



500 West Big Beaver
Troy, MI 48084
troymi.gov

CITY COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM

Date: January 8, 2020

To: Mark F. Miller, City Manager

From: Robert J. Bruner, Assistant City Manager
M. Aileen Dickson, City Clerk

Subject: Report of Efforts to Increase Voter Participation in Troy

Thank you for this opportunity to share the extensive outreach efforts that the City Clerk's Office continuously employs, and the efforts that target specific events or changes in law.

Since the current City Clerk was appointed in 2011, the City Clerk's Office has made voter outreach and education a top priority. While the City Clerk's Office is somewhat limited by state law as to what can be said and done to encourage people to register and vote, every effort is made to use of all options within the law.

The City Clerk is part of countywide, and statewide, networks of municipal clerks who share ideas, best practices, and frustrations with motivating residents to register, vote, and participate in elections. The questions raised by Council Member Hamilton are not unique to Troy. Every municipality wonders the same, and wonders how to achieve higher turnouts.

The Clerk's Office conducts voter registration drives in all Troy high schools at least once per year, or as allowed by the school administration. The presidential election year is the busiest year for registration drives, so the City Clerk's Office expects to be in every high school in Troy at some point during 2020. The City Clerk works with Troy School District administration, as well as staff at the individual schools, to plan these events. Since 2015, the City Clerk's Office has been very successful with the initiative to get students more involved whenever possible, especially by structuring voter registration drives so the students are the leaders and promoters. At Troy Athens High School, for example, there is an average of 150-200 students registered per year from these registration drives. The City Clerk's Office also participates in registration drives with other clerks' offices for school districts that cross City of Troy borders (e.g. Avondale, Bloomfield Hills, etc.)

In addition to the City's registration drives in schools, the City Clerk's Office conducts registration drives wherever invited. At these registration drives, registering typically coincides with applying for absent voter (AV) ballots. The Clerk's Office has held registration drives at the Troy Family Daze festival after the citizenship ceremonies for over a decade. Every year, the City Clerk's Office also holds registration/AV application drives throughout the City at assisted living residences, senior apartment complexes, homeowner's association meetings, community group meetings, League of Women Voters meetings, and religious organizations. Many of these events include presentations on



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election law, specific details about the next election, helpful tips for voters, and any other relevant information, along with question-and-answer time for attendees.

Since the passage of Proposal 3 of 2018, the Clerk's Office has promoted "no-reason AV" and the permanent absent voter (PAV) list through a variety of communication means. The City Clerk's Office, working with the City Manager's Office, sent a citywide mailing in the summer of 2018 to every household in Troy that informed voters of the change in law, and advertised the PAV list webpage. The PAV list webpage allows voters to send the Clerk's Office their requests to be placed on the PAV list. The City Clerk's Office, working with the City Manager's Office, advertised the PAV list and no-reason AV via social media, press releases, website banners, with a report to City Council, and the City Clerk participated in multiple interviews with news agencies. The City Clerk spoke to at least ten different community groups over the past year about the changes to election law, including PAV and no-reason absentee. Thousands of voters sent in their requests, and the City of Troy now has over 10,000 voters on the list (and counting). The November 2019 election was the first Troy election since the passage of Proposal 3, and the City of Troy saw an increase of about 15% in absentee voting overall. This percentage is expected to increase in 2020 since it is a presidential year, and the City Clerk's Office will continue to promote the PAV list and absentee voting option.

There are many factors that affect turnout and participation. Comparing one municipality to another, or one election to another, can be fascinating but tricky since demographics, ballot contents, political atmosphere, even weather, play an unpredictable role.

Even before the State of Michigan began requiring clerks' offices to be open for 8 hours the weekend before each election for absentee voting, the Troy Clerk's Office approached each election with the mindset of making the office as accessible as possible to all Troy voters. Before statewide elections in even-years, especially, the City Clerk's Office was open on the Saturday before the elections longer than the law required at the time, and frequently stayed open at least one evening during those election seasons. So, when the State expanded the extended hours requirement, it was pretty much business as usual in Troy. The only difference for Troy now is that the City Clerk is required to request City Council's approval and notify the Bureau of Elections of extended hours and extra Saturdays before each election. The Clerk's Office utilizes social media, press releases, and all contacts with the community to get the word out about Troy's extended hours.

In 2019, the City Clerk began holding Pop-up Clerk's Office events at the Troy Public Library. These mobile Clerk's Office hours are for any service that the Clerk's Office provides, but specifically in the month prior to an election, absentee ballots are issued. The next Pop-up will be held on February 15, 2020, from 11:00 am – 1:00 pm, and voters will be able to apply for and obtain absentee ballots for the March 10th Presidential Primary election.

Attached to this memo are two flyers that are taken to all the Clerk's Office events, and are posted on the City's webpage. Also attached is the postcard explained above that the City mailed in 2019. The last attachment is the State of Michigan's redesign of the AV ballot envelopes. Since AV ballots will be mailed starting February 3, 2020, it is important for the City of Troy to inform residents to expect their ballots to look significantly different than the brown paper envelopes. The City Clerk's Office has been advertising this change through many resources, including social media and newspapers.



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It's the City Clerk's Office philosophy that the best way to participate in, and appreciate, the democratic election process, is to work as an Election Inspector. Even working just one election provides an unparalleled insight into how every ballot is treated as sacred. The requirements are minimal: just be a registered voter, 18 years or older, living in Michigan (including elected officials, as long as they're not on the ballot in their assigned precinct). Students can also work if they're 16 or 17, and a US citizen living in Michigan. More often than not, first time workers report to us that they "had no idea what went on" and that it's actually pretty fascinating...and even, fun.

