifications are desired in addition to what is fiscally provided within the budget for these services, then the Board of Supervisors can take appropriate action.

## **SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION**

At the May 16 "non-meeting" information was provided by County Counsel, stating a qualified maybe to the concept that no charter amendment may be needed to transfer election services from its current organizational structure within the elected Assessor-County Clerk-Recorder's office to somewhere else in the organization. The sub-committee considered this information and believes its recommended

language makes clear which organization election services should be a part. No change to the original recommendation is proposed.

Mark Church also provided a binder of materials with responses to the 2016 management audit report included with the Charter Committee May 16 packet. The bulk of the 2016 audit report and the Church responses relate to issues of management style of present incumbents. These are not charter issues. The sub-committee based its recommendation on governance considerations. Therefore the recommendation from the sub-committee remains the same.

June 5, 2018

The Charter Review Committee was requested to consider if the elections function should be separated from the Assessor-County Clerk-Recorder and Chief Elections Officer organization. A sub-committee was formed to consider this question and make a recommendation to the full committee. The sub-committee reviewed written materials provided by the Assessor-County Clerk-Recorder and Chief Elections Officer and other County staff, heard testimony at meetings, met with community members and other elected officials and researched on-line materials. The sub-committee provided their recommendation to the Charter Review Committee. On May 30, 2018 the full Committee approved a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors to make **no change** to the charter and retain the elections function within its present organization. This recommendation is based upon the following considerations.

- The existing organization, as is, has been commended by the Secretary of State for its leadership within the State. San Mateo County is a leader within the State to implement the all mail ballot. The experiences and learning of the County will help other counties implement the Voters Choice Act.
- Over the past two decades the California laws and systems related to voting have become increasingly more complex when compared with years prior. Examples of new challenges include, Voters Choice act, Conditional Voter Registration, Motor Voter and the sophistication of potential cyber attacks. The present organization has implemented systems and procedures to address these new requirements and is recognized as a model for the State.
- One committee member described an error that occurred in the 2016 elections related to a school district. The County acknowledged the error and described how they had addressed the specific error. The sub-committee looked at other counties and found that errors were reported in other counties. For this election period, local papers are reporting on errors in Santa Clara County which has a separate and appointed Election Official. While each error is a problem, no organizational structure yielded an error free option. The present structure in San Mateo County appears to monitor its systems and resolve problems.
- For each election, a unique ballot must be generated for each registered voter so that it will include the candidates and issues that are specifically before that voter. The governance setting within San Mateo County is very complex due to its many special and school districts as well as the cities and the County. For some elections, there have been over 100 different types of ballots. The complexity will increase as elected bodies move to district elections. The key to implementing the Voters Choice Act and to generate these unique ballots is the technology capabilities within the present organization.
- The same technology staff in the Assessors, County Clerk-Recorder and Elections Office maintain and operate information systems for all of the functions they support. Staff maintain many GIS data layers which are the foundation for both the assessor and the elections functions. The voter registration database is called VoteCal and is managed by the Secretary of State. The technology staff use and merge the county maintained GIS information and the State voter database to create the unique ballot type for each voter. These ballots are sent to the discreet location address of the voter. The technology support function appears to operate well as is. If election services are separated from its current organization, there could be significant cost in

replicating the technology support within a separate organization and/or there could be a measure of dysfunction in a separation.



# County of San Mateo

## Inter-Departmental Correspondence

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**Department:** BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
DISTRICT 1  
**File #:** 18-514

Board Meeting Date: 6/26/2018

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**Special Notice / Hearing:** None  
**Vote Required:** Majority

**To:** Honorable Board of Supervisors  
**From:** Rosanne Foust, Chair, 2018 Charter Review Committee  
Kalimah Salahuddin, Vice-Chair, 2018 Charter Review Committee  
**Subject:** Executive Summary: Report and Recommendation of the 2018 Charter Review Committee

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

Accept the report and recommendation of the 2018 Charter Review Committee and direct County Counsel to prepare an ordinance calling an election on November 6, 2018 on a measure or measures to amend the San Mateo County Charter.

### **BACKGROUND:**

Pursuant to section 801 of the San Mateo County Charter (the "Charter"), on January 9, 2018, and January 23, 2018, the Board established and appointed the 2018 Charter Review Committee. As constituted by the Board, the Committee consisted of nineteen members who were nominated by Board members and designated organizations, representing a board range of interests. The members of the Committee are listed in Attachment A to this report.

### **DISCUSSION:**

In accordance with Section 801 of the Charter, and pursuant to direction given by the Board of Supervisors in Board Resolution Nos. 075570 and 075646, the 2018 Charter Review Committee herewith submits its recommendation for an amendment to the Charter, for consideration by the Board. This recommendation was developed over the course of 10 meetings, from January 30, 2018 to June 13, 2018, based on substantial input from invited speakers and members of the public and consideration of over 1,000 pages of written information. The final recommendation was developed, and adopted, after considerable discussion and debate by the Committee, and received the ten votes required by the Board's resolution. The proposed Charter amendment is presented for consideration by your Board, with a recommendation that the proposed amendment be placed on the November 6, 2018 ballot:

Section 302 of the Charter shall be amended and restated in its entirety as follows:

**Section 302. Appointment and Removal.**

The County Manager shall be appointed by the Board of Supervisors on the basis of executive and administrative qualifications and experience.

The County Manager is evaluated by the Board, serves at its pleasure, and may be removed by an affirmative vote of three of its members.

The Committee's full report concerning all potential Charter amendments considered, along with subcommittee analysis, is attached as Attachment B. The Committee wishes to extend its sincere appreciation to the Board of Supervisors for the opportunity to be of service to the County, and to participate in the important task of updating the County's Charter. The Committee would also like to thank the County Manager's office and the County Counsel's office for the exceptional and tireless staff support that they have provided the Committee over the last six months. Finally, the Committee extends its greatest thanks and appreciation to the citizens and invited speakers who took time out of their evenings to appear before the Committee to provide invaluable information, and to share their viewpoints, on issues of critical importance to the County.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

There is no fiscal impact in accepting the report.

RESILIENCE AGAINST EXTREME WEATHER SHOULD BE A PRIORITY

Because of the global failure to reduce carbon emissions, the world has already passed through one heat level tipping point and is rapidly approaching another. Resilience strategies to minimize damage from now unavoidable tragedies fall principally on local governments. Public infrastructure, building codes, zoning ordinances, and emergency services are all involved.

The enormous threats to public safety from climate driven events will only escalate over time. Although there are some models, it is extremely difficult to predict the unfolding magnitude of these events. Month long torrential rains are one possible example. Wind driven fires across a drought parched landscape are another. All that we really know now is that the threats will become much, much worse over time.

The Preamble to the County Charter currently states, in part, that the County should be “responsive to ... environmental needs and goals in a democratic manner.”

Given the unprecedented threat to public safety from extreme weather, we propose that a more precisely focused statement of priority be added to the County Charter Preamble:

Policies and programs providing long-term resilience against the increasing threats from extreme fire, flood, wind, rain, heat, drought and sea level rise should be a County priority. As much as possible these policies and programs should be developed collaboratively with the cities, districts, and other public entities in the County.

This statement is an extension of the existing Preamble language. We believe that there is no legal barrier to it.

A vote of the people confirming that resilience against extreme weather events is a priority will show support both for ongoing efforts on to mitigate sea level rise and for the very extensive efforts that will be needed to face the dangerous threats in the decades ahead.

