

CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA

ORDINANCE NO. 2015-22

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA, ALASKA INSTITUTING ALL-MAIL-BALLOT FOR MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS IN 2015 AND 2016 WHILE SITKA'S POLLING PLACE OF HARRIGAN CENTENNIAL HALL UNDERGOES RENOVATION AND IS INACCESSIBLE FOR VOTING

1. **CLASSIFICATION.** This ordinance is NOT of a permanent nature and is not intended to become a part of the Sitka General Code (SGC).
2. **SEVERABILITY.** If any provision of this ordinance or any application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of this ordinance and application to any person or circumstances shall not be affected.
3. **PURPOSE.** Harrigan Centennial Hall will be closed while undergoing major renovation from August 1, 2015 through December, 2016. Sitka's two voting precincts are located in that building. SGC 2.40.220 instructs the municipal clerk to "deliver a ballot to the elector either personally, by a duly authorized representative, or by mail..." and sets forth rules for mailing ballots. SGC 2.40.230 allows early voting, "as soon as ballots are available from the election official up to and including election day, in a location and at places and times determined by the municipal clerk." Further, SGC 2.40.240 states that the "municipal clerk is authorized to fashion rules and procedures for the conduct of the election so long as they are not in conflict with this chapter." The municipal clerk finds no conflict exists and proposes that the elections in 2015 and 2016 be conducted using an all-mail-ballot system. Special-needs voting and machinery will be available at the municipal clerk's office.

For several years, the State of Alaska and the City and Borough of Sitka have allowed voting-by-mail without requiring voters to sign an affidavit that they will be absent on election day. This so-called "no-excuses absentee voting" has proven to be popular and effective across the United States. In 1998, the State of Oregon instituted all-mail-ballot elections where every voter is automatically mailed a ballot. Washington State implemented a similar method in 2011, followed by Colorado in 2013. All states increased voter participation and, in fact, outperformed the US voter turnout rate. This process also makes voting more convenient for voters and allows voters a longer opportunity to study the ballot before completing their ballots.

4. **ENACTMENT.** NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ENACTED by the Assembly of the City and Borough of Sitka that all municipal elections held in 2015 and 2016 may be conducted using all-mail balloting. The municipal clerk will fashion necessary rules and procedures for all-mail-ballot elections.

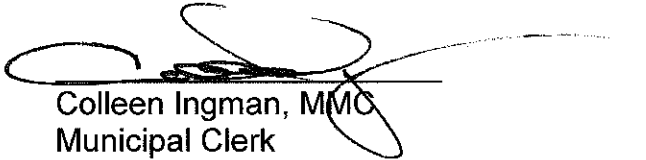
5. **EFFECTIVE DATE.** This ordinance shall become effective on the day after the date of its passage and is temporary in nature.

PASSED, APPROVED, AND ADOPTED by the Assembly of the City and Borough of Sitka, Alaska this 28th day of April, 2015.



Mim McConnell, Mayor

ATTEST:



Colleen Ingman, MMC
Municipal Clerk