

**CITY OF SEWARD, ALASKA
RESOLUTION 2020-041**

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

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; and

WHEREAS, the City of Seward was represented on the ESG by Vice Mayor Sue McClure, former Interim City Manager Jeff Bridges, and current City Manager Scott Meszaros. City Clerk Brenda Ballou participated as a subject matter expert; and

WHEREAS, on July 26, 2019, the ESG approved their final report and recommendations to the KPB with six final recommendations that included: 1) implementing a vote by mail hybrid structure (VBMS), 2) an education and outreach campaign, 3) amending the voter pamphlet process, 4) appointing service area board representatives, 5) eliminating proposition statements, and 6) 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, on September 23, 2019 the Seward City Council approved Resolution 19-086, supporting KPB Resolution 2019-047 to recognize the recommendations of the KPB ESG and directing staff to explore implementation of the recommendations, and signing 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

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WHEREAS, in December, 2019, the KPB Municipal and City 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 City of Seward shares roughly 1,800 voters with the KPB, and engaging in a joint effort with the KPB Election process will be a more convenient process for the shared voters; and

WHEREAS, the KPB has been using a VBMS successfully in 6 of its 28 precincts (Cooper Landing, Hope, Fox River, Moose Pass, Seldovia/Kachemak Bay, and Tyonek) for over 20 years; and

WHEREAS, KPB Ordinance 2020-24 addresses the ESG recommendations regarding the removal of advocacy statements for or against ballot propositions and also the Borough's restrictive timeline for run-off elections; 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 SEWARD, ALASKA that:

Section 1. The Seward City Council hereby recommends 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. The Seward City Council hereby 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.

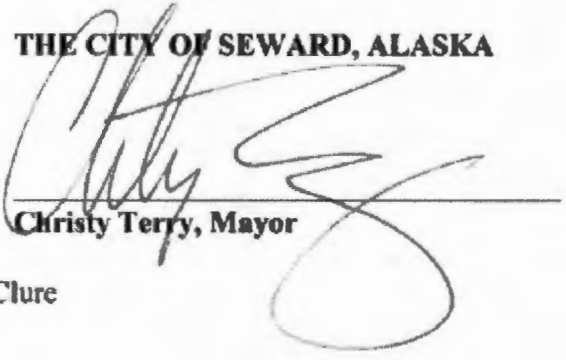
Section 3. Upon the enactment of Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly Ordinance 2020-24, the Seward City Council will take necessary steps to amend the City's election processes to implement a Vote By Mail Hybrid System for the City of Seward, in conjunction with the Kenai Peninsula Borough.

Section 4. This resolution shall take effect immediately upon adoption.

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PASSED AND APPROVED by the City Council of the City of Seward, Alaska, this
26th day of May, 2020.

THE CITY OF SEWARD, ALASKA


Christy Terry, Mayor

AYES: Osenga, Seese, Baclaan, Crites, McClure
NOES: Terry
ABSENT: Butts
ABSTAIN: None

ATTEST:


Brenda J. Ballou, MMC
City Clerk

(City Seal)

