

Pacific Grove City Council moves toward a 2026 election to decide council raises.



Pam Marino Aug 21, 2025 0



The Pacific Grove City Council during a meeting on May 21, 2025. Daniel Driefuss



The Pacific Grove City Council voted 7-0 on Wednesday, Aug. 20, to accept the results of a petition for a referendum against an ordinance it passed earlier this year to raise council compensation for the first time in 26 years.

The ordinance passed on May 7 with a 5-2 vote, with two councilmembers saying the raise—from \$420 to \$960 monthly for councilmembers and from \$700 to \$1,610 for mayor—should go to the voters to decide.

Former councilmember Luke Coletti challenged the ordinance by filing for a referendum through his group Transparent Pacific Grove, which required collecting signatures from at least 10 percent of registered voters, or 1,060. The group submitted over 1,800 signatures to Monterey County Elections on July 1.

Elections officials certified the signatures on Aug. 6. They checked 1,299 signatures, and found 1,178 to be valid.

After accepting the certification by Elections, the city council voted 7-0 to bring back a repeal of the original ordinance on Sept. 3 and then create a new ordinance to be put on either the primary or general election ballots in 2026, to be decided later.

It was the option that former mayor Bill Kampe argued for before the council vote. He urged P.G. citizens to vote "yes" on a raise when it does appear on the ballot.

"The job is probably far more than people realize. It's not just these meetings. It's all the prep time, it's the council liaison roles, it's the regional and state level meetings and engagement and the prep time that goes along with it. That, and you're always on duty when you're walking on the street," Kampe said.

In responding to residents who argued the job should be a volunteer position, Kampe said councilmembers are acting on behalf of an entire city. "It's an important job and a salary is a way for citizens to say it's an important job, 'do good work,'" he said.

Coletti thanked the 31 volunteers who collected signatures and called connecting with voters "a fantastic experience."

IN PRINT

flipbook recent

January 29, 2026

Stopping the Presses - Years of cutbacks by corporate owners have decimated the daily newspapers in Monterey County. Where does local journalism stand in 2026? Read more



TRENDING THIS WEEK

Articles



Montage Health and Anthem reach agreement over CHOMP coverage.

Nearly 500 of CHOMP's 800 nurses vote in favor of joining a union in historic vote.

An anonymous complaint about a P.G. noise ordinance vote cites a potential conflict of interest, spurring a state investigation.

Faced with declining student enrollment, school districts confront growing deficits.

A former CHOMP radiation oncologist files a breach of contract and whistleblower lawsuit against the hospital.

Monterey County District Attorney releases bodycam footage in Marina officer-involved shooting.

Following a nationwide search, Monterey is set to appoint a new city manager.

An annual Department of Homeland Security audit at CSUMB ignites student fears.

Public calls for independent investigation into the officer-involved shooting of a Seaside resident.

Nearing 100 years, Carmel's historic cocktail bar Sade's is slated for closure.



Taste Paso

He urged the council to place a measure on the November 2026 ballot, and suggested a charter amendment regulating future pay raises.

Councilmember Paul Walkingstick also argued for the November election and said he hoped voters would approve a raise.

"I do support the raise, not for myself. I support the raise in hopes that it will encourage people to run for office now that we've moved to districting," Walkingstick said. **Three of the six recently created voting districts are up for election in November 2026, districts 1, 3 and 5.** It's a transition away from at-large elections.

Councilmember Tina Rau agreed with Walkingstick.

"With three districts coming up for election in 2026, we're going to need nine to 12 people for us to have a robust discussion," she said.

Rau favored putting the raise on the June primary ballot, so that candidates considering a run for council in November would know what the compensation will be. To put it on the November ballot, she said, would be a "muddy water situation."

She called raising council's compensation "the right thing to do for the people who are coming behind us."

Mayor Nick Smith said he also favors putting an ordinance on the ballot in June.

There was no support among the public or councilmembers to put the question on a standalone special election.



Tags

Pam Marino



★ FOLLOW PAM MARINO

(0) COMMENTS

Welcome to the discussion.

LOG IN



SUBSCRIBE

Sign up for our flagship newsletter, with daily local news, inspiration, arts, opinion and more.

SUBSCRIBE (FREE)

INFO

- Advertising Info
- Contact Us
- e-Edition
- Pick Up A Paper
- About Us
- Archives
- FAQ
- Comment Policy

- Terms of Use
- Privacy Policy
- Copyright Infringement Policy and Takedown Procedure
- Do Not Sell My Personal Information
- Cookie Preferences

AFFILIATED

- Monterey County Gives!
- The Press Club

CONTACT INFORMATION

www.montereycountynow.com
 668 Williams Ave
 Seaside, CA 93955
 Phone: 831-394-5656
 Email: frontdesk@montereycountynow.com



The mission of Monterey County NOW is to inspire independent thinking and conscious action, etc.

Serving Big Sur, Carmel-by-the-Sea, Carmel Valley, Castroville, Del Rey Oaks, Marina, Monterey, Moss Landing, Pacific Grove, Pebble Beach, Prunedale, Salinas, Salinas Valley, Sand City, Seaside and the entire Monterey County. © Copyright 2026, Monterey County NOW, Seaside, CA - Milestone Communications Inc. All rights reserved. Formerly the Monterey County Weekly / Coast Weekly newspaper.