

Council Meeting: May 28, 2026	Prepared By: Deb Johnson, City Clerk
Topic: 2026 Election Absentee Voting Period	Action Required: Approval

Summary

Legislation was passed on May 15, 2026, and signed by the Governor on May 18, 2026, allowing municipalities to choose a shorter in-person early voting period. House File 4240 permits cities to conduct either 18 days of in-person early voting or the full 46 days of in-person absentee voting.

Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 203B.05, subdivision 1, was amended to state:

“Generally. (a) The full-time clerk of any city or town shall administer the provisions of sections 203B.04 to 203B.15 and 203B.30 if:

- (1) the county auditor of that county has designated the clerk to administer them; or*
- (2) the clerk has given the county auditor of that county notice of intention to administer them.*

The designation or notice must specify whether the clerk will be responsible for the administration of a ballot board as provided in section 203B.121, and the municipality must determine whether the municipality's office will be designated to administer voting under section 203B.081 starting on the 46th day before the election or the 18th day before the election.”

This change is effective immediately for all future state primary and general elections and does not apply to odd-year city, town, or school district elections.

Cities must notify the county of their decision to administer in-person voting for either the 46-day or 18-day period. Hennepin County has requested notice by June 1, with a required state deadline of June 12 for both the 2026 Primary and General Elections. Any future changes must be communicated at least 14 weeks prior to each election cycle.

Staff reviewed absentee and early voting history reports from the State Voter Registration System (SVRS) for the 2022 and 2024 election cycles. The reports indicate that voter participation during the 46-day in-person absentee voting period was significantly lower than participation during the 18-day early voting (using a tabulator) period prior to each election. Staff recommends that for the 2026 Primary and General Elections, the City conduct 18 days of in-person early voting (July 24–August 11 and October 16–November 2).

The City will continue to accept absentee ballot drop-offs beginning 46 days prior to Election Day. An Absentee Ballot Board consisting of the City Clerk and Deputy Clerk will be responsible for reviewing and accepting or rejecting absentee ballots that are dropped off during the 46-day absentee voting period (June 26 - August 10, 2026) and on Election Day.

Election	In-Person Absentee Voting (46 days)	In-Person Early Voting (18 days)	Total Absentee & Early Voters	Total Registered Voters
August 9, 2022 Primary	10	26	36	4698
November 5, 2022 General	82	569	651	4820

August 13, 2024 Primary	5	17	22	5126
November 5, 2024 General	24	1861	1885	5460

Recommendation

Approve administering in-person voting for the 18-day period for the 2026 Election Cycle and adopt Resolution 2026-44 Establishing an Absentee Ballot Board.

Council Action

Approve administering in-person voting for the 18-day period for the 2026 Election Cycle and Adopt Resolution 2026-44 Establishing an Absentee Ballot Board.

Attachments

1. [Resolution 2026-44 Establishing Absentee Ballot Board.doc](#)