

Election Rules – 2020 (Revised 4/2020)

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I. Election Committee

The Committee is responsible for:

* + 1. Convening meetings to plan and execute election procedures.
		2. Determining the polling location(s) for each District in which an election is to occur.

(3) Enlisting and assigning volunteer workers to staff polling places.

* + 1. Providing poll worker training and creating poll worker orientation materials.
		2. Obtaining and distributing equipment and supplies required in the polling places.
		3. Selecting a location for and equipping headquarters for the Committee.
		4. Arranging for the production and distribution of petitions for potential candidates for Commission seats.
		5. Providing an orientation for potential candidates
		6. Certifying the adequacy of circulated petitions submitted by potential candidates and making public announcement of the names and Districts of the certified candidates who qualify by timely filing of petitions.
		7. Arranging for and supervising the production of ballots.
		8. Verifying that no person has voted more than once in any election.
		9. Tallying the votes and certifying the results to the Commission.
		10. Providing timely website information to the CAC webmaster.
		11. Provide regular reports of the election process to the CAC during the election cycle.
		12. Making all other necessary and appropriate arrangements and determinations with respect to the nomination and election process.

II. Elections

1. The Committee shall determine the polling hours.
2. The Committee shall determine the location of polling places. To encourage voter participation, the Committee will:
3. Select well-known sites for polling places that provide public access, adequate access to disabled persons,
4. Select sites with adequate parking and clearly marked entrances.
5. Designate the polling places no later than the deadline for submitting nominating petitions.
6. Publicity

The Committee shall:

1. Submit a call for candidates for publication to at least one newspaper of general circulation in the community and to the CAC website and social media outlets ten weeks before the election, announcing the Districts in which elections are to be held, descriptions or maps of those Districts, and the place or places where petitions and copies of the Election Rules may be obtained. The Committee may also use any other means to publicize the elections as may be available and appropriate.
2. At least ten days before the election, submit to at least one newspaper of general circulation in the community and to the CAC website and social media outlets:
	1. the election Districts;
	2. the location of the polls;
	3. the date and hours of the election;
	4. descriptions or maps of those Districts;
	5. the names of the candidates for each District who have established eligibility by petition;
	6. that a voter must present a photo identification and evidence of place of residence and age, or sign a statement that he or she is eighteen years of age or older and currently resides at a stated address within the election District; and
	7. The Committee shall not include the names of Write-In Candidates in the announcements for the election.
3. Staff
4. The Election Committee shall appoint at least two people to staff each polling place. Such staff shall not include CAC members, candidates in that year's election to the CAC, or members of a candidate's immediate family or household. The election committee may appoint only one person to staff a polling place in which there is only one candidate.
5. Before the election, the Committee shall designate a presiding staff member for each polling place and specify that person's authority and duties.
6. The duties of the polling staff shall include the orderly operation of the polls and balloting, verifying voter eligibility, maintaining a register of persons voting, and ensuring the security of the ballots.

III. Candidates

1. The Committee is authorized to verify in whatever way it considers appropriate the place of residence for any candidate whose residency is challenged, for example:
	1. The potential candidate's County Board of Elections voting address, if any.
	2. The potential candidate's residence address as listed in a public telephone directory.
	3. The potential candidate's residence address as listed in a public address directory.
	4. Written statements from neighbors abutting the potential candidate's residence.
2. Should there be reasonable evidence that the potential candidate's address is as claimed, the Committee shall not withhold certification of the potential candidate's nominating petition solely on the residency question.
3. All potential candidates are encouraged to attend a candidate orientation provided by the Election Committee.

Following the orientation, any question from a potential candidate or certified candidate to the Committee must be submitted in writing or asked at a public meeting. The Committee will respond to questions in writing and will make the answer available to all candidates.

IV. Candidate Nomination

1. Petition Procedures

The Committee shall make nominating petitions available at one or more locations designated by the Committee, beginning at least ten weeks before Election.

A potential candidate for election to the CAC shall obtain petitions from the designated places, and shall at the time of receipt of the petitions, place on file his or her name, signature, residence address, CAC District, email address (if available) and telephone number. Any attempt to deceive in providing the above information may result in a disqualification by the Committee for that election.

A potential candidate shall personally circulate the petition(s) for his or her candidacy. The Committee may grant an exemption to this requirement if the potential candidate demonstrates that he or she has a disability which would make it a hardship for the potential candidate to personally circulate his or her petitions. In this case, the candidate shall designate a circulator for gathering signatures for the candidate's candidacy.

