



500 West Big Beaver
Troy, MI 48084
troymi.gov



CITY COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM

Date: June 16, 2020

To: Mark F. Miller, City Manager

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

Subject: Request for Approval of Drive Thru Clerk's Office and Election Update

History

With so many questions and news articles about the upcoming August 4th election, and with the uncertainty caused by the pandemic, the City Clerk's Office wants to provide an update and timeline for City Council regarding our preparations for the August 4th Primary Election.

In early June, the Secretary of State mailed Absent Voter Applications to all registered voters not on the Permanent Absent Voter List, and, the City Clerk's Office mailed Absent Voter Applications to our Permanent Absent Voters. While August primaries typically see voter turnout in the area of 25% in Troy, the City Clerk's Office has begun receiving an extraordinary number of Absent Voter Applications, and we expect the turnout to be much higher than previous averages.

A combination of the COVID-19 pandemic, universal distribution of Absent Voter Applications, and the political atmosphere of the Presidential election year bring many unprecedented logistical challenges. Over the past few months, the City Clerk's Office has developed plans that will mitigate those challenges.

On the Agenda for the June 22, 2020 Regular City Council Meeting is a request for approval of an additional time for the City Clerk's Office to offer Absent Voter (AV) Ballots to Troy voters. We would like to hold a Drive Thru Clerk's Office at the east entrance of City Hall on July 25, 2020 from 8:00am-12:00pm to allow voters to obtain their AV Ballots while remaining in their cars. Staff members will be stationed inside the east lobby, with all the materials needed for contactless service. We are also prepared to hold drive thru AV Ballot issuing on weekdays, in the same manner, to eliminate the need for voters to enter City Hall. This is in addition to the legal requirement for the City Clerk's Office to be open for voter registration and AV Ballots on Saturday, August 1, 2020 from 8:00am-4:00pm.

We have purchased a number of items that will also help our efforts. Two additional drop boxes will be installed outside City Hall, an additional walk-up box on the east side and an additional drive-up box on the west side. A proof of the drop box design is attached to this memo.

With the help of Stephanie Fleischer, Marketing Coordinator, we mailed a postcard to all registered voter households that is clever and informative, and addresses some of the common myths about AV



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Ballots. We are sharing this information on social media, and on the Elections webpage. A proof of the postcard is attached to this memo.

At the June 8, 2020 Council Meeting, City Council approved the relocation of the Absent Voter Counting Board (AVCB) from City Hall to the Troy Community Center. The AVCB will be headquartered in the east wing of the building in the banquet rooms, and the three precincts assigned to the Community Center will be shifted to the north entrance and senior cafeteria. To clarify, all 31 precincts will be operating in their usual polling locations throughout the city on Election Day.

Troy's Absent Voter Applications and ballots are handled by a team of 6 to 8 Election Aides who work with the staff of the City Clerk's Office for about 6 weeks before each election. They also work either in the Clerk's Office the entire Election Day, or in assigned precincts. The Election Aides receive Absent Voter Applications through the mail, mail ballots, work with voters if they have issues with their applications or ballots, track ballots when they are received, reconcile trays of ballots before sending the ballots to the AVCB on Election Day.

We get a lot of questions from voters, and the media, about the security and efficacy of absentee voting. The Absent Voter Applications and ballots are tracked using the State's Qualified Voter File (QVF) software. This web-based software is updated in real-time across the entire state, so, if someone from Troy registers to vote in another city, the record on our side is updated within seconds of the registration being entered. Likewise, if we issue a ballot to a voter, within seconds every other clerk's office in the state can see that a ballot was issued if they look up that voter. A voter's record also contains their signature, all their contact information, birthdate, and the entire history of where they've been registered in the State of Michigan. One thing we cannot see is how they vote or if they are affiliated with a political party. Absentee voting activity is tightly controlled and tracked through QVF. Applications are marked "sent" when distributed, then marked "received" once we have verified the voter's signature on the application against the signature in QVF. QVF and the State's driver's license system are linked, and share signature images. Once the application is "received", we assign a ballot (by ballot number on the stub) which then shows as "ballot sent". When the ballot is returned, the voter's signature on the envelope is verified against the signature on the application and again against the signature in QVF. The Clerk's Office contacts voters immediately every time there is an issue with an Absent Voter Application or envelope. Issues are things like missing signatures or signatures we cannot verify. By working with voters to obtain their signatures, we resolve 99% of the issues before Election Day.

