



CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION AGENDA
Board of Elections

COUNCIL MEETING WILL BE ONLINE ONLY

Due to the COVID-19 precautions, the Council Meeting will be held online and is planned to be cablecast on Verizon 21, Comcast 71 and 996 and streamed to www.greenbeltmd.gov/municipaltv.

Resident participation:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82539962931?pwd=Q21yMS92d3o5bXFDNzltOFphSXh3dz09>
Passcode: 379898

OR

Join By phone: (301) 715-8592
Meeting ID: 825 3996 2931
Passcode: 379898

In advance, the hearing impaired is advised to use Video Relay Services (VRS) at 711 to submit your questions/comments or contact the City Clerk at (301) 474-8000 or email banderson@greenbeltmd.gov.

Wednesday, February 24, 2021
8:00 PM

Work Session Packet

Board of Elections (Mail-in Voting, Voter ID, Signature Validation)
Suggested Action:

Agenda

- Introductions
 - Council Discussion
 - Board of Elections Report #20-2 (Mail-in Voting, in and after Election ~Year 2021)
 - Voter ID and Signature Validation to ensure Election Integrity
 - Questions and Answers
 - Other Items
- [BOE_Report_20-2.pdf](#)

City Council Work Session Agenda Item Report

Meeting Date: February 24, 2021

Submitted by: Shaniya Lashley-Mullen

Submitting Department: Administration

Item Type: Work Session Item

Agenda Section: Work Session Packet

Subject:

Board of Elections (Mail-in Voting, Voter ID, Signature Validation)

Suggested Action:

Agenda

- Introductions
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Attachments:

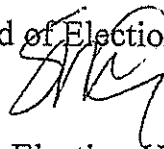
[BOE_Report_20-2.pdf](#)

MEMORANDUM

November 30, 2020

TO: Bonita Anderson, City Clerk

FR: Patricia Evans, Chair, Board of Elections
Steven Gilbert, Co-Chair



RE: Mail-in Voting, in and after Election Year 2021

Ms. Anderson, the Board of Elections here submits proposed amendments to the City's Election Code, to expand the procedures for mail-in voting – until now called “absentee” voting – in future election years. Copies are being provided to Council Members, and the Board stands ready to review this matter, when convenient for the Council.

These draft amendments were approved after the Board determined that many voters in the future may prefer to vote by mail. The purpose of the amendments is to make mail-in voting easier for them.

A major impetus for the present popularity of mail-in voting is of course the coronavirus pandemic. But voters' experience this year, where State and Prince George's County boards of elections have fashioned an effective mail-in balloting and vote-counting procedure, may alter future behavior, and we may find that many more voters prefer to vote by mail.

The Board has also found, after reviewing mail-in balloting procedures in Rockville and New Carrollton, that easing mail-in voting procedures tends to raise significantly the level of voter participation. That remains one of the Board's chief goals, increasing vote-casting percentages. Our elections, in odd-numbered years, have less participation than State and Federal elections.

We hope that the draft amendments, to Code Section 8-4, are not difficult to follow. The proposed changes to present procedures add Council and City Clerk processes, to make mail-in voting more convenient for voters. The Council early in each election year will – the draft says “may” – pass a resolution setting dates and procedures for that year. The Clerk then sends each registered voter “one or more” notices about mail-in voting, and, after voters have notice and an opportunity to

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contact the Clerk's office and Board with questions, the Clerk sends every voter an application for an absentee ballot.

Then, as soon as practicable after the November ballot is set and mail-in ballots are printed, the Clerk will send each voter who has filed an application in proper form a mail-in ballot, with instructions for completing and submitting it.

The new procedures will likely add significantly to the costs of future elections. That is the main equation to consider: The City will spend more to put on elections, but voter convenience will be enhanced, and many more will participate. The main costs of course will be in the additional printing and mailing charges, as well as the cost of e-poll books that will be required for this expanded mail-in voting process.

If the Council approves these or similar mail-in voting procedures, then voters will have many choices, on and prior to election day: Mail-in voting, early voting for four weekends and three weeks prior to the election, and in-person voting on election day.