Each potential candidate, or, in the case of a potential candidate granted a disability exemption, each Circulator, must complete and execute the affidavit at the end of the petition before its submission to the Committee at the location specified by the Committee. At a minimum, the affidavit will include a certification that the potential candidate is qualified to be a candidate for the CAC.

Each potential candidate must submit a petition containing the following information for at least five qualified voters who reside in the potential candidate’s District:

(a) valid signature,

(b) residence address and

(c) residence phone number or e-mail address.

Potential candidates shall submit nominating petitions and affidavit for candidacy with the Election Committee at least five days before the regular April CAC meeting in the election year. If a Candidate wishes verification of submission of the petition, the Candidate shall contact the Chairperson of the Election Committee by email. The email address of the Chairperson will be made available to the Candidates in the nominating packets.

1. Petition Validation
	1. The Committee shall check the validity of the petition signatures for each potential candidate by attempting to contact a representative number of petition signers by telephone.
	2. If any of discrepancies or possible improprieties are discovered from these contacts, the Committee shall check all signatures for that potential candidate for validity in a like manner until either fifty valid signatures are found or the potential candidate's petition is ruled invalid for lack of sufficient signatures.
	3. The determination of the Committee shall be announced within five days of the deadline for submitting the petition.
2. Write-in Candidate Application
3. A person who does not submit a nominating petition may qualify as a Write-In Candidate by submitting their completed candidate packet to the Committee no later than 5 p.m. the day after the regular April meeting of the CAC in the election year. Only 30 valid signatures will be required for a write-in candidate if no candidate submitted a valid petition under Section B. above.
4. A potential candidate for election to the CAC shall obtain petitions from the designated places, and shall at the time of receipt of the petitions, place on file his or her name, signature, residence address, CAC District, email address (if available) and telephone number. Any attempt to intentionally deceive in providing this information will result in disqualification by the Committee for that election.
5. The Committee shall determine whether the candidate meets the eligibility requirements other than timely filing of nomination petitions, and if the result is affirmative, shall certify that the applicant qualifies as a Write-In Candidate, no later than the five days after the deadline for receiving the application.
6. The Committee shall immediately notify any Petition Candidate of the existence of a Write-In Candidate in the same District.

V. Ballots, Regular and Absentee

1. The Committee shall record the total number of ballots produced for each District.
2. Each ballot shall prominently display the identifying number for the respective District of the candidates listed.
3. Each ballot shall carry a list, headed with the phrase ”Vote for One”, of the names of Petition Candidates certified by the Committee as meeting Candidate Qualifications for that CAC District, with a ”( )” preceding each name.
4. The order of listing candidate's names on the ballot of each District shall be determined randomly.
5. Each ballot in a District in which there is a certified Write-In Candidate shall conclude with a blank line, preceded by a ”( )” for use in the event voters wish to write in the name of a Write-In Candidate.
6. No Write-In Candidates are to be listed on the ballots.
7. The absentee ballot shall be identical to the in-person ballot.
8. No political party or other organization shall be named on the ballot in association with a candidate's name.

VI. Polling Procedures

1. The CAC Election Committee shall provide voting opportunities for voters utilizing the mail-in balloting procedure outlined in the CAC Election Rules and the option of direct in-person voting at the polls is being eliminated with the concurrence of the Stay-At-Home Directive currently in effect.
2. Mail-in Balloting
	1. The Committee will rent a P.O. Box for the purpose of receiving Ballot Request Forms and Cast Ballots for the elections. The P.O. Box will be opened on specific dates set by the Committee and at least two members of the Election Committee must be present when the box is opened.
	2. The Committee will provide mail-in ballot request forms to candidates, the Whetstone Library and the local newspaper. The form will be provided the same day that candidate petitions are made available and the call for candidates is issued. Candidates may duplicate the mail-in Ballot Request Form and give it to prospective voters.

(3) The prospective voter must complete the Ballot Request Form and mail the completed form, along with a self-addressed stamped envelope, to the Election Committee’s P.O. Box. The self-addressed stamped envelope must be provided by the prospective voter. A candidate or candidate’s representative cannot collect and/or submit requests for a mail-in ballot. Multiple Ballot Request Forms cannot be mailed in one envelope. Only one absentee ballot request form per envelope will be accepted.

