

## MEMORANDUM TO CITY LEADERSHIP

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**TO:** Salt Lake City Leadership  
Mayor Mendenhall and City Council Chair Amy Fowler

**DATE:** March 23, 2021

**FROM:** Lauren Shafer, Deputy City Recorder

**SUBJECT:** UPDATE: Ranked Choice Voting and Participation in the Municipal Alternative Voting Method Pilot Program

\* Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) and the “pilot program” are used interchangeably in this memo; however, RCV is the method of voting which falls under the pilot program.

### IMPORTANT DATES:

- **By April 29, 2021:** Provide notice to overseas and military voters under the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA) if a Primary election will be held.
- **By April 30, 2021:** Publish election notice that identifies: (i) the municipal offices to be voted on in the municipal general election; and the (ii) dates for filing a declaration of candidacy for the offices identified.
  - Due to Newspaper deadlines and the current calendar year, the publication would need to be provided to the Salt Lake Tribune by **Thursday April 22** (3 pm) or to the Deseret News by **Tuesday, April 27** (4 pm).
- **By May 9, 2021:** Provide notice to Lt. Governor & County Clerk by resolution indicating intention to participate in the Pilot Program and assurance the municipality has the resources and capability to participate.
  - Considering the Council meeting schedule, the resolution consideration date (provided the publishing and notification information provided above) is suggested for April 20 at the Formal meeting.
- **Tuesday, November 2, 2021:** Municipal General Election.
  - Primary election is optional in the Pilot Program

### BACKGROUND:

In February 2021, the Council was briefed on the potential of conducting the 2021 Municipal election as part of the Municipal Alternative Voting Pilot Program otherwise known as Ranked Choice Voting. This memorandum is for the follow-up briefing addressing the impact of state legislation and upcoming deadlines.

At the initial briefing two videos were discussed – please click on these links to view the video contents:

- [Post It Note Video](#)
- [City of Vineyard Ranked Choice Voting Video](#) (created by the Lieutenant Governor’s Office)

The purpose of the memo is to outline components of the Municipal Election timing impacted by the determination to participate in the Pilot Program. The determination to participate is crucial to the Recorder’s office providing clear timelines and community outreach efforts. Providing an informal response to this question, allows the Recorder’s office to return with the Interlocal Agreement outlining

costs, to prepare a draft resolution to notify the office of the Lt. Governor and the County Clerk formally of the determination, and to begin outreach material creation and strategy.

Upon the determination of the election method, the timeline to declare candidacy is defined. Currently individuals are opening campaign finance committees but do not declare candidacy officially until the election method is determined.

## **BUDGET:**

The Recorder's Office received a draft Interlocal Agreement from Salt Lake County Elections with the following costs:

- \$119,108 – Traditional Voting Method with a Primary and General Election
- \$120,218 – Ranked Choice Voting Method with a Primary and General Election\*
- \$72,387 – Ranked Choice Voting Method *without* a Primary \*

*\*Ranked Choice Voting methods may go over the estimate based the participation of other municipalities, not exceeding \$10,000.*

Prior to receiving the estimates from the County, the Recorder's office had requested \$275,000 in the budget proposed to the Mayor.

If opting into the Pilot Program, the determination to hold a Primary Election involves various considerations including:

- Voters and Candidates expectations of a Primary Election
- Potentially fewer candidates to rank on the November General Election ballot
- Voters may experience Ranked Choice Voting prior to the General Election
- Holding a Primary Elections contributes to overall costs, limiting educational outreach funds
- Timing to educate voters about Ranked Choice Voting is decreased
- Potential candidates would be afforded additional time to collect signatures (if desired) prior to the Declaration of Candidacy period
- Impact of the timing on the COVID-19 vaccination efforts, potential in-person voting and campaigning efforts

## **COMMUNITY OUTREACH:**

If selected as the chosen method, the Ranked Choice Voting method will require additional community outreach to ensure voters have been provided the opportunity to practice and understand how Ranked Choice Voting works. Voter education plays a large role in elections and it has been noted that candidates are the initial educator in their conversations with the public. Building upon the 2015 Vote by Mail campaign efforts, outlined below are some of the anticipated community outreach efforts through funding joined with the State or from fiscal savings if the Primary election is not held.

Stages of Preparation (all being evaluated for multiple languages and alternative communication methods)

- Candidates
  - Use of informational material within the Candidate Guide
  - Listed in the Candidate Guide, scheduled open conversation/practice opportunities conducted by the Recorder's office
- Promotional Asset Development used and distributed through:
  - Social Media Campaign efforts
  - Website – multiple locations throughout the City
  - Ranked Choice Voting Instructional video development
  - Citywide Mailing (postcards)
  - Newspaper publishing notices

- Outside organization distribution (including recognized community organizations, religious groups, community & senior centers, individual schools and districts, libraries, large employers, business associations)
- Pins, banners, promotional materials
- Multiple press releases, interviews, email updates
- Paid promotional spots on radio, social media and digital advertising
- SLCTV/Media Services Outreach in multiple languages
  - Capitol City News segments
  - Ask Me Anything (AMA) Events

The Lieutenant Governor's Office has roughly \$200,000 available for outreach and public education on Ranked Choice Voting. However, until it is known how many cities will opt into the Pilot Program, the funding and education cannot be outlined. As of March 22, 2021, cities opting into the Pilot Program include: Draper, Lehi, Payson, Riverton, Springville, Vineyard, and Heber City.

**TIMELINE OVERVIEW:**

<b>Election Calendar Task</b>	<b>Due dates</b> if current voting method is selected <b>OR</b> Ranked Choice Voting with a Primary is selected	<i>Number of Calendar Days from date of the Memo: March 23</i>	Adjusted Date if RCV is selected (without a Primary election)	<i>Number of Calendar Days from date of the Memo: March 23, 2021</i>
Election Official must prepare a notice for UOCAVA voters for the primary election	April 30	38	Not applicable	38
Publish a notice that identifies: (i) the municipal offices to be voted on in the municipal general election; and (ii) the dates for filing a declaration of candidacy for the offices identified	May 1	39	May 1	39
Last day for Council members to use Communication Budget Funds to distribute newsletters <a href="#">(A.19)(d)</a>	May 11 ( <i>last day to postmark</i> )	50	August 3 ( <i>last day to postmark</i> )	135
Declaration of Candidacy period begins	June 1	70	August 10	140
Declaration of Candidacy period ends	June 7	76	August 17	147
Ballots must be transmitted to UOCAVA voters	June 25	94	Not applicable	94
First day to send mail / absentee ballots to active registered voters	July 20	119	Not applicable	119
Last day to register to vote for Municipal Primary Election	July 30	129	Not applicable	129
Municipal Primary Election	August 10	140	Not applicable	140
Municipal General Election	November 2	224	November 2	224

**Request to the Council:**

1. Would the Council consider a straw poll indicating interest to participate (or not participate) in the Pilot Program for Ranked Choice Voting?
2. If the Council chooses to participate in the Pilot Program, will there be a Primary Election?