

CITY OF SOLDOTNA
RESOLUTION 2020-022

A RESOLUTION RECOMMENDING THE KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH ASSEMBLY ENACT
ORDINANCE 2020-24 WHICH WOULD PROVIDE FOR VOTE BY MAIL ELECTIONS, MORE
TIME BETWEEN A REGULAR ELECTION AND RUN-OFF ELECTION AND TO REMOVE
PROPOSITION STATEMENTS

WHEREAS, City Manager Queen, Council Member Cox and City Clerk Saner were active participants in the Kenai Peninsula Borough (KPB) Election Stakeholders Group throughout 2019; and

WHEREAS, the group was established to research ways to increase voter participation by developing sustainable election processes that maximize accessibility and inclusivity while conserving public resources; and

WHEREAS, after holding many public meetings the KPB Election Stakeholders group made multiple recommendations to the KPB Assembly; and

WHEREAS, the group's number 1 recommendation was for the KPB to transition the election process from the current polling site structure to a vote by mail hybrid structure (VBMS); and

WHEREAS, the VBMS is consistent with the guiding principles adopted by the Election Stakeholder's Group, 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 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; and

WHEREAS, on September 12, 2019 Soldotna City Council (COS) adopted Joint Resolution 2019-001, recognizing the recommendations of the KPB Election Stakeholders Group; and

WHEREAS, the VBMS is a proven methodology that the KPB has been using for over 20 years in six of its 28 precincts (Cooper Landing, Hope, Fox River, Moose Pass, Seldovia/Kachemak Bay, and Tyonek); 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, the City of Soldotna shares roughly 4,000 voters with the KPB and much of the Election process is a joint effort making voting in both the COS and KPB Election a more convenient process for the shared voters; and

WHEREAS, the Soldotna City Council wishes to transition the COS Elections to a VBMS; and

WHEREAS, it is in the best interest of the shared voters if both the COS and KPB implement the same voting process; and

WHEREAS, the Soldotna 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;

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

Section 1. That the Soldotna City Council encourages the Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly enact Ordinance 2020-24 as currently written, 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.

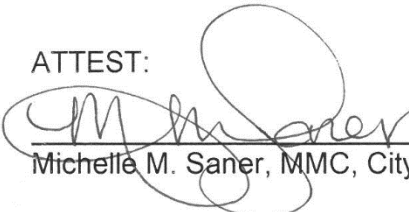
Section 2. That the Soldotna City Council recommends a Vote By Mail System be implemented to promote greater flexibility and voter participation when events make it impractical, unsafe or impossible to vote at a traditional polling site.

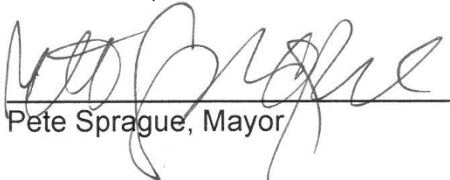
Section 3. A copy of this resolution shall be forwarded to Borough Mayor Charlie Pierce, and the Members of the Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly.

Section 4. This resolution shall become effective immediately upon its adoption.

ADOPTED BY THE CITY COUNCIL THIS 13TH DAY OF MAY, 2020.

ATTEST:


Michelle M. Saner, MMC, City Clerk


Pete Sprague, Mayor

Yes: Ruffridge, P. Parker, Carey, Chilson, L. Parker, Whitney
No: None