Enclosure: Draft Election Code Amendments
Copies to: Council Members

DRAFT GREENBELT ELECTION CODE
AMENDMENTS: MAIL-IN VOTING
RESOLUTIONS, APPLICATIONS,
AND BALLOTS

Section 8-4. [Absentee] *Mail-in Voting Procedures.*

(a) *For purposes of this section, a “mail-in ballot” is a ballot not cast in a polling place, a “mail-in voting resolution” is a resolution passed by the council in an election year setting out procedures for mail-in voting in that year, a “mail-in ballot clerk” is a clerk appointed by the board of elections for assisting in the counting of mail-in ballots, “election day” means the day of a municipal election, and the city clerk will usually be referred to as the “clerk.”*

(b) Residents of the city who are qualified voters registered with the Prince George’s County Board of Elections have the right to vote by [absentee] *mail-in* ballot in municipal elections, as provided in this section. *All voters may vote by mail-in, regardless of the reason.*

(1) *In each election year, on or before the last Monday in March, the council may by resolution direct the clerk to mail one or more notices and an application for a mail-in ballot to every registered voter.*

(2) *The resolution, to be styled and referred to as the “mail-in voting resolution” for that election year, shall direct the clerk to mail to all registered voters one or more notices of mail-in voting procedures, applications for mail-in ballots, and instructions to voters of their right to apply for a ballot and vote by mail-in and how they may do so. The resolution shall also state the time and date by which mail-in ballots must be received, or post-marked, to be counted.*

(3) *Upon approval of the mail-in voting resolution, the clerk shall: (i) obtain a current list of residents registered to vote; (ii) mail to all*

registered voters one or more notices, as stated in the resolution, advising them of their right to vote by mail-in and instructing them how to do so; (iii) mail to each voter an application for a mail-in ballot, together with instructions how to apply for it, complete it, and submit it, and by what time and date to apply and then submit; and (iv) mail to each voter who requests one a mail-in ballot, with instructions how to cast it and the time and date for submission.

[(b) For purposes of this Code, an “absentee ballot” is a ballot not used in a polling place, and “election day” means the day of a municipal election.]

(c) [Voting by absentee] *Unless otherwise provided in a mail-in voting resolution, voting by mail-in* ballot in municipal elections shall be as follows:

(1) Except for an emergency [absentee] *mail-in* ballot, as provided below, a voter may apply for [an absentee] *a mail-in* ballot for a municipal election without stating a reason.

(2) Applications for [absentee] *mail-in* ballots shall be [made in writing] *submitted* to the [city] clerk not [earlier than twenty (20) days nor] later than 12:00 noon of the last day before election day.

(i) [Applications shall include the voter’s] *On applications, voters shall provide their* name and signature as they appear on the registration list, city domicile address, and telephone number. [Each absentee ballot issued requires a] *A separate application is required for each mail-in ballot.*

(ii) A voter who has not been issued [an absentee] *a mail-in* ballot but is unable to vote at a polling place because of illness or accident or required absence, where the voter suffers the illness or injury or learns of the required absence at a time when applying for [an absentee] *a mail-in* ballot would be untimely or impractical, may be issued an emergency

[absentee] *mail-in* ballot. An application for an emergency [absentee] *mail-in* ballot shall give the reason why it is needed and all other information required for [regular absentee] *non-emergency mail-in* ballots. Emergency [absentee] *mail-in* ballots shall be cast in the same manner as [regular absentee] *non-emergency mail-in* ballots.

(iii) A qualified voter domiciled in the city but residing outside the continental United States for the 30-day period ending on election day may apply for [an absentee] *a mail-in* ballot by facsimile *or scanner*, if the application [contains] *has* all information required [of] *on* other [absentee applicants] *mail-in ballot applications* and a certification that the voter meets the qualification, domicile, residency, and time requirements in this [paragraph] *subsection (c)*. [No ballot] *Ballots* may *not* be cast by facsimile *or scanner*.

