



Takoma Park City Council Meeting – June 17, 2020 Agenda Item 2D

Voting Session (Consent Agenda)

Single Reading Ordinance Approving a Contract for Ballot Programming, Scanning and Tabulation, Ballot Marking Devices, and Related Services and Support

Recommended Council Action

Approve the ordinance.

Context with Key Issues

In preparation for the November 3, 2020 City Election, the City Clerk contacted vendors to request quotes to scan and tabulate ballots and provide ballot marking devices for voters who need or wish to use them. These services would be needed whether the election is conducted by mail or in person. The Board of Elections reviewed quotes from MK Election Services, ES&S, and IVS, LLC. The recommended vendor, IVS, LLC, provides the least expensive option and the proposal best fits the needs of the City. IVS also offers an additional option that is still being evaluated by the Board of Elections:

Accessible Absentee Voting — \$2,000. This option provides the City with the ability to issue accessible absentee ballots via the web. The procedure for the voters is as follows: (1) go to a website to access the ballot, (2) fill out the voter affidavit & make ballot selections on their computers, (3) print out both the voter affidavit & the voted ballots on their printers, and (4) return all documents to the City via postal mail service. An advantage of this option is that the software will be able to catch many common ballot errors such as over-votes or under-votes. Another benefit is that every oval on the ballot will be filled out perfectly. Most importantly, this option is accessible — a visually-impaired person can use the screen readers on their computer to mark the absentee ballots independently.

Staff recommends that the additional \$2,000 expenditure be authorized by the Council and it has been included in the draft ordinance. The ability to deliver a ballot electronically, to be marked by a voter, printed, and returned via postal mail, would benefit overseas voters, voters who do not receive their ballot in the event of vote by mail, and voters who need an accessible voting option at home. Procedures for its use would be developed by the Board.

Council Priority

Engaged, Responsive & Service-oriented Government

Environmental Considerations

Staff does not anticipate any significant environmental impact from this action.

Fiscal Considerations

The ordinance authorizes an expenditure of up to \$12,500 for services from IVS, LLC, which includes the proposed services amount plus the \$2,000 option referenced above. It is likely that in the event of a vote by mail election the number of ballot marking devices would be reduced from six to three, resulting in a savings of \$2,250.

Racial Equity Considerations

A reason for the change in election date is to encourage more residents to vote in Takoma Park elections. It has been particularly difficult to draw in voters from Wards 4, 5, and 6, the wards with larger numbers of people of color and people who live in multifamily housing. We believe that people who are interested in voting in the presidential election will be more likely to use the opportunity to vote in the City election at the same time.

Attachments and Links

- Draft Ordinance
- Proposal for Election Services – IVS, LLC

Introduced by: Councilmember

Single Reading:

CITY OF TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND

ORDINANCE NO. 2020-

**CONTRACT FOR BALLOT PROGRAMMING, SCANNING AND TABULATION,
BALLOT MARKING DEVICES,
AND RELATED ELECTION SERVICES AND SUPPORT**

WHEREAS, the next City of Takoma Park election is scheduled for November 3, 2020; and

WHEREAS, in preparation, the Board of Elections reviewed proposals for ballot scanning and tabulation and lease of ballot marking devices; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Elections recommends contracting with IVS, LLC for the services since the vendor is both the least expensive and the best fit for the City; and

WHEREAS, IVS offers an additional option to provide accessible ballots from a secure website, to enable voters to mark a ballot on their computer, print the ballot, and return it via postal mail; and

WHEREAS, staff recommends that the Council approve the inclusion of this option in the contract, subject to its positive evaluation by the Board of Elections; and

WHEREAS, sufficient funds are available in the election budget for these services.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND, THAT:

SECTION 1. The City Manager is authorized to enter into a contract with IVS, LLC for election services in an amount up to \$12,500.

SECTION 2. This Ordinance shall become effective upon adoption.

ADOPTED this _____ day of June, 2020 by roll-call vote as follows:

AYE:

NAY:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT: