

July 29, 2025, City Council Agenda Comments

The following comments on an item on the Newport Beach City Council [agenda](#) are submitted by:

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Item IV.A. PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT - PUBLIC EMPLOYEE APPOINTMENT (City Clerk)

Our City Charter, in [Section 603](#), is very clear about the powers and duties of the City Clerk, but does not provide the guidance it does for the City Manager regarding how the appointment must be made.

Given that lack of clear requirements, I am pleased to see someone authorized a [listing](#) of the City Clerk vacancy on GovernmentJobs.com, including a [recruitment brochure](#) published by Alliance Resource Consulting (the City's current on-call executive recruitment firm under contact [C-7393-2](#)).

The brochure anticipated "first-round interviews" for the position on June 18, 2025. I don't know if that first round of interviews occurred. But since this is the first announcement of a meeting of the full council to consider the appointment, if they did occur, and any Council members participated, it must have been three or less.

Regarding the present meeting, I hope:

1. That the number of applications received will be publicly revealed.
2. That the full Council will interview the applicants who seem qualified, and not rely on the opinions of the recruitment firm or the Council members who may have participated in the first round of interviews (assuming it has happened).

I have no strong feelings about what the Council should be looking for in a City Clerk, other than it be someone who puts service to the public foremost.

In that connection, it seems strange that the present Clerk's office does not have a terminal for the public to view documents electronically, as it did at the old City Hall.

I hope the new Clerk will be able, as former Clerk Leilani Brown was, to assemble the Council agenda materials into a single, bookmarked downloadable file (the online posting of the July 22 agenda, available at the time of the meeting, consisted of more than 90 separate files).

And I hope the new Clerk will be able to work with the City's Laserfiche vendor and the IT Division to improve ease of public access to the commendably vast collection of documents it maintains online. In particular, it would be an improvement for the public to be able to search within the results of a previous search, and also if the documents could be archived in a format that maintains page-by-page accessibility without having to disable the hyperlinks that may appear on those pages.¹

¹ The [Planning Division](#) uses Laserfiche to archive documents with active links, but, frustratingly, they are embedded in a PDF that can be accessed only in its entirety, which may involve slowly downloading hundreds of pages even if only a single page is of interest. By contrast, [the Clerk](#) archives documents in a Laserfiche format that can be accessed and linked to a page at a time, but, frustratingly, any links the [original PDF posting](#) contained become inoperable.