



AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

Election Code Committee

STAFF

Delynn Coldiron, City Clerk
Cecilia Good, Senior Deputy City Clerk
Carrie Daggett, City Attorney
Sara Arfmann, Assistant City Attorney II

SUBJECT

Debrief from the February 18 Council Meeting, Discussion on Election Oversight and the Candidate Information Session and Ranked Choice Voting Updates.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this item is to:

- Debrief from the February 18 Council Meeting where the election code changes were discussed;
- Discuss election oversight;
- Discuss the upcoming Candidate Information Session; and
- Provide an update on ranked voting efforts.

GENERAL DIRECTION SOUGHT AND SPECIFIC QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED

1. Does the Committee want staff to move forward with the election oversight as described or are changes needed?
2. Are there any concerns related to the Candidate Information Session agenda or are modifications needed?
3. Are there any concerns related to the ranked choice voting communications plan or updates?
4. Are there any final items the Committee wants to address before next session?

BACKGROUND / DISCUSSION

At its January 27, 2025, meeting, the Committee reviewed revised code amendments related to eliminating write-in candidates, adding ranked voting provisions in case of a special election administered by the City, eliminating the requirement that circulators read petitions when requested but providing an accessible way to access the information, and aligning campaign finance reporting with state provisions, as well as adding additional ones for committees that have been established more than 90 days ahead of an election. The Committee provided direction on which code amendments should be moved forward for consideration by the full Council. Council considered these code amendments during its February 18 Council meeting.

February 18, 2025 Meeting Debrief:

These are the Ordinances presented to Council at the February 18 meeting:

- A. First Reading of Ordinance No. 029, 2025, Amending 7-145 of the Code of the City of Fort Collins to Clarify and **Revise the Process for Enforcement of Campaign Violations. Adopted 7-0.**
- B. First Reading of Ordinance No. 030, 2025, Amending Article V of Chapter 7 of the Code of the City of Fort Collins to **Clarify and Revise the Restrictions and Requirements Related to Campaign Contributions** in City Elections. **Adopted 7-0.**
- C. First Reading of Ordinance No. 031, 2025, Amending Section 7-103 of the Code of the City of Fort Collins to **Remove Write-In Candidates** in City Elections. **Adopted 5-2.**
- D. First Reading of Ordinance No. 032, 2025, Amending Section 7-165 of the Code of the City of Fort Collins to **Clarify and Revise the Requirements for Petition Circulators. Adopted 7-0.**
- E. First Reading of Ordinance No. 033, 2025, Amending Chapter 7 of the Code of the City of Fort Collins to **Update Various Sections Related to City Elections for Consistency with the City Charter and Within Chapter 7. Adopted 7-0.**

All ordinances but No. 031, 2025 will be on the Consent Agenda for the March 4 meeting. Ordinance 031, 2025 will be a discussion item since there was a split vote. If approved, all code changes will become effective on March 14, 2025 and all necessary materials and website sections will be updated accordingly.

Election Oversight:

The Committee has discussed the option of hiring an outside contractor to provide additional and proactive oversight over the election process. During the February 18 Council meeting, Council directed staff under Other Business to propose a formal process to provide proactive oversight over mostly campaign finance for this election cycle.

Election complaints received between 2019 and 2023 have been summarized on Attachment A. Staff plans to briefly cover how these violations might be covered based on code changes that have been made and based on the assumption that an outside contractor will be utilized to look at Finance Campaign Reports and related items. Staff has prepared a list of items the outside contractor would be expected to fulfill, as well as some supplemental items that might be added. Staff has provided an estimate of what this might cost and plans to seek Council approval for an appropriation that would cover any election oversight the Committee recommends, and Council approves, as well as additional monies needed to cover the coordinated election cost.

Candidate Information Session:

Currently, the proposed agenda includes the following items:

- Agenda
 - General City Information
 - Full-Service City, History-Past and Present, Structure
 - Council
 - Direct Reports, Council Duties, Council Schedule, District Boundaries, Boards and Commissions, Council Compensation
 - Election Timelines and Requirements

- Candidate Affidavit, Committee Registration, Nomination Petition, Campaign Finance and Reporting
- Review of pertinent Code changes
- Complaint and enforcement information
- Outside contractor role
- Ranked Voting
 - General information
 - Video

Staff is interested in knowing whether anyone from Council that is not planning on being a candidate this election cycle or former Councilmembers would want to participate in this session to answer questions from participants about what it is really like to be a Councilmember.

Ranked Voting Update:

Staff intends to give an update on the RV Communications Plan. A summary has been provided as Attachment B. Staff will also provide an update on our experience with our first touchpoint – the State of the City Address on February 24 and will provide information about our discussions with Poudre School District and CSU. To date, we have received three applications from volunteers who want to participate in this effort. We have started to build out the City’s Ranked Voting (RV) website which currently includes some general information about RV, information about coming events, a link for the volunteer application, and a list of FAQs. Soon, we will have a video ready to go and a sample ballot that people can practice filling out. We will send Council information when these items are available. The link to the website page is: <https://www.fcgov.com/elections/ranked-voting>.

Election Update:

Staff has received Candidate Affidavits from three individuals so far:

- Mayor – No candidates
- District 1 – 2 candidates:
 - Christopher Bramhall-Conway
 - Daisy Montgomery
- District 3 – No candidates
- District 5 – Amy Hoeven

Outstanding Items:

Additional items that remain outstanding include:

1. Code amendments related to Redistricting.
2. Other Topics: “Bike Rack” Items:
 - b. Public Financing of Campaigns

Staff will be looking for guidance on whether the Committee would like to continue meeting or to hold these items for when the Committee reconvenes in the fall.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Election Violations since 2019
2. Ranked Voting Communication Plan Summary
3. Presentation