* 1. Within 7 days following the certification of candidates and write-in candidates, the Ballot Request Forms will be collected from the P.O. Box and the Committee will convene to process the Mail-in Ballot Request Forms.
	2. Each mail-in Ballot request envelope will be opened, reviewed, and one ballot will be issued to each requester using the self-addressed stamped envelope provided.
	3. The Committee will log the ballot number on the Voter's Ballot Request form and file the Ballot Request Form in ballot number order by district.
	4. On Election Day, the mail-in ballots will be retrieved from the P.O. Box prior to regular polling hours and brought to the Election Headquarters.
	5. Mail-in ballots will be counted after the in person ballots.
	6. Each mail-in ballot will be opened and matched to the Ballot Request form. The Ballot numbers will be verified. The Ballot will be stapled to the Ballot Request form. The ballot will be compared to the poll book. If the Election Committee determines that the voter has cast a ballot on Election Day, the mail-in ballot will not be counted.
	7. Post count, the mail-in ballots will be stored and handled in the same manner as the in-person ballots.
1. Direct in-person voting at the polls:
2. In addition to voting on Election Day, voters will be provided the opportunity to vote early. The early voting date(s) will be scheduled after announcement of the candidates' and write-in candidates' certification and prior to the first Saturday in May (i.e. Election Day).
3. If there is more than one candidate (including a write-in candidate) in a district election, the polling place for that district shall be staffed by at least two people during voting hours.
4. Each polling place will have, at a minimum, a secure ballot box, ballots, a map of CAC districts, the CAC bylaws and election rule, and a poll book for registering voters.
5. Each voter shall present photo identification with current address and age, or photo identification with another piece of identification with the voter's current address and age to a polling place election staff member designated by the Committee for that purpose. A voter may also present photo identification with an out-of-date address plus a bill, check, or the like showing a current address. If a voter does not have such identification materials at the polling place, the voter must sign a statement that he or she is eighteen years of age or older and currently resides at a stated address within the election District in which he or she is voting. A poll worker shall staple the statement to the ballot so that any person may challenge the residency of the voter. Any candidate, candidate's witness, Committee member, CAC member, or poll worker may review the residency statement. Any disputes related to the veracity of a residency statement shall be resolved by two or more Election Committee members viewing the voter’s photo identification with current address and date of birth(age) or a photo identification with an out-of date address showing the voter’s date of birth (age)plus a bill, check, or the like showing a current address.
6. By submitting a residency statement, a voter acknowledges that the ballot is no longer anonymous.
7. A voter may cast an anonymous ballot by presenting identification that complies with this rule.
8. Using the identification provided in accordance with the preceding section, the polling place staff member shall verify that the voter is eligible to vote in the district election for which a ballot is requested and has not previously voted at the polling place. Upon such verification, the voter shall register in the poll book, entering name,signature, and residence address.
9. The voter shall be provided with a single ballot, and shall cast a vote by marking the ballot and depositing it in a sealed ballot box provided for that purpose.
10. No person shall engage in any campaigning within 100 feet of the entrance of the building used by voters at the polling place during the time the poll is open on Election Day.
11. At the appropriate polling place, a witness may represent a candidate or an individual or group supporting or opposing any issues or candidate on the ballot. No witness shall directly or indirectly campaign for issues or candidates on the premises of a polling place. A candidate shall not serve as a witness to the voting. No witness shall serve as a poll worker.
12. The polling staff shall deliver the sealed ballot boxes to the Committee immediately upon the closing of the polls.

VII. Counting of Ballots

1. The ballot boxes and envelopes containing absentee ballots shall remain sealed until the counting begins.
2. Immediately following the conclusion of all voting and the transportation of all ballots to the headquarters, the Committee shall count the ballots from the ballot boxes.
3. No ballots for a non-certified write-in candidate shall be counted.
4. Blank ballots shall be counted to ensure integrity of election results.
5. Any person may witness the counting.

VIII. Security of Ballots

1. During the period of active balloting, election materials will be stored in sealed containers in a secure place whenever the materials are not in use by the Election Committee. Active balloting is from the mailing out of mail-in ballots and concludes with the closing of the polls on Election Day.
2. All voted ballots for each District shall be placed in a sealed container after counting has been completed.
3. The sealed containers shall be kept in a secure place until two weeks after the election or until any formal election complaint is resolved, whichever is later, at which time, the materials will be handled in accordance with the City of Columbus Record Retention Policy.
4. Ballots not used in the election shall be handled in the same manner as voted ballots.

IX. Results

1. The Committee shall informally notify the candidates and the CAC Chairman of the uncertified election results within twenty-four hours of the close of the polls.
2. Before the Committee certifies the election results, the Committee shall disqualify a potential candidate or candidate who is ineligible to serve due to death, withdrawal of candidacy, lack of residency, or other reason in violation of these rules or rulings by the mayor or city attorney.