

**City of Missoula, Montana
New Business Item**

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

Council Meeting Date: June 21, 2023

Sponsor(s): Marty Rehbein, Legislative Director / City Clerk

Prepared by: Claire Trimble

Ward(s) Affected:

<input type="checkbox"/> Ward 1	<input type="checkbox"/> Ward 4
<input type="checkbox"/> Ward 2	<input type="checkbox"/> Ward 5
<input type="checkbox"/> Ward 3	<input type="checkbox"/> Ward 6
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> All Wards

Action Required:

Consider a resolution.

Recommended Motion(s):

I move the City Council:

Adopt a resolution of the Missoula City Council calling for 2023 municipal government non-partisan elections to be conducted by:

- mail ballot or polling place;

and for primary elections to be held for the following races on September 12, 2023:

- Mayor and Ward(s) 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.

Background and Alternatives Explored:

Filing for city elections closes on June 19, 2023, 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.

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 19, 2023. (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 26, 2023.

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.

September Primary

Mail Ballot	\$ 136,856.50
Polling Place	\$ 161,809.00

November General

Mail Ballot	\$ 149,341.50
Polling Place	\$ 175,294.00

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:

Click or tap here to enter text.