

CITY COUNCIL MEMORANDUM

FROM: The Office of the City Manager **DATE:** February 8, 2021

SUBJECT: Consider and approve Resolution No. 2021-011, calling the May 1, 2021 City Council Election, and authorizing the Mayor to execute a joint election agreement with Tarrant County and other political subdivisions for election services.

PRESENTER: Alicia Richardson, City Secretary / Chief Governance Officer

SUMMARY:

The City Council is required by the Texas Election Code to order the city's general election of officials. Resolution No. 2021-011 orders the city's election for May 1, 2021. The resolution also authorizes the city to hold its election jointly with other Tarrant County entities, contract with Tarrant County to administer the joint election, and establishes voting locations.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

The City Secretary's Office is responsible for conducting municipal elections as prescribed by the Election Code of the State of Texas and the City of North Richland Hills' City Charter.

The City Charter states that the governing body of the city shall consist of a Mayor and seven (7) Council persons who shall be elected for terms of two years. All places, including the Mayor, will be elected at large. The Mayor and Council persons in Places 2, 4, and 6 shall be elected in even-numbered years and Council persons in Place 1, 3, 5 and 7 elected in odd-numbered years.

Pursuant to Section 3.004 of the Texas Election Code, the governing body of a political subdivision shall order the general election. An election may only be held on a uniform election date - first Saturday in May or the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November.

In accordance with state law, Resolution No. 2021-011 orders the city's general election of officials to be held on May 1, 2021. Persons elected to offices of City Council Places 1, 3, 5 and 7 shall be for a term of two years. The resolution establishes Election Day voting locations, provides for the appointment of election officials, early voting and Election Day procedures, and authorizes the Mayor to execute a joint election agreement and contract for election services with Tarrant County.



The filing period for the 2021 general election began January 13, 2021 and concludes on February 12, 2021. Candidates will file their completed application with the City Secretary's Office during the business week between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.

Early voting will begin April 19, 2021 and continue through April 27, 2021. In the event a run-off election should be needed, the resolution sets June 5, 2021 as the run-off date, provides for early voting days and times and allows the contract with Tarrant County to be extended to the run-off election.

Tarrant County has been approved to utilize vote centers on Election Day. The Tarrant County Commissioner's Court approved participation in the countywide polling place program. This allows qualified voters the ability to cast their ballot on Election Day at any polling location within Tarrant County. Previously, qualified voters were required to cast their ballot on Election Day at their preassigned polling location based on their precinct.

As in previous years, the city's election will be held jointly with other Tarrant County political entities holding an election to be administered by Tarrant County. Following the filing period (February 12, 2021), Tarrant County will provide a finalized contract that includes all entities participating and holding an election. It is anticipated that the election contract will be similar to previous contracts with the county and will include the following provisions:

- Tarrant County Elections Administrator, or his designee, will serve as the administrator of the joint election with each participating entity and be responsible for decisions and actions as required by law.
- Early voting will be conducted jointly with all participating entities beginning on April 19, 2021 and ending on April 27, 2021 at the locations and times established by the county. North Richland Hills voters may vote early at:
 - ✦ Tarrant County Elections Center, 2700 Premier, Fort Worth; (Main Early Voting Location)
 - ✦ Dan Echols Center, 6801 Glenview Drive;
 - ✦ North Richland Hills Library (Community Room), 9015 Grand Avenue; or
 - ✦ any of the other joint early voting locations within Tarrant County.
- Voting will be conducted exclusively on the county's Hart InterCivic Verity Voting System. This hybrid system provides a paper trail for every voter, combined with the latest advancement in digital security.
- Ballots that contain content for more than one joint participant because of overlapping territory will be arranged in the following order: Independent School District, City, Water District(s), College District and other political subdivisions.
- Vote Centers on Election Day – qualified North Richland Hills voters are able to cast their ballot at any polling location within Tarrant County.
- The Tarrant County Elections Administrator will release unofficial cumulative totals and precinct returns of the election as precincts report to the central and remote



tabulating stations and the returns are tabulated. The unofficial cumulative totals and precinct returns will be released to the joint participants, candidates, press and general public by distribution of hard copies at the central counting station (2700 Premier Street, Fort Worth) and by posting to the county web site. Each participating entity will receive their election results from the county's website.

- Election expenses will be allocated among the participating entities.
- The Elections Administrator will be the general custodian of the voted ballots and all records of the joint election.

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve Resolution No. 2021-011.