



**CITY OF WAUKESHA
Administration**

201 Delafield Street, Waukesha, WI 53188
Tel: 262.524.3700 fax: 262.524.3899
www.waukesha-wi.gov

Committee: Ordinance & License	Date: 7/13/2020
Common Council Item Number: 20-0883	Date: 7/21/2020
Submitted By: Gina Kozlik, Clerk Treasurer	City Administrator Approval: Kevin Lahner, City Administrator KL
Finance Department Review: Diane Gard, Interim Finance Director DG	City Attorney's Office Review: Brian Running, City Attorney BR
Subject: Repeal Ordinance Section 1.06 decentralizing absentee ballot processing by the Municipal Board of Absentee Ballot Canvassers (Central Count) . The process will be returned to the individual poll locations using absentee ballot processors assigned to the polls.	

Details:

In 2012 there was a need for the current ordinance centralizing the counting of absentee ballots for both training purposes and to relieve those duties from the polls. It was becoming increasingly difficult to efficiently handle a high number of in-person voters while trying to attend to processing absentee ballots in envelopes on Election Day.

Today, with the surge in popularity of absentee voting we expect to see a shift of the numbers of in-person voters at polls decreasing through the end of 2020 and beyond. Absentee in April was up to 42% and we expect that trend to continue as voters experience the ease and convenience of voting by mail.

In April, 30+ poll staff were used as absentee processors to open and process over 17,000 ballots with 12 pieces of voting equipment programmed specifically for Central Count. The only reason that number of additional equipment was available in April was because we condensed our poll locations into one location at Schuetze.

To be able to promote the goals of social distancing during the pandemic, we cannot continue central count processing with double the number of absentee processors at one location. Returning absentee processing in a decentralized way to the poll locations allows for optimum use of scarce and costly equipment and while additionally affording us the ability to split the work with staffing at our 15 reporting units. The planned purchase of 4 additional machines will allow use of 2 machines at polls where volume is high.

There has been no relief offered with any changes to current laws to allow for more time for counting which also is a consideration with processing time and equipment availability. We have reached the point where we need to decentralize absentee processing and move forward with training strong teams for August so they are ready for November.

Options & Alternatives: Continue processing ballots using the Central Count method and relocate to a larger space to attempt to create some distancing of absentee processors. Would additionally need to purchase additional equipment at a cost of \$6,000+ per machine which may not even be available to purchase.



Financial Remarks:

Ordinance change and decentralizing has no financial impact as we would be using the tabulating equipment we already have with the 4 additional machines we will be purchasing.

Executive Recommendation:

Approve Ordinance repeal with request to waive 3rd reading.