


# Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly

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## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Peter Ribbens, Assembly President  
Members, KPB Assembly

**FROM:** Kelly Cooper, Assembly Vice President/Sponsor 

**DATE:** September 2, 2025

**SUBJECT:** **LAYDOWN Amendment Ordinance 2025-19-09:** Approving the Use of Funds for the Costs of Distributing Informational and Promotional Materials About Ballot Proposition No. 1 Seeking Voter Approval to Require Hand Counting of In Person Ballots Voted on Election Day (Cooper)

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The purpose of this amendment is to also appropriate funds for the education campaign of ballot Proposition 5.

(Please note the bold underlined language is new and the bracketed strikeout language is to be deleted.)

➤ Amend the title as follows:

**AN ORDINANCE APPROVING THE USE OF FUNDS FOR THE COSTS OF DISTRIBUTING INFORMATIONAL AND PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS ABOUT BALLOT PROPOSITION NO. 1 SEEKING VOTER APPROVAL TO REQUIRE HAND COUNTING OF IN PERSON BALLOTS VOTED ON ELECTION DAY AND BALLOT PROPOSITION NO. 5 SEEKING VOTER APPROVAL TO REQUIRE TO CHANGE THE CURRENT ELECTION DATE TO ALIGN WITH THE STATE OF ALASKA ELECTION DATE**

➤ Amend sixth Whereas clause to read as follows:

**WHEREAS,** it essential to provide factual, nonpartisan information on the efficiencies, cost-effectiveness, and accuracy of ballot tabulators and local election[s] processes, procedures and practices; and

➤ Add the following Whereas clauses BEFORE the sixth Whereas clause:

**WHEREAS, voters should be aware that moving the Borough regular election to November will cause certain logistical challenges, including polling place conflicts, ballot printing constraints, and, due to the state making it clear that the Borough and State will not be able to share election workers, the change may result in a need to recruit and train a separate pool of election workers apart from those serving State and Federal elections; and**

**WHEREAS, changing the Borough regular election date to November would also require the purchase of polling place booths, signs, etc. currently shared with the State; and**

**WHEREAS, unless the cities within the Kenai Peninsula Borough likewise amend their election dates, this election date change may void the MOA the Borough has with the cities related to election administration; and**

**WHEREAS, a Borough election date change that does not include the cities changing their local election date accordingly would mean that city residents would continue to participate in city elections in October, resulting in multiple election dates for the same voters and increased voter confusion and administrative burden;**

**WHEREAS, moving the Borough regular election date to coincide with State and Federal elections could also result in local issues and local candidates being overshadowed by State and Federal election campaigns; and**

➤ Amend Section 2 to read:

SECTION 2. That the Assembly hereby appropriates **\$34,000** from the General Fund fund balance to account 100.11110.26PR1.49999 and approves the use of the funds for an informational and promotional campaign, which may be used to influence the outcome of the election on October 7, 2025, on ballot Proposition 1 concerning hand counting ballots **and ballot Proposition 5 concerning changing borough elections to November.**

Your consideration is appreciated.

FINANCE DEPARTMENT FUNDS/ACCOUNT VERIFIED	
Account:	<u>100.27910</u>
Amount:	<u>34,000.-</u>
By: <u>BH</u>	Date: <u>9/2/25</u>

## **Scope of Work for Distributing Informational and Promotional Materials about Ballot Proposition No. 1**

### **Objective:**

The objective of this ad campaign is to inform the Kenai Peninsula Borough (KPB) voters of our current election processes that uses electronic tabulating equipment for counting ballots. The campaign will focus on highlighting the benefits of maintaining tabulators, the efficiency they bring to the election process, and the potential risks of hand-counting ballots. This will be done in direct response to the proposed Citizen Initiative Ordinance 2024-01, which seeks to mandate hand-counting of all in-person ballots on election day.

This scope of work is to engage and educate voters in the borough, ensuring they are well-informed about the importance of maintaining tabulating equipment for a more efficient, secure, and fair election process.

