

# 2020 City Election Specifics

## 1. Registering to Run for Office

A citizen seeking elected office must meet the eligibility requirements identified in the City Charter. The citizen must also sign a sworn Statement of Candidacy, pay the appropriate fee, and submit the required documents, including a Financial Disclosure Statement and proof of residency. Any prospective candidate who does not meet or complete the requirements or submit all the documentation will be deemed ineligible to run for office and will not be placed on the City election ballot. The City will begin accepting candidates for the October 17, 2020 election at 9:00 a.m. on July 20, 2020 and continue to accept candidates until 4:00 p.m. on September 2, 2020.

Any City resident may review the submitted documentation from a candidate for office. If a City resident disputes the eligibility of a candidate for office, then he/she must complete an election complaint form and submit it to the City Manager, who is the Supervisor of Elections, no later than September 17, 2020. The Supervisor of Elections will have the election judges review the submitted documentation and make a recommendation of eligibility or any need for document clarification. If the Supervisor of Elections determines the candidate is not eligible to run for the office sought, the candidate will be notified in writing, along with an explanation of the reason. The letter will be sent to the candidate's residence by certified mail, return receipt requested, or registered mail, and first-class mail. The letter shall be deemed delivered three days after the date the letter is mailed, unless otherwise evidenced by the receipt. The candidate will have three business days from the date the letter is delivered to appeal the decision; otherwise, the candidate's name will be removed from the ballot.

In order to appeal the decision, the candidate must complete an official appeal form and submit the form to the Supervisor of Elections by 4:00 p.m. on the third business day following the delivery date of the letter. In the event of an appeal, the City Attorney's office will designate an attorney to review the appeal and make a final determination. The final determination will be sent to both the candidate and the Supervisor of Elections and will not be subject to further appeal.

## 2. Electioneering Restrictions and Requirements

Campaign signage shall comply with the general signage provisions set forth in § 6.5 of the City's Unified Development Code. In general, campaign signs are not allowed inside road rights-of-way, on sidewalks, or obstructing sidewalks or City streets. No campaign signs are allowed on City, County, State, or federal property. All candidates must limit the size of campaign signs to City zoning requirements when placed inside the City limits. Campaign signs may be placed on private property if the property owner agrees. All campaign signs should be removed within two calendar days of the election's conclusion.

No campaigning may be performed, nor election signs placed, inside or within 100 feet of the back entrance or front entrance of the building where the elections are held.

Anyone wanting to file a complaint regarding any violation of these rules or policies may complete and submit to the Supervisor of Elections an official complaint form. The Supervisor of Elections will choose a panel of three election judges to review the complaint. The election judges may recommend to the Supervisor of Elections a course of action depending on the incident and any prior incidents in the campaign. If it is determined that an action is necessary, the action could be a letter of clarification, a letter of reprimand, or even a fine to the candidate as allowable under the City Code. Any actions taken are open to public review and copying. Complaints regarding the general signage provisions set forth in § 6.5 of the City's Unified Development Code shall be referred to the City Planner.

### **3. Eligibility to Vote**

The City will accept, as the final list for registered voters, the list provided from the County, to include only those registered prior to 4:00 p.m. on Monday, September 28, 2020. If the Supervisor of Elections chooses to send out a ballot to each registered voter, the ballots will be mailed out sometime in September. Citizens registering in August and September who do not receive a mailed ballot will need to request a ballot following the Absentee Voting process or may choose to vote in person on election day.

### **4. Absentee Voting**

Registered voters may request an absentee ballot if they choose to vote early. A registered voter may vote early through the absentee voting process even if (s)he is going to be in town on election day. In order to request an absentee ballot, the voter must either call the election volunteer or staff member designated by the Supervisor of Elections on the City's website ([www.choosecambridge.com](http://www.choosecambridge.com)) or on the City's Facebook page or stop by City Hall and speak with the designated election volunteer or staff member. In order to obtain an absentee ballot, a voter or his/her duly qualified agent must submit a fully completed absentee ballot request form verifying the voter's full name, date of birth, address, and telephone number. If the Supervisor of Elections chooses to mail out a ballot to every registered voter, the voter should utilize that ballot and only request one if they do not receive their ballot or their mailed ballot is lost, destroyed, or spoiled.

Requests for absentee ballots shall be made Monday through Friday between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., except on City holidays. Absentee ballot requests for the October 17, 2020 general election will be accepted beginning September 2, 2020, and absentee ballot requests for the December 1, 2020 runoff election, if necessary, will be accepted beginning October 19, 2020. The voter need not have planned to be out of town on the date of the election to vote absentee. No voter will be provided more than one absentee ballot unless the Supervisor of Elections has reasonable grounds to believe that the absentee ballot previously provided has been lost, destroyed, or spoiled.

Voters who wish to designate an agent to return an absentee ballot application and pick up the voter's absentee ballot, deliver a completed absentee ballot, or assist the voter in casting an absentee ballot or completing an absentee ballot request form by reason of the voter's disability, inability to read or write, or inability to read the ballot may only do so by completing a designation

of agent form provided by the Supervisor of Elections. Requests for designation of agent forms shall be made in the same manner as requests for absentee ballots as set forth above.