On Election Day, the Absent Voter Counting Board (AVCB) is convened, and at 7am they are allowed to begin their work. Members of the AVCB are sworn, sequestered Election Inspectors who are under strict rules during their work hours. Some of the rules are that they cannot leave the building, they must never be alone, they are not allowed to communicate with the outside world anything that goes on inside the AVCB. They eat meals together. They take breaks together. They even have to visit restroom facilities in groups. Under current Election Law, members of the AVCB cannot start working before 7am on Election Day, and cannot leave the AVCB until the work is done. This means that if there are circumstances which cause an AVCB to need 24-36 hours to complete their work, the members must remain until the ballots are all counted. There are a number of bills working their way through the Michigan Legislature currently that could provide some relief for AVCB members, such as allowing members to work shifts, allowing for the AVCB to convene for multiple days, and allowing the option



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for the county to convene an AVCB on behalf of the municipalities who opt-in for that election. Some of these bills have bipartisan legislative support, and the support of local clerks, county clerks, the Michigan Association of Municipal Clerks (MAMC), the Michigan Association of County Clerks (MACC), the Michigan Townships Association (MTA), the Oakland County Clerks Association (OCCA), and others. Before the Stay Home order, the City Clerk testified at the State Senate Elections Committee, and met in person with Representative Padma Kuppa to discuss some of these bills. More recently, the City Clerk participated in a conference call with Senator Ruth Johnson, members of the MAMC, MACC, MTA, and others. There seems to be consensus at many levels of government that there needs to be legislative action in order to evolve Election Law in light of the current circumstances. The City Clerk continues to monitor these bills closely. In the meantime, we must make our preparations only with current, established laws in mind.

The Clerk's Office is budgeted for a fifth high-speed ballot tabulator workstation in the 2021-2022 Budget, so we will have 5 teams in our AVCB. We have also purchased 5 high-volume electric envelope slicers. Each precinct team, and each team in the AVCB, will receive a PPE and sanitizing supply bag that contains face shields, masks, hand sanitizer, signage, etc., as shown in the attached photo. The City Clerk's Office is working closely with the facilities that house our precincts to make sure that we create a safe, secure environment for our workers and voters.

We are actively receiving an influx of Absent Voter Applications, and we expect our ballot delivery from the printer during the week of June 15th. We will conduct preliminary testing on our machines and ballots, while simultaneously issuing and stuffing ballots for mailing, during the week of June 22nd. We plan to begin mailing absentee ballots on June 29th.

As required by law, we will provide ballots by email or mail to all MOVE (Military and Overseas Voter Empowerment act) by June 20th (45 days before the election) and each day after as new Federal Postcard Applications (FPCAs) are received.

We've provided a timeline in this memo with more details of the election activities and deadlines leading up to the August 4th Primary Election, as well as any concurrent November deadlines, as information for City Council.

Timeline for August Primary Election (and any concurrent November deadlines)

June 15-19:	Supply of ballots received from the ballot printing company
June 22-29:	Conduct preliminary testing of machines, programming, and ballots; prepare ballots for mailing to any voters whose applications are on file
June 20:	Issue MOVE ballots by June 20; then on-demand for new FPCAs
June 25-July 14:	Troy Election Commission meets to appoint Election Inspectors for August 4 Primary Election
July 6:	Notice of Voter Registration for August must be published by July 6; Clerk's Office extra hours for AV Ballots must be posted
July 20:	Last day to register any other way but in-person at the Clerk's Office
July 21-August 4:	Register to vote in person at the Clerk's Office
July 21 4pm:	Filing deadline for Troy School Board candidates (November ballot)
July 24 4pm:	Write-in filing deadline for Council Member candidates (August ballot)