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### **Goals:**

- **Inform Voters:** Educate voters on the advantages of using electronic tabulators, focusing on speed, accuracy, and transparency in the election process.
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**Timeline:** Begin as soon as possible through election day October 7, 2025.

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### **Key Messages:**

- **Efficiency:** Electronic tabulators ensure that ballots are counted quickly and accurately, minimizing the risk of delays and human error. Hand counting is significantly slower than machine tabulation. This results in delayed results, higher staffing costs and extended processing times.
- **Security and Transparency:** Electronic tabulators are equipped with robust security protocols and are tested to ensure the integrity of the election process.

In 2021, the Borough Assembly adopted a new chapter of code KPB 4.60 Election Security and Integrity, to ensure borough elections are accessible, reliable and secure. This includes random hand counts of at least three precincts to confirm the counts are tabulating correctly.

- **Cost-Effectiveness:** Maintaining tabulators is more cost-effective than relying on manual labor for hand-counting, ensuring that resources are used wisely. More election workers



(hand counting teams) will need to be hired to conduct hand-counting after the polls close at 8:00 pm.

- **Human Error Prevention:** Hand-counting increases the potential for mistakes, while tabulators are programmed to minimize human error, enhancing the accuracy of results. Repetitive tasks like counting ballots manually lead to fatigue, loss of focus and mistakes such as misreading markings, double counts or misrecording tallies.

In studies and real cases<sup>1</sup>, error rates in hand counts can be alarmingly high. For example, an attempt in Nevada saw up to 25% error in hand-counted ballots. Machine Counts typically have error rates below 1%.

It is reported<sup>2</sup> that hand counts strain administrative resources, lead to burnout among election workers, and can discourage volunteers from participating in future elections

- **Fairness:** Automated counting is consistent and impartial, avoiding potential bias or confusion during the manual counting process. Hand counts can undermine trust in the process if results are inconsistent or challenge the administrative capacity of election officials.

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## Campaign Components:

- **Digital Ads:**
  - **Platforms:** Social media platforms (Facebook), local news websites, and the KPB official website.
  - **Format:** Engaging images, infographics, and possible short video clips explaining the benefits of tabulators.
  - **Messaging:** Clear, concise, and focused on the efficiency, security, and reliability of tabulating equipment.
- **Print Ads:**
  - **Platforms:** Local newspapers distributed within the borough.
  - **Content:** Informational flyers, newspaper ads, and posters placed in strategic public locations, emphasizing the benefits of maintaining tabulators.
  - **Design:** Professional, clear, and direct, with bold headlines and visual cues about the efficiency and security of electronic tabulators.

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<sup>1</sup> *Time*, October 9, 2024 “Why hand counting ballots could create an election disaster”

<sup>2</sup> *The Guardian*, April 7, 2024 and El Dorado County, “The Reality of Full Hand Counts”

This campaign will educate Kenai Peninsula Borough voters on the advantages of using electronic tabulators in the election process. Therefore, the primary objective of this campaign would be awareness with a secondary focus on traffic. Based on those objectives, the primary KPIs will be impressions and clicks.

**Timeline:** Aug. 25–Oct. 6, 2025

**Platforms:**

- Meta: Ads will be targeted to users 18–65+ in the Kenai Peninsula Borough.
- Print Advertising:
  - Peninsula Clarion: Run 1 quarter page ad per week at \$493 for 6 weeks: \$2,958
  - Homer News: Run 1 quarter page ad per week at \$429 per week for 6 weeks: \$2,574
- Digital Display: While this isn't in the scope of work, we recommend digital display as the bread and butter for all awareness-focused campaigns. This tactic places ads on websites that users visit most and can be geographically targeted. For example, the Weather Channel or popular news websites.