(3) [To be counted, an absentee] *Unless otherwise provided in a mail-in voting resolution, a mail-in* ballot must reach the office of the [city] clerk not later than two [(2)] hours before the polls close on election day.

(4) To cast [it, the] *a mail-in ballot, a* voter must complete the [absentee] ballot, *following the printed instructions*; place it in a blank, sealed envelope[, and then]; place the sealed envelope in the [absentee] *mail-in* envelope on which is written the voter's name as registered; and [signature] *sign the mail-in envelope*. The voter [shall] *must then place the mail-in envelope in a designated drop box or* mail or deliver [the absentee envelope] *it* to the [city] clerk's office. The [city] clerk shall check it against the list of applications for [absentee ballots. An absentee envelope that] *mail-in ballots, and if it* does not correspond to a name on the [absentee] *mail-in* ballot application list, *then it* shall not be opened. [Absentee] *Mail-in* envelopes that contain more than one blank, sealed envelope shall be kept by the [city] clerk, [and] *but they* [those absentee ballots] shall not be *opened or* counted. If a ballot is submitted in a properly signed and sealed [absentee] *mail-in* envelope [without being] *but is not* contained in a blank, sealed envelope, then the board shall determine by majority vote whether [a violation of] the voter's privacy

[has occurred or] *may have been compromised* and whether the ballot may be counted. If [a determination is made] *the board decides* to count the ballot, then *the clerk or a board member* [of the board] shall place the ballot in a blank, sealed envelope. *The clerk shall mail the voter a notice stating that the mail-in ballot was not enclosed in a sealed envelope, advising whether the board decided to count the ballot, and also advising that the voter's privacy may have been compromised.*

(5) After the time [has passed] for receipt of [absentee ballots on election day, as provided above] *mail-in ballots has passed*, the [city] clerk shall deliver the sealed, blank envelopes to the *mail-in ballot* clerks [appointed by the board of elections for the counting of absentee ballots]. The city clerk shall advise the [absentee] *mail-in* ballot clerks of the numbers of [absentee] *mail-in* ballots issued and [absentee] *mail-in* envelopes returned, and shall keep the same record of the [absentee] *mail-in* ballots as is kept by the clerks of election at their polling places.

(6) Upon receipt of the sealed, blank envelopes, the [absentee] *mail-in* ballot clerks shall deposit them in [the] *a* ballot box. The [absentee] *mail-in* ballot clerks shall *then* open the sealed envelopes [and determine] *to ensure* that no envelope contains more than one [(1)] ballot. Ballots in sealed envelopes that contain more than one [(1)] ballot shall not be counted.

(7) The [city] clerk shall [furnish voters absentee] *make mail-in* ballots *available* for runoff elections as soon as runoff [ballot forms are available] *ballots have been printed*. Otherwise, [absentee] *mail-in* balloting for runoff elections shall [be as provided] *follow the procedures* in this section.

(8) A voter for whom [an absentee] *a mail-in* ballot has been issued may vote only by casting the [absentee] *mail-in* ballot. If [an absentee] *a mail-in* ballot is lost or destroyed and not returned in the [absentee] *mail-in* envelope to the [city] clerk, a second ballot may be issued.

(9) If [an absentee] *a mail-in* ballot is challenged by the city clerk or [an absentee] *a mail-in* ballot clerk for noncompliance with this section, it may not be counted until the board [of elections] determines that it is valid. [Absentee ballot validity shall be determined by rules adopted by the board.]

(10) If, before ballots are counted [on election day], the [city] clerk or board [of elections] determines that a voter who cast [an absentee] *a mail-in* ballot died before election day, then the ballot shall not be counted. [But if, in a case of an absentee] *If, however, upon a mail-in* voter's death, neither the [city] clerk nor the board [of elections] determines until after ballots have been counted that the voter died before election day, then the ballot shall be counted, and neither the ballot nor the election may be held invalid because the voter died before election day.

KEY:

[Brackets] indicate deletions from existing law.

Italics indicate additions to existing law.

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