



City of Missoula, Montana
Item to be Referred to City Council Committee

Committee: Committee of the Whole
Item: Resolution calling for the method of City elections and considering whether or not to hold primaries in any offices on the ballot
Date: June 17, 2021
Sponsor(s): Marty Rehbein
Prepared by: Marty Rehbein
Ward(s) Affected:
 Ward 1 Ward 4
 Ward 2 Ward 5
 Ward 3 Ward 6
 All Wards N/A

Action Required:
Consider a resolution

Recommended Motion(s):
I move the City Council: Adopt a resolution of the Missoula City Council calling for 2021 City municipal government non-partisan elections to be conducted by _____ [options include mail ballot or polling place.] [If Council wishes to call for a primary in any municipal races, insert the following language] and calling for a primary election for _____ [options include: Mayor, Municipal Court Judge Dept(s) 1, 2, 3, Ward(s) 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6] to be held on September 14, 2021.

Timeline:
Referral to committee: June 21, 2021
Committee discussion: June 23, 2021
Council action (or sets hearing): June 28, 2021
Public Hearing: n/a
Deadline: June 28, 2021 and July 21, 2021

Background and Alternatives Explored:
Filing for city elections closes on June 21, 2021, at 5 p.m. The City Council has two decisions to consider:

- 1. The method of City elections
- 2. If the statute governing non-partisan primaries is not triggered, Council has the option to request that primaries be held for offices on the ballot. (more info. below)

A draft resolution with both these options has been prepared for consideration.

Method of Election
If the City Council would like City elections to be conducted by mail ballot, [13-19-201](#) and [13-19-202 MCA](#) allow this option: A mail ballot is not required by state law.

If City Council does not initiate a request, based on past City elections and costs, the elections administrator has indicated he will likely make the determination to conduct the city election by mail ballot and will send the City a statement of his decision. If the Council disagrees and would

like a polling place election, the governing body needs to pass a resolution to that effect by July 21, 2021 (See [13-19-203, MCA](#) and [13-19-204, MCA](#))

City elections have been conducted by mail ballot since 2007. Voter turnout increased when the city switched to mail ballots and election costs decreased.

Primary Election

After the close of filing, the Missoula County Elections Administrator will notify the city if a primary election is required in accordance with the [13-14-115 MCA](#).

A spreadsheet to assist in determining if a primary is required is attached to this agenda item. Pursuant to 13-14-115 (3) MCA, City Council has the option to request that a primary be held for any of the offices on the ballot if it passes a resolution not more than 10 days after the close of filing. The only scheduled City Council meeting that meets this deadline is June 28, 2021.

Financial Implications:

Following are the estimated costs for city-wide elections. The costs for a primary in an individual ward would be approximately 1/6 of the totals listed below. Costs listed below for a polling place election are based on one polling place per ward.

Sept Primary		City wide cost	One ward cost
Mail Ballot		\$114,634.19	\$19,105.70
Polling Place		\$146,756.57	\$24,459.43

November General		
Mail Ballot		\$117,244.19
Polling Place		\$149,366.57

Note if another jurisdiction places any measure on the ballot during the city's election, some of the costs of conducting the election are split between the two jurisdictions reducing the costs to each jurisdiction.

Links to external websites:

N/A