



**City of Coral Gables
CITY COMMISSION MEETING
September 13, 2023**

ITEM TITLE:

Ordinance on Second Reading.

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF CORAL GABLES, FLORIDA, AMENDING SECTION 1- " CREATION, COMPOSITION, ELECTION, TERMS, VACANCIES, QUALIFICATIONS" AND SECTION 1.1 "RUN-OFF ELECTION" OF ARTICLE 1 "CITY COMMISSION AND MAYOR" OF THE CITY CHARTER TO CHANGE THE DATE OF THE GENERAL ELECTION FROM APRIL 08, 2025 TO NOVEMBER 05, 2024 AND TO CHANGE THE DATE OF ALL SUBSEQUENT ELECTIONS; PROVIDING FOR A FOUR (4) MONTH REDUCTION OF EXISTING TERMS OF OFFICE ; MOVING THE RUN-OFF ELECTION TO FOUR (4) WEEKS AFTER THE GENERAL ELECTION AND MOVING THE SWEARING-IN DATE TO FIVE (5) WEEKS AFTER THE GENERAL ELECTION; AMENDING SECTION 3 "ELECTION TO OFFICE; COMMISSION AS JUDGE OF QUALIFICATIONS, REQUIREMENTS, BALLOTS, CANVASSING, AND QUALIFYING PERIODS" AMENDING THE QUALIFYING PERIOD; ADOPTING SUCH CHARTER AMENDMENTS PURSUANT TO SECTION 100.3605, 101.75, AND 166.021(4), FLORIDA STATUTES; PROVIDING FOR A REPEALER PROVISION, SEVERABILITY CLAUSE, CODIFICATION, AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE

(Sponsored by Vice Mayor Anderson)

(Sponsored by Mayor Lago)

BRIEF HISTORY:

The City Charter currently calls for the City's general elections to be held the second Tuesday in April of odd-numbered years. The Charter also proscribes a run-off election to be held two weeks after the general election, and a qualifying period 50 to 46 days before the general election. Section 101.75, Florida Statutes, provides that a municipality may, by ordinance, change the dates for qualifying and for election of members of the municipality's governing body. Section 100.3605(2) similarly provides the authority to the City Commission to change the dates of its election via ordinance and provide for the orderly transition of office resulting from such date changes.

Currently, each April election costs the City approximately \$125,000 for each general election and, if needed, an additional \$125,000 for each run-off election. Voter turn-out in the April 2023 election was 20.92% for the general election and 17.55% for the run-off election. In contrast, should the City move its general election to coincide with the statewide general election held November of even-numbered years, the general election would cost approximately \$20,000 and the run-off would continue to cost \$125,000. This would result in savings of approximately \$100,000 every two years. In addition, the City anticipates that such a move would increase voter

turnout. During the November, 2022 general election approximately 62.96% of registered voters in the City of Coral Gables voted.

Should the City adopt an ordinance amending the charter to move the general election to November of even-numbered years, the City would also need to move the date of the run-off election. The City Charter currently provides that the run-off dates may be adjusted by Ordinance. This ordinance moves the run-off from two weeks to four weeks after the general election in order to allow for canvassing of the general election, to account for November holidays, and allow for sufficient turnout and time to mail absentee ballots.

This Ordinance also amends the qualifying period to align with those qualifying periods for election to a county office as specified in F.S. § 99.061(2). This Ordinance would set that qualifying period as 71 to 67 days prior to the state’s primary election. For a November 5, 2024 election that would result in a qualifying period from June 10, 2024 through June 14, 2024. F.S. 101.75 provides that when moving an election to a date concurrent with any statewide or countywide election the dates for qualifying for the election moved by such ordinance shall be specifically provided for in the ordinance.

If the City Commission adopts this Ordinance as drafted, it would result in a shortening of the terms of each Commissioner and the Mayor. Group 1, Group 2, and Group 3 will have terms shortened four months. Rather than ending terms in April of 2025, those officials’ terms would end in December of 2024. Subsequently, the Commissioners in Group 4 and 5 terms will end in December of 2026 rather than April of 2027. This item was adopted on first reading during the Augst 23, 2023 City Commission meeting. There have been no changes since first reading.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION:

No.	Amount	Account No.	Source of Funds
Total: N/A			
Fiscal Impact: None. Savings of approximately \$100,000 every two years.			

ATTACHMENT(S):

1. Draft Ordinance