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DATE: July 17, 2023

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council through City Manager

FROM: Kendall Sawyer, City Clerk

SUBJECT: Resolution Approving an Agreement with the County of Sonoma for the Purpose of Conducting Consolidated Municipal Elections for the City of Petaluma

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### **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the City Council adopt the attached Resolution approving an agreement with the County of Sonoma for the purpose of conducting consolidated municipal elections for the City of Petaluma, and authorizing the City Manager to execute said agreement.

### **BACKGROUND**

The City of Petaluma contracts with Sonoma County to consolidate municipal elections. After each election, the City receives an invoice from the County for its portion of the election costs. This does not include the cost of candidate statements for Mayor and Council Member candidates. Those costs are covered by the candidates themselves. The City's current contract with Sonoma County will expire December 31, 2023. The new agreement will extend through December 31, 2027.

### **DISCUSSION**

The contract includes one substantive change from the current contract, which is to clarify the Sonoma County Registrar of Voters is to serve as the Elections Official for the Petaluma Schools District. The functions of the Elections Official include issuing and accepting nomination papers for school board candidates, a duty that was previously shared between the County and the City Clerk. This revision will provide consistency across all school districts elections and will mitigate confusion on behalf of the candidates who previously filed part of their nomination papers with the City and part of their nomination papers with the County. Further, California Elections Code section 5000 et seq discusses elections of school districts and section 5303 specifically states that the County elections official shall perform the duties incident to the preparations for and holdings of all district elections.

## **PUBLIC OUTREACH**

This agenda item was noticed in compliance with the California Brown Act.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

The proposed action is exempt from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) in accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15378(b)(5), in that executing a contract for consolidated election services does not meet CEQA's definition of a "project," because the action does not have the potential for resulting in either a direct physical change in the environment or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment, and because this action that constitutes organizational or administrative activities of governments that will not result in direct or indirect physical changes in the environment.

## **FINANCIAL IMPACTS**

The cost of consolidated election services is included in the annual budget.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

1. Resolution with Exhibit A (Agreement)
2. Opinion Letter from Petaluma City Attorney to Sonoma County Counsel