

RESOLUTION 20-27

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SELDOVIA, ALASKA, RECOMMENDING THE KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH ENACT ORDINANCE 2020-24 WHICH WOULD PROVIDE FOR A VOTE BY MAIL SYSTEM FOR ELECTIONS BOROUGH WIDE

WHEREAS, in February, 2019, the Kenai Peninsula Borough (KPB) established the Election Stakeholders Group (ESG) to increase voter participation by developing sustainable election processes that maximize accessibility and inclusivity while conserving public resources; and

WHEREAS, the City of Seldovia was represented on the ESG by Council Member Colberg, Council Member Rojas, City Manager Cassidi Cameron, and City Clerk Heidi Geagel, as active participants in the ESG throughout 2019; and

WHEREAS, on July 26, 2019 the ESG approved their final report and recommendations to the KPB with six final recommendations that included implementing a vote by mail hybrid structure (VBMS) and an education and outreach campaign, amending the voter pamphlet process, appointing service area board representatives, eliminating proposition statements, and adopting a Borough Resolution regarding ranked voting for run-off elections; and

WHEREAS; the ESG's number 1 recommendation was for the KPB to transition the election process from the current polling site structure to a VBMS which is consistent with the guiding principles adopted by the ESG, including: maximizing accessibility and inclusivity in the election process; promoting efficient use of public resources; increasing voter satisfaction and confidence in Borough elections; and ensuring the security and integrity of the voting system; and

WHEREAS, the Seldovia City Council adopted Resolution 20-07 on September 25, 2019 recognizing the recommendations of the KPB ESG and authorizing Mayor Lent to sign the Kenai Peninsula Borough Joint Resolution 2019-001; and

WHEREAS, the KPB Clerk's Office entered into a contract with Resource Data in December of 2019 for the purpose of preparing a feasibility study and cost analysis, which concluded that the KPB would be able to successfully transition to area-wide vote by mail elections; and

WHEREAS, in December 2019 the KPB Borough and Municipal Clerks began meeting monthly to consider the VBMS and how to develop a unified process that meets the needs for each municipality; and

WHEREAS, the VBMS is a proven methodology that the KPB has been using for over 20 years in six out of its 28 precincts, including; Seldovia/Kachemak Bay, Cooper Landing, Hope, Fox River, Moose Pass, and Tyonek; and

WHEREAS, the City of Seldovia (COS) shares roughly 450 voters with the KPB and it is in the best interest of the shared voters if both the COS and the KPB implement the same voting process; and

WHEREAS, the Seldovia City Council supports the transition of the COS Elections to a VBMS; and

WHEREAS, the Seldovia City Council supports the removal of advocacy statements for or against ballot propositions from being included in the official voter information pamphlet, which is produced by the Borough Clerk's office and is required by borough code to be factual in nature; and

WHEREAS, in the event of a run-off election, an extra week between the regular election and the run-off election would allow more time for the Borough Clerk's office to get ballot packages out, providing for a timely receipt by the voters and return receipt by the Borough; and

WHEREAS, the current global health pandemic further reinforces the need to implement a VBMS election process, to allow for greater flexibility and voter participation when events make it impractical or difficult for borough residents to safely vote at a traditional polling site.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SELDOVIA, ALASKA:

Section 1. That the Seldovia City Council encourages the Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly enact Ordinance 2020-24, which amends the borough election process in ways that are consistent with the recommendations and guiding principles adopted by the Election Stakeholder Group in July, 2019.

Section 2. That the Seldovia City Council recommends a Vote By Mail System be implemented to promote greater flexibility and voter participation when events make it impractical, unsafe or impossible to vote at a traditional polling site.

Section 3. This resolution shall become effective immediately upon its adoption.

PASSED AND APPROVED by a duly constituted quorum of the City Council of the City of Seldovia, Alaska, on this 11th day of May, 2020.

ATTEST:

APPROVED:


Heidi Geagel, City Clerk




Dean Lent, Mayor