



OFFICE OF THE MUNICIPAL CLERK/ELECTION OFFICIAL

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Date: August 20, 2021
To: Mayor Weldon and Assembly
From: Beth McEwen, Municipal Clerk/Election Official
Subject: Elections Update

The Assembly has tasked the Clerk's Office with providing information about voting options and methods for the 2021 Regular Municipal Election and future elections.

OCTOBER 5, 2021 Regular Municipal Election

On April 26, 2021, the Assembly passed a motion calling for the October 5, 2021 Regular Municipal Election to be conducted as a Vote By Mail (VBM) election in partnership with the Municipality of Anchorage. The Clerk's Office is on schedule for that election. Full details are available on our website at <https://juneau.org/clerk/elections>; key dates of importance are as follows:

- Sept. 5 – Last day for voters to register to vote or update mailing address prior to ballot mail out;
- Sept. 14 – Ballots mailed out to all Juneau registered voters;
- Sept. 16-Oct. 5 – Drop Boxes open 24/7 for ballot drop off;
- Sept. 20-Oct. 5 – Vote Centers Open for In-Person voting, ballot replacement, or ballot drop off;
- Oct. 5 – Election Day, Vote Centers open 7am-8pm; Ballot Drop Boxes close at 8p.m.;
- Oct. 7 – Clerk staff flies to Anchorage with ballots to be processed;
- Oct. 8-15 – Clerk staff oversees ballot processing at the Anchorage Election Center;
- Oct. 19 – Canvass Review Board meets with Clerk/Election staff in Juneau to review & certify the election.

Vote By Mail (VBM)-Ballot Processing Center Project

Since January 2021, at a variety of Assembly and Assembly Standing Committee meetings, Clerk and Engineering/Public Works staff have provided the Assembly with options, estimated costs, timelines and potential locations to house a permanent CBJ Ballot Processing Center for the purposes of conducting Vote By Mail Elections. The CBJ Thane Warehouse was the location determined best suited for the center.

This project was last discussed at the August 9 Assembly Committee of the Whole (COW) meeting at which a motion was passed instructing staff to draft an appropriating ordinance in the amount of \$700,000 to be brought to the Assembly for Introduction and Public Hearing. There was discussion with Assemblymembers about the manner in which future elections might be conducted. Following are the cost estimates associated with the Ballot Processing Center start up and ongoing operating costs along with some initial estimates on alternative options.

Estimated Expenses

- Final Operational Costs for the October 6, 2020 Regular Municipal Election **\$134,000**
- Estimated Operational Costs for the October 5, 2021 Regular Municipal Election **\$150,000**
- One Time Cost for Thane Warehouse Ballot Processing Center: **\$555,000-\$730,000**
[This is Capital Improvement Project (CIP) cost only with \$330,000 for warehouse renovations & \$225,000-\$400,000 for equipment and does not include operating expenses.]
- Year 1 (2021-2022) Ballot Processing Center operations full ballot mail out **\$150,000**
- Subsequent Elections Ballot Processing Center operations - full ballot mail out **\$165,000**

Alternate Option

Assemblymembers, at the Aug. 9 COW meeting, asked about the process/cost for mailing out applications for ballots to all registered voters and then only mail full ballot packets to those voters who completed and returned their ballot applications. Below is a rough estimate based on the current rates of postage with an initial application mail out of 28,000 with anticipated 16,600 returned applications.

Alternative Option – Application First then Ballot Packet Mailing **\$170,000**

Additional Administrative Expenses

The operational estimates above include the cost of hiring additional election staffing for election purposes but do not include the regular Clerk's Office staff salary and benefits factor when conducting elections. Staffing expenses from the regular Clerk's budget dedicated to election work is **\$100,000**.

The operational costs also do not factor in the work involved with hiring election staff for the processing of any initiative petitions. Should any initiative petitions be filed, an additional **\$7,500** operational expense should be factored into the cost of the election.