An individual must be at least 18 years of age and not a candidate on the ballot in order to qualify as an agent for purposes of returning a voter's absentee ballot application, assigning an address for the ballot to be mailed other than the address of the registered voter, and/or delivering the voter's completed absentee ballot. Additionally, the individual must attest in writing, under penalty of perjury, that he/she is acting as the voter's designated agent and will deliver the absentee ballot to the voter. If the voter requests that his/her agent return the completed absentee ballot, then the individual must also attest in writing, under penalty of perjury, that he/she is returning the absentee ballot as completed by the voter and that he/she has not altered the ballot in any way.

Voters who wish to designate an agent to assist him/her in completing his/her absentee ballot or absentee ballot request form by reason of the voter's disability, inability to read or write, or inability to read the ballot may only do so by completing the designation of agent form described above. An individual may not assist a voter with completing his/her absentee ballot if the individual is a candidate on the ballot, the voter's employer or an agent thereof, or an officer or agent of the voter's union. Additionally, the individual must attest in writing, under penalty of perjury, that he/she was duly authorized by the voter to assist him/her.

An individual may serve as an agent for more than one voter; however, a properly qualified agent will only be mailed one absentee ballot per voter. Under no circumstances will an individual be mailed an absentee ballot without having been properly qualified as an agent as set forth herein.

The volunteer or staff member designated by the Supervisor of Elections will determine if the individual requesting an absentee ballot is eligible to receive an absentee ballot. Additionally, such volunteer or staff member shall determine whether an individual is eligible to serve as a voter's agent. For individuals who are deemed ineligible to receive an absentee ballot or serve as a voter's agent, the designated volunteer or staff member will write the contact information of the denied individual and explain the reason therefor. In the case of an individual deemed ineligible to serve as a voter's agent, both the voter and the denied individual shall be so notified. The individual deemed ineligible to receive an absentee ballot or serve as a voter's agent may request an appeal, in which case the designated volunteer or staff member will note the request for an appeal and turn the request over to the Supervisor of Elections to hear the appeal. The Supervisor of Elections may designate a panel of three election judges to consider the appeal and provide a recommendation prior to making his/her final determination.

Unless a voter properly designates a qualified agent to return his/her completed absentee ballot, the volunteer or staff member designated by the Supervisor of Elections to accept requests for an absentee ballot will e-mail a request to the City's election vendor to have an absentee ballot sent to the registered address of the voter if he/she is determined eligible to receive an absentee ballot. The absentee ballot will be mailed by the City's election vendor to the registered address of the voter. The voter will be responsible for receiving, completing, and mailing in the absentee ballot. All absentee ballots will be kept at the U.S. Post Office at 301 High Street, Cambridge, Maryland until the October 17, 2020 general election or the December 1, 2020 runoff election, if necessary. Any absentee ballot received by the City after the closing of the polls of the general

election or the runoff election, if necessary, will not be counted. It is the voter's responsibility to ensure that the City has received the voter's absentee ballot by the closing of the polls. If a voter who receives an absentee ballot is concerned (s)he will not have time to mail the ballot in. The voter may bring the ballot to the election poll site or vote in person on election day.

On October 17, 2020, volunteers and/or staff members designated by the Supervisor of Elections will pick the absentee ballots up from the Post Office and transport them to the polling place for counting. A representative of any candidate may follow the designated volunteers and/or staff members to the Post Office and back. Any absentee ballots received by the Post Office after the time the Supervisor of Elections' designees pick up the mail Saturday morning will not be counted. Anyone wanting to submit his/her absentee ballot on the date of the election may go to the polling place and deliver his/her ballot in person. Anyone concerned that his/her absentee ballot was mailed in too late may vote in person at the polling place. If the election vendor finds that a voter has voted both by absentee ballot and in person, the absentee ballot will be destroyed and only the in-person ballot will be counted.

## **6. Election Day**

Each voter will be required to verify her/his last name, first name, month and day of birth, and address. Anyone unable to do this for the judges will not be allowed to vote or may be given a challenged ballot.

Voters will only be allowed to vote in the ward identified on the County registration list. If a voter states he/she has moved and the new address is outside the ward identified on the voter registration, he/she may be given a challenged ballot.

Absentee ballots will be accepted at the polling site so long as the individual bringing it is the voter him/herself or his/her duly qualified agent. Absentee ballots will not be accepted if it is submitted by someone other than the voter him/herself or his/her duly qualified agent. Anyone who brings her/his absentee ballot to the polling site will be given the opportunity to vote in person, in which case their absentee ballot will be destroyed.

Any disputes regarding eligibility to vote will be handled by a team of three election judges designated by the Supervisor of Elections. In some cases, a challenged ballot may be issued.

## **7. Challenged Ballots**

Challenged ballots will have a narrative written on the envelope to explain the challenge. A panel of three election judges chosen by the Supervisor of Elections will review each case and determine whether to consider a challenged ballot.

## **8. Voting Offenses**

The City takes voting fraud and other voting and election-related offenses very seriously. Pursuant to § 3-15(b) of the City Charter, any person who bribes, coerces, or intimidates any voter or attempts to do so shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and, on conviction thereof, subject to a fine

of up to \$500 per offense and/or incarcerated for up to three months in jail. Additionally, the Supervisor of Elections reserves the right to refer any suspected election-related offenses to the State's Attorney for Dorchester County and/or the Office of the State Prosecutor. The Supervisor of elections may decide to automatically send designation of agent forms to the state prosecutors office for review when one individual serves as an agent for four or more voters.