

Kenai Peninsula Borough
Office of the Borough Clerk

MEMORANDUM

TO: Kelly Cooper, Assembly President
Assembly Members

FROM: Johni Blankenship, Borough Clerk (JB)

DATE: October 13, 2020

RE: Resolution 2020-072: Certifying the Results of the October 6, 2020 Regular Borough Election (Cooper at the Request of the Borough Clerk)

The Regular Municipal Election was held on October 6, 2020. All polling site precinct results were reported and published on the webpage by 8:45 p.m. Additional by mail precinct ballots and absentee / questioned ballots were counted prior to certification and are included in the resolution and the supporting documentation.

Absentee Ballot Application Promotion Campaign:

The Clerk's Office mailed 48,697 absentee ballot applications to registered voters in the Kenai Peninsula Borough. We received 3,540 completed applications in the mail and online. We mailed or faxed 3,510 ballot packages and received and transferred 2,614 voted ballot packages to the Canvass Review Board. All voters who applied online received an email letting them know that their ballot package was mailed and another email when their voted ballot package was received.

The following incidents were reported on Election Day:

1. An Optical Scan unit in Ninilchik was accepting ballots however the number on the digital display was not advancing.

Solution: A new machine was delivered to the site and up and running by 8:15 a.m. (all ballots that were not counted earlier were counted after the polls closed at 8:00 p.m. and prior to transmitting results).

2. We received two (2) phone calls from voters in Seldovia / Kachemak Bay precinct who reported that they did not receive a ballot. It was confirmed

that a handful of voters were not mailed ballots and somehow did not end up on the list that was emailed to the contractor. I have consulted with the Division of Elections to confirm the correct list of votes was sent to me and it was determined that the sorting/filter of voters failed due to formatting issues.

Solution: A new protocol has been put in place when sorting voter list to mitigate from this situation happening again. All voters that contacted us were directed to the absentee voting official at the Seldovia Library.

Our normal practice gave voters options to ensure their ability to vote. We had an absentee voting official in Seldovia available from September 21st through Election Day. In addition, we posted signs 2-weeks prior to the election directing voters to contact us if they did not receive ballot. We only received the two phone calls on election day.

3. We received phone calls and emails from voters that were concerned that not all election officials were wearing masks.

Solution: We provided all election sites with PPE and COVID-19 protocols. We provided the following:

- Face masks for election workers and voters
- Face Shields
- Gloves of varying sizes
- Hand Sanitizer
- Disinfecting Wipes
- Best Practices Guidance
- DHSS Social Distancing and Mask Wall Posters
- DHSS Floor Decals for 6' social distancing

It was determined that I did not have authority to mandate that election workers wear masks; therefore, it was not mandated but highly encouraged.

4. Eleven (11) voters attempted to vote twice. If the voter voted once at the polls as well as absentee or question, the ballot that they voted at the polls was counted when it went through the optical scan tabulator. If they voted in other ways the ballot that was first in time was counted. All voters will be contacted for further investigation and all voters will be reported to the State of Alaska Attorney General for further investigation (AS 15.15.410 and AS 15.56.040).

Solution: Ongoing Voter Education and continued use of the KPB Votes brand to help voters associate our elections with our brand.

Additional Item of Interest:

The canvass review board took extra care to cure any issues with voted ballot packages that were received on time; however, missing mandatory information. For example, a voter did not provide an identifier, did not sign the envelope or have their signature witnessed. 64 ballot packages were received with missing information, of those the canvass board was able to cure and therefore count 30 of them prior to certification.