

## Elections Update

### 2020 City of Ramsey Council Election

The following seats on the Ramsey City Council will be voted on in the 2020 Election: Mayor, Councilmember At-Large, Councilmember Ward 2 and Councilmember Ward 4.

1. Candidate filings open for these seats at 8:00 am on Tuesday, May 19.
2. Absentee voting for the Primary Election begins on Friday, June 26.
3. The Primary Election is scheduled for Tuesday, August 11.
4. The General Election is scheduled for Tuesday, November 3.

### The House Subcommittee on Elections Meeting

The following information has been provided by Anoka County Elections: The House Subcommittee on Elections met on Wednesday, April 8<sup>th</sup> to discuss election changes in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Secretary of State, the Minnesota Association of County Officers, and the League of Minnesota Cities all indicated their support for conducting the August primary and the November general election primarily by mail.

The proposal includes mailing ballots to all registered voters and then allowing for some in-person voting for non-registered voters and voters requiring assistance.

For next steps, the working group formed by the Secretary of State's office will likely need to retool the draft legislation to scale back from all-mail and determine what other changes would best accommodate holding elections in a pandemic without expanding to all mail voting. Those could potentially include some combination of the following, among others:

- Mailing absentee ballot applications to every voter to encourage voting by mail (as done for primaries in Georgia & Iowa)
- Expanding the direct balloting period to encourage more early voting & reduce the administrative burden for voters & administrators
- Moving to some form of "vote centers" or reduced # of polling places on Election Day to address challenges in recruiting/retaining sufficient # of election judges
  - One proposal that was discussed that I do not see as remotely viable was expanding the number of polling places (e.g. two polling places for every precinct). I think the idea was that this might help to more easily accommodate the distancing requirements, but the logistics of pulling this off when voting locations and judges are already likely to be scarce (not to mention lack of equipment) makes this impossible
- Modifying healthcare facility voting requirements
- Expand the current 7 day period to open and count absentee ballots
- Allow for accepting of ballots that arrive after Election Day

It is anticipated that regardless of what legislative changes are made, there will be a significant increase in the number of voters casting their ballot by mail. Anoka County will be exploring the different ways to encourage more voters to choose this method to reduce the burden and potential risks to voters and judges on Election Day, and also identify what the impact will be as far as Anoka County's ability to absorb this increase.

One other note from the proposed legislation were possible changes to candidate filing. This would extend the provisions of "absent candidates" under M.S. 204B.09 so that all candidates could submit their affidavits electronically or by mail as opposed to requiring that they file in-person with the filing officer. If legislation is not passed, early filing locations will still need to be open for candidate filing beginning on May 19, 2020.