

Report/General Information on By-Mail Elections

Questions Posed to and Answered by State Elections Division:

1. Would the State allow us to continue to use the ACCUVOTE device to count ballots? **Yes**
2. How would the State conduct its elections in our community if we did not have any trained, local election judges/officials for traditional in-person voting ? **We would provide training, as we have in all prior years, to all workers we recruit to work on our election boards and those who might serve as an absentee voting official.**
3. Does the department require any special procedures for by-mail elections or is the local government responsible for creating and overseeing its own processes/procedures? **The borough would be responsible for creating their own processes/procedures for by-mail elections.**
4. Has the department done any research on voter turnout or possible fraud, regarding by-mail elections that could be shared? **We have not. But you may want to check with some counties in Washington and Oregon as they are two of a number of states that now have statewide vote-by-mail.**
5. Is there other information regarding by-mail elections that you could share with us? **We only conduct by-mail elections for a small number of regional educational attendance areas that have opted to have their election conducted by mail. And then any special elections, such as the Petersburg incorporation election. We have very limited statutes and regulations on this matter. If you are interested in them, I can send you what we have.**

Other Information:

1. Rules & Regs: Development of our own rules and regs would not be difficult. We could refer to both the State of Alaska; Lake & Peninsula Borough and Oregon State regs to develop our own.
2. Voter Fraud: Per the history of fraud cases received from the Oregon Election Divisions, fraud would be a minimum concern in our local elections. Since Oregon went to full-fledge vote by-mail in November, 2000, the State prosecuted 13 criminal election law complaint cases regarding voting. The State of Alaska has not prosecuted any cases regarding voting. [Oregon population: 3,831,000; Alaska population: 710,000 (source IDiscover, 2013 rounded to the nearest 100,000)] The history of Oregon mail elections & criminal complaints is attached.

3. If we converted to a by-mail election, the sitting assembly would take an active role in the final vote count. The assembly, in concert with the clerk's office, would be the counting board (less any members that were running for re-election).
4. Should at anytime the State withdraw use of their electronic counting units (Accuvotes) the borough would need to purchase its own counting unit.
5. Absentee voting in the clerk's office would be provided for mail-in elections.
6. The combination of the State retaining in-person voting and the borough converting to by-mail elections would create confusion with the borough residents and would take considerable public outreach, and time, to educate the public on the differences.
7. Participation: There is no doubt that by-mail elections would increase the percentage of voter turn-out and encourage many who have not bothered to vote in the past to begin participation. Voter participation is estimated to increase at a minimum of 10-15 percent*
8. Cost of by-mail elections far exceed traditional in-person voting due to added postage and printing costs. (see Cost Comparison Estimate)

* Strong voter turn-out is mostly accredited to "what is on the ballot"; not what method is used for voting