Attachments:

Voter Information Flyer

Permanent Absent Voter List Postcard

REV-Up Troy Flyer

Absentee Ballot Envelopes

Voting in Troy

Register · Vote · Work
Get involved in government!

New!

» Pop-Up Clerk's Office | Troy Public Library | Saturday, February 15, 2020 11am-1pm

Register

- » By mail until the 15th day prior to each Election Day
- » In-person from the 14th day prior through Election Day at the City Clerk's Office
- » Requirements to register: US Citizen, 18 years old by the next Election Day

Vote Absentee

- » Anyone can apply for an Absentee Ballot ("No-Reason AV")
- » Register for the Permanent Absentee Voter List (PAV) to get the absentee application automatically mailed to you 75 days before each election
- » City Clerk's Office hours the weekend prior to each Election Day:
Friday until 5pm; Saturday 8am-4pm

Work as an Election Inspector

- » \$12 per hour plus paid training, and bonus for Chairpersons
- » Work with voters in voting precincts or in the Absentee Counting Board in City Hall
- » Any registered voter in Michigan can work as an Election Inspector
- » Students can work if they are 16 or 17, and a US Citizen

For more information, please contact the City Clerk's Office at
248.524.3316 or email clerk@troymi.gov



I WANNA

VOTE

FOR SOMEBODY

Any registered voter can sign up for the Permanent Absentee Voter List!

Being on the List just means we can send you the Absentee Ballot application before each election. You can choose to vote absentee by returning your completed app to us.

Sign up for the PAV now for the November 5, 2019 election!

Visit troymi.gov (click on the homepage link for the PAV List), or call the City Clerk's Office at 248-524-3317.



CITY CLERK'S OFFICE
500 West Big Beaver
Troy, MI 48084

REV-Up Troy

Register · Educate · Vote

Let's get students
involved in government!

Register

- » Voter registration drives: Spring and Fall
- » Student involvement will generate more student involvement
- » Recruit students to work during elections

Educate

- » Present and explain voting and election laws
- » Distribute information packets, voter registration applications and absentee ballot applications
- » Provide mock election assistance

Vote

- » Encourage voting in all elections
- » Introduce students to ballots and proposal language
- » Equip students with voting precinct and absentee ballot instructions

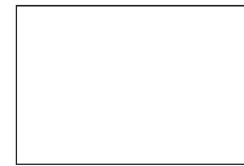
For more information on this amazing program please contact the
City Clerk at 248.524.3317 or email at Aileen.Dickson@troymi.gov



Official absent voter ballot

See instructions inside.

Sample City Elections Department
4321 Franklin Avenue
Sample, MI 44444-1234



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



Label/window for
voter's address
(and IMb)

Track your ballot at mi.gov/vote

Contact information



Sample City Elections
4321 Franklin Avenue
Sample, MI 44444-1234



www.samplecity.gov/elections



elections@samplecity.gov



Phone: 111-222-3333

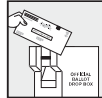


Fax: 111-222-6666



TTY: 1-222-555-1222

How to return your ballot



Return to local clerk's office by 8 p.m. Election Day
Drop off your ballot at your local clerk's office or drop box (if available) — no postage required.



Return by Mail
Mail your ballot so it is returned by 8 p.m. Election Day.

If you make a mistake on your ballot, contact your local clerk for a new ballot.



Return envelope Official ballot

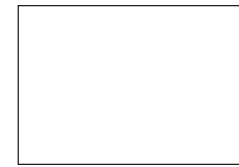
To be opened only by the Precinct
or Absent Voter Ballot Counting
Board

Don't forget to sign on the back.

Drop off or mail your ballot
so that it is returned by
8pm on Election Day.

Track your ballot at mi.gov/vote.

Sample City Elections Department
4321 Franklin Avenue
Sample, MI 44444-1234



First class postage
required



Sample City
4321 Franklin Avenue
Sample, MI 44444-1234



For Clerk's use only

Precinct _____

Return date and time _____ Ballot _____

Signature verified? Initial: _____

Rejected? Reason _____

Did you...

- Sign in the box below in your own handwriting?
- Put your ballot in the envelope?
- Return to local clerk before 8 p.m. on Election Day?

I assert that:

- I am a United States citizen.
- I am qualified and registered to vote at the address listed.
- I am voting in conformity with state election law.
- I marked my ballot and placed it in this envelope without showing it to anyone.
- I am returning my ballot to the clerk's office by delivering it myself or a member of my immediate family or household, or sending it by public postal, express mail, or parcel post service, or other common carrier.

I understand that knowingly making a false statement is a misdemeanor.

Voter, sign here in ink. Power of attorney is not acceptable.

This box must be signed or your vote will not be counted.

Keep your ballot secure.

It is a felony for anyone to be in possession of an absent voter ballot except authorized election officials, employees of postal services or other common carriers during the normal course of their job handling mail, or a member of the voter's immediate family or household who the absent voter has asked to return the ballot.

Sign Here

X _____ *Date*

If someone assists you or helps you mark your ballot, they must sign and identify themselves.

I assisted the voter who is disabled or unable to mark his/her ballot according to his/her directions and without showing it to another person.

Assistant, sign here

Print name

Print full address

A person who assists an absent voter and knowingly makes a false statement is guilty of a felony.