

TO: Mayor and City Council
FROM: David Chanski, City Administrator/Clerk
RE: Counting Write-In Votes
DATE: July 1, 2024



Background

Included in the extensive election law changes passed by the State Legislature this past legislative session was the ability for municipalities to govern how write-in votes are counted for their local elections. The Legislature now gives municipalities 3 options:

- A) Continue to count every write-in vote.
- B) Require a candidate wishing to have their write-in votes individually recorded to file a written request with the Chief Election Official (for Breezy Point the City Administrator/Clerk) no later than the seventh day before any municipal election.
- C) Only count votes for write-in candidates if the total number of write-in votes for an office is equal to or greater than the fewest number of non-write-in vote for a ballot candidate for that office.

During the 2022 General Election, staff spent over an hour counting write-in votes for local offices.

Resolution

If the Council desires to change how write-in votes are counted, a resolution stating such must be passed, and a draft resolution to that affect is attached. The City Council would just need to select which option they prefer.

Staff recommends that the City Council adopt the attached resolution and select Option A. This is the simplest way to administer write-in votes as well as would put the City's write-in vote policy in alignment with the State and Federal Government, which both require candidates to submit written requests for their write-in votes to be counted.

Council Action

Staff recommends that the City Council adopt the attached resolution governing write-in vote counting, and require any candidate wishing to have their write-in votes individually recorded to file a written request with the Chief Election Official no later than the seventh day before any municipal election.