## Proposed Schedule of Items for the CRC

3/11/2026

### **Tuesday, March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2026 | 3/17/2026**

- Present format for recommendations
- Provide background information on 2018 CRC
- Preview of Independent District Lines Commission

### **Thursday, April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2026 | 4/2/2026**

- Preview of Procedures for Board Appointments to Fill Vacancies in Elected Office
- Preview of Annual Review of Board Governance Practices
- Preview of Row Officer Consolidation / Language Access & Equity
- Preview of Human Rights & Equity Commission

### **Tuesday, April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2026 | 4/14/2026**

- Vote on subcommittee recommendations

### **Monday April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2026 | 4/27/2026**

- Vote on final recommendations and letter for BOS

# County of San Mateo

## 2026 County Charter Review Committee – Recommendation Process

**Brian Pettit - Deputy County Attorney**

March 17, 2026



# 2018 CRC Report

- Summary memo (pp.1-4)
- Attached subcommittee reports (pp.5-16)



# Subcommittee Reports

- Subcommittee members, chair
- Issue(s) considered
- Investigative process (references to research material, interviews, etc.)
- Recommendation and justification



# Report Approval Process

- March 17<sup>th</sup> & April 2<sup>nd</sup> – Subcommittees preview recommendations to Committee
- Prior to April 14<sup>th</sup> meeting, subcommittees prepare and submit written reports
- April 14<sup>th</sup> – Committee votes on subcommittee recommendations (10 affirmative votes needed)
- Prior to April 27<sup>th</sup> or 28<sup>th</sup> meeting, County staff prepares final summary memo
- April 27<sup>th</sup> or 28<sup>th</sup> – Committee votes on final report



# Recommendation to the BOS

- BOS meeting May 5<sup>th</sup> – targeted date for BOS to receive CRC's report
- Chair provides presentation
- BOS may direct County Attorney to prepare ordinance to call for election on one or more issues



# Questions?

**COUNTY** OF **SAN MATEO**



# Independent Redistricting Commission for SMC

First Presentation to County Charter Committee  
March 17, 2026

## Recommended

*that the Board of Supervisors place a Charter Amendment upon the Ballot for a vote of the people to Amend Article II section 202 of the County Charter to add that the decennial evaluation and modification of Supervisorial Districts in San Mateo County be performed by an “Independent Redistricting Commission” as defined by California Law and that the Commission select its map pursuant to State Law, the California Constitution and the US Constitution.*

# California Law

- Constitutional mandate of “One Person, One Vote”
- Districts should be equal in size (number of people) and representative without favor, prejudice or bias to an group, party or special interests
- County supervisorial district must be evaluated every ten years after the decennial federal census. New, revised or modified districts must be adopted in time for the next regular election cycle after January 1 and the year ending in “2”.
- The redistricting process is intended to be devoid of political, economic or other undue influences.
- CA law requires the BOS to adopt by resolution or ordinance district maps in lieu of an Independent Redistricting Commission

# State Mandates Criteria for Drawing Maps

- Equal Population (one person, one vote) is priority one
- Not splitting or devaluing Communities of Interest
- Geographic integrity (keeping cities and census tracts intact)
- Easily identified, understood and not artificially interrupted (contiguous)
- To the extent practicable, compact

**Any Redistricting Commission must comply with this criteria**

# County Options for Redistricting

- There are four options for a General Law or Charter county to draw district lines after a federal census:
  - Advisory Commission: drafts a new map subject to BOS approval
  - Hybrid Commission: draft maps for BOS to choose
  - Independent Commission: drafts a map which the BOS must approve
  - Board of Supervisors: creates a new map and approves it
- SMC used an Advisory Redistricting Commission in 2021, but the BOS pursued and approved a separate map

# Interview with 2021 ARC Participants

- Interviewed Jim Lawrence (ARC Chair) and Supervisors Pine and Canepa
- Pine and Canepa were tasked by the BOS to form an Advisory Committee made up of volunteers and 3 per district for a total of 15 members. Pine commented that the criteria for members should be reviewed for a future committee
- The committee worked in a truncated timeline due to late arriving census data. They were able to submit two narrowly passing maps. The BOS had issues with both maps and proposed a new map created by a consultant.
- Both supervisors commented that the new map was not very different from the previous map.
- Pine indicated that he would be in favor of a Charter change. Canepa was represented by his aide so could not speak for himself.

