



118 Central Avenue North, New Prague, MN 56071
phone: 952-758-4401 fax: 952-758-1149

MEMORANDUM

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
CC: JOSHUA M. TETZLAFF, CITY ADMINISTRATOR
FROM: KEN ONDICH, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR
ROBIN PIKAL, FINANCE DIRECTOR
DATE: MAY 27, 2026
SUBJECT: DESIGNATION OF ABSENTEE VOTING PERIOD FOR CITY-ADMINISTERED ELECTIONS

The Minnesota Legislature recently adopted changes to election law (203B.05, subdivision 1) allowing municipalities that administer elections to reduce the in-person absentee voting period from 46 days to 18 days prior to an election. Cities wishing to implement the shortened absentee voting period must notify their county by June 12, 2026.

Historically, cities administering elections were required to offer in-person absentee voting beginning 46 days before Election Day. While this timeline was established to maximize voter access, the extended period creates significant staffing and operational demands for local governments.

The recent legislative change provides cities with the option to better align absentee voting operations with available resources. The change to 18 days will provide a more efficient and cost-effective process for the City while still offering voters ample opportunity to vote before Election Day. A shorter voting period reduces staffing demands and costs associated with maintaining a 46-day absentee voting operation. In addition, the 18-day timeframe aligns with Minnesota's direct balloting process, allowing us to streamline operations through tabulator-based voting.

As a reminder, the City only administers in-person absentee voting within the City for voters on the Scott County side of the City as Le Sueur County retains that entire process for voters on the Le Sueur County side of the City. Additionally, those voters on the Scott County side of the City that wish to vote further than 18 days out are still able to vote absentee at Scott County or request an absentee ballot through the mail.

Staff Recommendation

Staff is recommending that the City designate the new 18-day absentee voting period for the upcoming 2026 and future city-administered elections.