



Staff Report

Meeting Date: Dec, 17, 2024
Meeting Type: City Council

To: City Council
From: Administration
Item Title: Discussion/Consideration: Ordinance to Abolish City Election Commission

Background: After attending our city clerk training on elections last Thursday, we learned that many cities are using the county to run their elections. I did not get back in town until Friday night and met with our staff, Heather and Kendra yesterday to discuss this. I apologize that this is last minute. But, I just learned of this and feel it is in the best interest of the city to discuss and consider.

I would like to recommend the adoption of an ordinance that would abolish the city election commission and allow for the City to contract with the County Election Commission to run the upcoming city elections. Qualifying and absentee voting will still be administered by the City Clerk like normal, but the County will oversee the voting on election day. I am making this recommendation because the county election commission is most qualified and trained to conduct the elections. The county election commission runs typically one election per year; therefore, they maintain current on all training requirements. They also have relationships with poll workers who also maintain their training requirements. The equipment used by the County Election Commission is complicated and very costly. Yes, the County would let us borrow the equipment, but we would have to train our commissioners on how to use the equipment. Additionally, we may still have to pay the County Election Commission to be on standby for assistance with the equipment on election days. Another perk, is that the County owns printers and can either print some of our ballots for us, including absentee ballots. The printers would then also be used on election days if we needed more ballots. Remember, everything is ordered on estimates, so if a precinct has a higher than normal voter turnout, the County Election Commission and Kendra Necaise have the ability to quickly print more ballots.

From a financial standpoint, it is cost effective to request the county's help because the city will not have to pay to update training for three election commissioners and poll workers. The city would have to also pay the Circuit Clerk's office for this service, which is a new fee. At the end of the day, we expect a minimal increase in cost (or a "wash").

The Hancock County Election Commission and circuit clerk are very excited about the opportunity to work with the City of Bay St Louis to make sure that the 2025 elections run smoothly.

If the city council wishes to move in this direction, the attached ordinance would need to be adopted. The language in this ordinance is statutory. Heather and I are both on standby today to answer any questions before the meeting. I will put this for discussion under my report.

If the council does not wish to move in this direction, your city clerk will be prepared to run the election like normal.

Recommendation:

Attachments: