

Memorandum



Date: January 21, 2026,
To: Mayor and Commissioners
From: Kalla Langston-Weiss, City Clerk
Subject: Early Voting Agreement with Berrien County

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide information and rationale regarding the recommendation to continue early voting through an agreement with Berrien County rather than establishing an independent city early voting location.

After reviewing the requirements and associated costs of operating a standalone early voting site, staff has determined that proceeding independently would require the purchase of new election equipment. This equipment investment would be necessary to meet current election administration standards; however, the City is nearing the end of its current equipment lifecycle. As a result, purchasing new equipment at this time would represent a significant financial commitment with limited long-term benefit to the City.

By entering into an early voting agreement with Berrien County, the City is able to ensure continued compliance with early voting requirements while avoiding the immediate and substantial capital expense of acquiring new equipment. The County already possesses the required equipment and infrastructure to administer early voting efficiently and securely, resulting in a more cost-effective option for the City.

Additionally, partnering with the County reduces administrative and staffing burdens on City staff.

For these reasons, staff recommend that the City Commission approve participation in the County early voting agreement based primarily on fiscal responsibility and operational efficiency during the remainder of the current term.

Attached is the Draft Agreement as well as estimated budgets.