# Existing Independent Redistricting Committees

- Three counties used IRCs in 2021 to redistrict
  - San Francisco County (state law)
  - San Diego County (state law and in charter)
  - Los Angeles County (state law)
- Four counties will have IRCs in 2031 (all mandated by state law)
  - San Luis Obispo
  - Kern
  - Fresno
  - Riverside

# Consistent Feedback from 2021 IRCs

- All three commissions felt the effort and cost was well justified and generated defensible maps. All three counties had history of partisan maps.
- Commission membership varied
  - SF (9): BOS appointed one member from their district, Mayor appointed three, rest were election board recommendations
  - Los Angeles(14) and San Diego (14) had vetted candidates and then a random draw
- Cost of the Commission: as much as \$1 million dollars
  - Mapping consultants
  - Salary of county employees tasked to commission
  - Public solicitation help
- Convene Commission six months before census data for training, organization, planning
- Archiving process, maps and best practices for next Commission

# Arguments for the County Charter Change (1/2)

- Precedent: San Diego County does have it in their County Charter
- Precedent: Those counties that could not get it instituted via a Charter change or ordinance were forced to do it via state law change.
- Removes the possible conflict of interest from the redistricting process when the map approval is in the hands of the Board of Supervisors
- Putting it in the County Charter allows the voters of San Mateo County to decide whether to make Redistricting independent of the BOS. Instituting an Independent Redistricting Commission can also be achieved via a state law, but that removes the ability for voters to weigh in.
- Empowering an IRC with autonomy and budget will result in an exacting and well considered Supervisorial District map. The BOS do not have the time to do the same job.

## Arguments for the County Charter Change (2/2)

- The state attempted to make this law for all Charter Counties with SB1108 and was vetoed by the Governor due to concerns about costs to counties.
- Since 2021, the increase in high density housing in the county along the Cal Trans corridor and other issues for Communities of Interest will require careful consideration. A non-partisan commission is in the best position to evaluate new criteria.
- Leaving the vital job of drawing district lines to consultants disenfranchises the citizens and voters of the county. Consultants do not live and work here and do not have a frame of reference to understand the subtle issues of the population.
- Given the 2021 map barely changed, district lines have not changed in 20 years while the county has changed. An IRC would objectively review those changes and produce a more relevant map.

# Arguments Against a County Charter Change (1/2)

- Why change something that is not broken?
- This does not belong in the County Charter
  - This can be done by ordinance.
  - This can be done by lobbying for a state law.
- The cost of an IRC to do the job correctly can be as much as \$1 million +
- An effective IRC will need dedicated county resources, similar to the Civil Grand Jury. The members of the IRC need to be paid a stipend for their service.
- A careful process is required to make sure committee members are not partisan actors.

# Arguments Against a County Charter Change (2/2)

- The committee members must be prepared for a significant time commitment. San Francisco noted that there was significant harassment of committee members.
- It's likely that a majority of voters are happy with the current district lines and letting the BOS manage the redistricting process.

# Breaking Down the Recommendation

1. Amend the County Charter, Article II, Section 202 to create an Independent Redistricting Committee with similar language to the section in the San Diego County charter.

Section 400.1: Redistricting Commission. After each federal decennial census, the supervisorial districts of the County shall be reapportioned in the manner specified by general law by a redistricting commission established pursuant to the California Elections code. The supervisorial district boundaries shall be drawn in such a way that the area of at least three districts shall include unincorporated territory with two of the districts having geographic area that is predominantly outside of the incorporated cities as population will permit. (Amended, effective 11-6-18)

2. If approved by this committee and the Board of Supervisors, submit to the voters for the November 2026 election.
3. If passed by the voters, the BOS must via ordinance define the commission and basic processes by which it will do the job of redistricting. This should include commission definition, assignment of members, budget, county resources.