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July 30:	Public Accuracy Test of election machines, programming and ballots
July 31 4pm:	Write-in filing deadline for Precinct Delegate candidates (Precinct Delegate candidates' filing deadline was May 5; write-in candidates for Precinct Delegate can also file at their own precincts on Election Day until 8pm)
July 31 5pm:	Last time a voter can obtain an AV Ballot by mail
August 1:	City Clerk's Office open for AV ballots in-person only (voters requesting to spoil their ballot and obtain a new one can be mailed a replacement ballot until 2pm)
August 3:	AV Ballots available in-person only until 4pm; ballots must be voted at the City Clerk's Office
August 3:	Citizens registering to vote can obtain AV Ballots until 4:30pm; ballots must be voted in person at the City Clerk's Office
August 4:	Polls Open for August Primary; AVCB convenes to process AV Ballots (7am until all ballots are tabulated)
August 4:	Citizens can register to vote, then can vote by AV Ballot at the City Clerk's Office or in-person at their precincts
August 4 4pm:	Emergency absentee voting closes (emergency must have occurred after 5pm on July 31)
August 4 8pm:	AV Ballots due at the Clerk's Office; all ballot issuing closes
August 6-18:	County Board of Canvassers (BOC) convenes; Clerk's Office staff must be available 7 days/week during this time to respond to requests from the BOC

Finally, remember that anyone who is a registered voter in the State of Michigan can become an Election Inspector for Troy (even elected officials!) Applications are available on the Elections webpage, and training classes will be held in mid-July.

Financial

There is no additional financial impact for the City of Troy to offer this service to Troy residents and voters.

Recommendation

City Management requests City Council approval of the additional location for issuing and receiving absent voter ballots on Saturday, July 25, 2020, as required by Michigan Election Law.



I DON'T WANT TO MISS A
LOVE
LIFE

DON'T CLOSE YOUR EYES. DON'T FALL ASLEEP.

Until you read this.

Cause you don't want to miss a vote!

MYTH:

"Absentee ballots aren't counted unless the election results are close."

"Absentee ballots can be counted if they're postmarked by Election Day."

"If you vote absentee once, you have to always vote absentee."

TRUTH:

Absentee ballots are counted just like voting in-person!

Absentee ballots must be received in the Clerk's Office by 8pm on Election Day.

A voter can change their mind any time, and vote in person, as long as they haven't returned their absentee ballot yet.

Every voter can sign up for the Permanent Absent Voter List. Voters on the List will automatically be mailed absentee applications before each election. Troy voters may add their name to the PAV list on our website, troymi.gov/PAVList.

- The Clerk's Office will **NEVER** automatically mail ballots to voters.
- 2020 Elections are on August 4 and November 3.

We need more election workers! Election workers either work in precincts or in the Absent Voter Counting Board. Contact the City Clerk's Office for more info!



CITY CLERK'S OFFICE

500 West Big Beaver
Troy, MI 48084

NONPROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
TROY, MI
PERMIT NO. 19



Sales Number: **752**

Business Name: City of Troy

Model/Cabinet: 710 28G

Date of Proof: 6/11/2020

Quantity: 2

Date Shipped: _____

Special Instructions:



Left
19.5" x 44.2"



Top
14.5" x 4"



Door
15.92" x 27.49"



Right
19.5" x 44.2"

PROUD MEMBER OF AN
PIG
TEAM

COVID

Stay Healthy Procedures



Please wear a
mask at all times.



Maintain 6 foot
social dist



Use
hand
sanitizer
f.

Avoid
surfaces,
wear

Practice
Social Dist

Wait here un
called forward



PLEASE
WEAR A MASK



Practice
distancing

