



CITY OF CORONADO

CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

Appoint Special Counsel for the November 2026 General Election and Authorize the City Manager to Execute a Professional Services Agreement with Special Counsel to Provide Special Legal Services for Matters Related to the November 2026 General Election to Be Held in the City of Coronado as Required by Coronado Municipal Code

RECOMMENDATION

Appoint Helen Holmes Peak, of the firm Lounsbery, Ferguson, Altona, & Peak LLP, as special counsel for the upcoming 2026 General Election and authorize the City Manager to execute the Professional Services Agreement.

BACKGROUND

Coronado Municipal Code Section 1.84.070(A) requires that “At least 90 days prior to a City election, the City Council shall appoint a special counsel for that election...” in case of complaints of alleged violations of the City’s elections code. Section 1.84.080(D) states that, “Review, investigation, enforcement, litigation, and prosecution under this chapter shall be commenced and carried out only by an appointed special counsel.” In 2019, the City Clerk’s Office issued a request for proposals to solicit for these services. From the received proposals, Ms. Peak was selected and is recommended again for this election cycle because of her familiarity with the City of Coronado’s election requirements and extensive experience in municipal law.

ANALYSIS

The City of Coronado has previously utilized the special counsel services of Helen Holmes Peak, of the firm Lounsbery, Ferguson, Altona, & Peak, since 2006 for general and special elections.

FISCAL IMPACT

The firm will be retained on a time and materials basis. The hourly fee for service is \$395 per hour for Ms. Peak and other special counsel. Previous costs incurred for special counsel in 2024 and 2022 were \$24,894 and \$5,521, respectively.

ALTERNATIVE

The City Council may choose to appoint an alternative special counsel or provide further direction to staff, as appropriate.

CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT

This action is not subject to CEQA.

PUBLIC NOTICE

No public notice is required for this item.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Coronado Municipal Code Sections 1.84.070, 1.84.080
2. Draft Professional Services Agreement with Helen Holmes Peak

Submitted By: City Clerk's Office / Kelsea Holian