

Introduced by: Mayor Pruhs and
Council Member Cleworth
Council Member Rogers
Council Member Marney
Council Member Ringstad
Council Member Sprinkle
Council Member Tidwell
Date: October 9, 2023

RESOLUTION NO. 5084

A RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF CONTINUING TO HOLD LOCAL ELECTIONS IN EARLY OCTOBER

WHEREAS, City Charter Section 11.1 sets the regular City election date as the first Tuesday in October, or on such other date as may be fixed by ordinance; and

WHEREAS, FGC Sec. 22-6(a), provides that the regular election will be held on the day provided in the Charter, unless the City Council, by ordinance, sets the election on the same day as the regular municipal election for the Fairbanks North Star Borough (FNSB); and

WHEREAS, the FNSB is considering Ordinance No. 2023-58 that would change the date of the Borough's regular election from early October to early November to coincide with the state and federal elections held on the Tuesday following the first Monday in November; and

WHEREAS, equipment for local elections, such as voting booths, tables, chairs, and ballot boxes, is currently borrowed from the State of Alaska Division of Elections, and if the Borough and City held their elections at the same time as the State, the Borough and City would have to procure their own voting equipment; and

WHEREAS, Borough Ordinance No. 2023-58 includes an appropriation in the amount of \$190,000 for the Borough Clerk to purchase election equipment for local elections if the election date is moved from October to November; and

WHEREAS, regular City elections have been held in conjunction with Borough elections, and the City has sought to keep its election codes and procedures as similar as possible to that of the FNSB to ensure consistency for voters; and

WHEREAS, the City of Fairbanks operates on a calendar year budget, and moving the regular election date to November will significantly impact the City's budget preparation process, which occurs in November and December; and

WHEREAS, if local elections were held on the same date as state and federal elections, it is likely that awareness of City and Borough candidates and propositions would be diminished; and

WHEREAS, the Matanuska-Susitna Borough moved the date of its regular election from October to November effective in 2019, and their average voter turnout prior to the change (based on their 10 previous regular elections) was 18.35%, and the Mat-Su Borough voter turnout each year since the election date change is as follows: 2019 regular election, 10.31%; 2020 regular election, 32.86%; 2021 regular election, 17.86%; 2022 special election, 10.05%; 2022 regular election, 40.58%; and

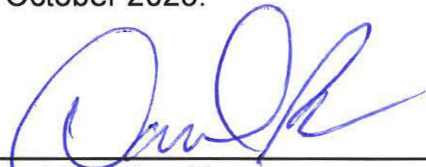
WHEREAS, conducting absentee voting by mail concurrently with the state and federal elections presents opportunity for voter confusion in that voters might return all their voted ballots in the same envelope, causing either their state/federal ballot or their City/Borough ballot to not be counted; and

WHEREAS, the City Council believes that keeping the regular City and Borough elections on the first Tuesday in October best serves the interests of local voters.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council that the City of Fairbanks supports keeping local elections in early October.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Clerk is directed to send a copy of this resolution to the Borough Clerk for distribution to Mayor Ward and the Borough Assembly.



PASSED and APPROVED this 9th day of October 2023.



David Pruhs, Mayor

AYES: Ringstad, Rogers, Cleworth, Marney, Sprinkle, Tidwell
NAYS: None
ABSENT: None
APPROVED: October 9, 2023

ATTEST:

D. Danyielle Snider, MMC, City Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:



Thomas A Chard II, City Attorney