



500 West Big Beaver  
Troy, MI 48084  
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## CITY COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM

Date: May 31, 2020

To: Mark F. Miller, City Manager

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

Subject: Relocation of Absent Voter Counting Board for Elections in 2020  
*(Introduced by: M. Aileen Dickson, City Clerk)*

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Absentee ballots are processed and tabulated by a group of sworn and sequestered Election Inspectors called an Absent Voter Counting Board (AVCB). On Election Day, the AVCB begins processing work at 7:00am, and are sequestered in City Hall until the absentee ballots have all been tabulated, usually 9:00pm or later. Absentee ballot processing involves teams of 3 or 4 Election Inspectors working in a reverse assembly line opening ballot envelopes, removing ballot stubs, removing the ballots from the secrecy sleeves, and then the Team Chairperson feeds the ballots through a high speed scanner/tabulator. This process is prescribed by Election Law, and guarantees that the voter's identification is separated from the voted ballot before any votes are exposed.

Typically, the City Clerk's Office hires 25 Election Inspectors and Chairpersons for the AVCB. This year, however, a number of factors have caused the need for a larger AVCB due to the increase in absentee ballots. First, the Secretary of State sent absentee ballot applications to all registered voters in Troy who weren't already on the Permanent Absent Voter (PAV) List. This is a practice outside the norm due to the COVID-19 pandemic in order to encourage voters to vote absentee, and stay home from the in-person precincts on Election Day. The City Clerk's Office sent absentee ballot applications to the 12,000 voters currently on the PAV List. Second, voting turnout in general is always at its highest peak during the Presidential Election year. Troy could issue more than 20,000 absentee ballots for August, and 40,000 absentee ballots for November. To compare, our highest Presidential absentee ballot turnout to date has been about 15,000 ballots. Third, in November 2018, voters passed a State Constitutional amendment that allows all voters to vote absentee without providing a reason. This is the first Presidential Election cycle since that amendment passed, and even before COVID-19, we were expecting a dramatically higher absentee turnout this year.

In order to be prepared for the substantial increase in absentee ballots in 2020, the City Clerk's Office budgeted for a fifth high speed scanner/tabulator workstation. We also are recruiting for an AVCB consisting of 50 or 60 Election Inspectors, including 5 Chairpersons, and 5 Team Captains. Because of the pandemic, we are preparing to provide PPE and sanitizing supplies to all workers, and we need a space that can allow for the minimum 6-foot social distancing between workers. The spaces that we usually use in City Hall will not be able to accommodate our needs for either election in 2020, so we are asking City Council to approve the relocation of the Absent Voter Counting Board to the Troy Community Center banquet room and nearby meeting rooms for both the August 4 and November 3, 2020 elections. The in-person voting precincts located at the Community Center will be shifted from the east entrance to the north entrance. Michigan Election Law requires the local governing body to



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approve the relocation of precincts outside of 60 days before Election Day, so this relocation must be approved at the June 1, 2020 Council Meeting in order to meet the deadline for the August 4 election.