**Hard Cost Budget**

Platform	Budget
Meta	\$1,500
Print Ads	\$6,000
Digital Display	\$1,500
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$9,000</b>

*All hard costs incur an industry standard finance fee of 20%. Any hard costs will be agreed upon with the client in advance and will count toward the overall budget.*

In addition to the above hard costs, T&C estimates an agency budget of \$7,500 to manage this ad campaign. That budget includes:

- Full-service digital strategy, including copywriting



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- Custom ad creative
  - Monitoring and management of the ad campaign, including in-progress adjustments and optimizations.
  - Monthly ad reporting detailing KPIs.

## **Scope of Work for Distributing Informational and Promotional Materials about Ballot Proposition No. 5**

### **Objective**

The objective of this ad campaign is to inform the Kenai Peninsula Borough (KPB) voters why holding borough elections in October is in the best interest of borough voters.

At first glance, aligning with the State of Alaska's November election may seem simple, but the impacts on voters, workers, and taxpayers would be costly and disruptive.

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### **Goals**

- **Inform Voters:** Educate voters on the disadvantages of moving local elections to November.
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**Timeline:** Begin as soon as possible through election day October 7, 2025.

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### **Key Messages:**

- **Local Focus** – October elections keep borough issues front and center, without being overshadowed by high-profile state and federal campaigns.
- **Proven Tradition** – The Borough has successfully conducted elections in October for decades, ensuring stability and predictability for voters.
- **Efficient Administration** – October elections avoid the complications of competing with state and federal elections for workers, polling places, and equipment.

#### **1. Election Worker Shortages**

- The State of Alaska requires separate election workers for state and local elections.
- Many of our experienced election workers already serve the state in November.
- The Borough would have to recruit and train an entirely new pool of election workers.

#### **2. Polling Location Conflicts**

- Many polling places are simply not big enough to accommodate two sets of equipment, workers, and voters simultaneously.

- This would force the Borough to search for new polling sites—an additional cost and inconvenience for voters.

### **3. Ballot Printing Challenges**

- Our ballot printer cannot produce ballots in November due to the demand from state and federal elections.
- Even obtaining a new ballot printer would be difficult, especially in even-numbered years when state and federal ballots are also being produced.

### **4. Increased Costs for Equipment**

- The Borough currently shares voting booths, signs, tables, and other equipment with the State.
  - The Borough has budgeted the purchase of its own full set of equipment for every polling location.
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### **Campaign Components:**

- **Digital Ads:**
  - **Platforms:** Social media platforms (Facebook), local news websites, and the KPB official website.
  - **Format:** Engaging images, infographics, and possible short video clips explaining the benefits of holding local elections in October.
  - **Messaging:** Clear, concise, and focused on the efficiency, security, and reliability of current borough election practices.
- **Print Ads:**
  - **Platforms:** Local newspapers distributed within the borough.
  - **Content:** Informational flyers, newspaper ads, and posters placed in strategic public locations.
  - **Design:** Professional, clear, and direct, with bold headlines and visual cues.



This campaign will inform Kenai Peninsula Borough voters about the advantages of holding borough elections in October.

The primary objective of this campaign would be awareness with a secondary focus on traffic. Based on those objectives, the primary KPIs will be impressions and clicks.

**Timeline:** Sept. 8 - Oct. 6, 2025

**Platforms:**

- Meta: Ads will be targeted to users 18-65+ in the Kenai Peninsula Borough.
- Print Advertising:
  - Peninsula Clarion: Run 1 quarter page ad per week at \$493 for 6 weeks: \$2,958
  - Homer News: Run 1 quarter page ad per week at \$429 per week for 6 weeks: \$2,574
- Digital Display: This tactic places ads on websites that users visit most and can be geographically targeted. For example, the Weather Channel or popular news websites.

**Hard Cost Budget**

Platform	Budget
Meta	\$1,500
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Digital Display	\$1,500
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- Full-service digital strategy, including copywriting



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- Custom ad creative.
  - Monitoring and management of the ad campaign, including in-progress adjustments and optimizations.
  - Monthly ad reporting detailing KPIs.
  - Flyer design.