

MEMORANDUM:

TO: Village of Estero Council Members
FROM: Sharon L. Harrington
Lee County Supervisor of Elections
DATE: October 13 2016

SUBJECT: Conduct of Elections for the Village of Estero

Our office has executed the contract for the Lee County Supervisor of Elections Office to conduct municipal elections for the Village of Estero beginning with the first actual election since its incorporation.

I would like to extend to your Village Clerk, Kathleen Hall the resources of my office during her inaugural election as Clerk. I'm sure it feels like a daunting task because of the complexity of the process, but we want assure you that we are here to help.

I wanted to provide some information to the Council with regards to early voting that may help in your decision making process:

- The Village can elect to conduct early voting for its residents providing sufficient notice is given to the Supervisor of Elections so arrangements could be made to secure EV site(s).
- The Village can decline having the SOE conduct early voting since voters would still have 2 other methods to cast a ballot which are mail ballots and election day voting.
- There are two sites that would be the most convenient for voters. We currently use the Estero Recreation Center and our Bonita Springs Branch Office as early voting locations. The Village can decide to utilize either one or both. If additional sites are requested, we would have to find another location since we don't have any others in the vicinity.
- The Village can elect the number of days and hours of operation they wish to offer for EV. The City of Fort Myers and Cape Coral generally will have at least 6 days from a Monday through to Saturday 10:00am to 6:00pm, but we have had as little as 3 days. It would depend on what the Village wants to allocate financially to the EV process.
- It is estimated to cost an average of \$1,000 per day.
- During the Presidential Preference Primary, our records indicate that 1,689 voters utilized the Estero Recreation Center and took part in early voting.

**ADDENDUM TO ELECTION SERVICES AGREEMENT
APPROVED BY COUNCIL OCTOBER 5, 2016**

Q & A

How much would they save by adopting an ordinance which allows for an election to be on the same date as the Presidential Preference Primary?

- If the Village of Estero would hold its election in conjunction with the Presidential Preference Primary, there would be no cost for that election. Direct costs would be applied to all other elections not held on the same day as the PPP.

Is the rule about no municipal elections on federal or state election days a statutory rule/regulation or is it a rule created by the Supervisor of Elections.

- The rule about no municipal elections on federal or state election days is at the discretion of the Supervisor with the contract to conduct the Village of Estero elections stating that the election must be held on a mutually agreed upon date. We do not conduct any municipal elections on countywide elections other than on the PPP as mentioned above.

With respect to polling locations and equipment, it is my understanding that there are no specifically mandated guidelines and that each Supervisor's office uses its reasonable discretion. However, the Village Council is concerned that since the upcoming elections are outside of the typical federal and state cycle that there may not be adequate equipment and wish to avoid lines for local voting. Would it be possible to add some specific language regarding these concerns – perhaps whatever internal standards your office would typically rely on in these instances?

- There will be an adequate supply of voting equipment for each of the Estero precincts regardless of whether they have their election with the PPP which is a countywide election, or at another time when we are conducting just their municipal elections. After the 2012 election we added an additional 100 units in the field which provides for no less than 2 scanners per precinct and 3 per early voting site.

Finally, on the qualifying provisions, since the Village does not have the resources to confirm the signature requirements for the petitioners seeking qualification is there a means by which we can flush that out more clearly with respect to the Supervisor's office confirming signatures for the candidate – my experience is that is a service the candidate pays for and then the scrubbed lists are sent to the municipality for final qualification?

- Signature verification on candidate petitions is done by the Supervisor of Elections. Candidates can bring their petitions to the Main Office and pay the signature verification fee of \$.10 per petition. We will verify candidate-petition signatures and certify the number of valid signatures to the Village Clerk. The Village Clerk will then use the certification provided by the Supervisor in the qualifying process to determine whether the candidate will need to pay a filing fee or they have provided the required number of petitions with valid signatures in lieu of paying the fee.

Cost Estimates – I understand from Burt that the 2017 budget is based on a \$3 and \$5 dollar per voter approximation with \$3 dollars being for regular election day polling and \$5 dollars for early election and mail-in or absentee voters. Am I correct in these assumptions, if possible we would like to provide that basis in the estimate provision of the Agreement as it will help the Council decide on whether early voting is cost effective.

- The City of Sanibel and the Town of Fort Myers Beach will hold expenses that can be shared by each municipality, for example: required legal advertising in a newspaper of general circulation (News-Press) of the Canvassing Board Meetings Schedules, voter registration book closing notices, the sample ballots and staff overtime for Election Day, however, some election costs will be specific to the Village election.

- In accordance with Section 97.021(13) Florida Statutes, “election costs” include, but are not limited to: *expenditures for all paper supplies such as envelopes, instructions to voters, affidavits, reports, ballot cards, ballot booklets for absent electors, ballot language translation, outgoing postage, return postage, notices to voters; advertisements for registration book closings, testing of voting equipment, sample ballots, and polling places; forms used to qualify candidates (when necessary or required); polling site rental and equipment delivery and pickup, poll worker staffing and training, polling place signage set-up and removal; data processing time and supplies; election records retention; labor costs, staff overtime; designation and cost for operation of early voting sites (if requested by the Village); including those costs uniquely associated with vote-by-mail ballot preparation, poll workers, and election night canvass.*
- The Village currently has 26,480 registered voters. We estimate election costs at approximately \$3.00 per voter. The estimate *does not* include shared costs for legal advertising. The Village’s portion of shared legal advertising costs may be as high as \$6,000. Additionally, if the Village places referendums on the ballot, the Village is responsible for separate advertising its referendums in accordance with Section 100.342, Florida Statutes once in 5th week and once in the 3rd week before the day of the election in a newspaper of general circulation.

Also, how soon does the Village need to make a decision on early voting?

- If the Village elects to hold early voting, the cost may be as high a \$5.00 per voter in addition to shared legal advertising costs and is based on the designation of (1) one early voting site. The cost per voter increases with the designation of additional sites. You can use these numbers ($\$3.00/\$5.00 \times 26,480 + \$6,000$) as an approximate amount when figuring the cost of the 2017 Village election. The Village’s shared and actual election costs will be supported by invoices post-certification of the Village election.
- The Supervisor of Elections requires 120-day notice by way of resolution of the governing body of the Village wherein the Village calls for the March 7, 2017 and authorizes the Supervisor of Elections to conduct the Village election. The deadline to submit the resolution is Monday, November 7, 2016.