

ITEM TITLE:

#20-04 - Emergency Ordinance Amending Chapter 7.04 of the Valdez Municipal Code by Creating Section 7.04.200 Titled Elections Emergency Plan. Adoption.

SUBMITTED BY: Sheri Pierce, MMC, City Clerk

FISCAL NOTES:

Expenditure Required: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Unencumbered Balance: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Funding Source: [Click here to enter text.](#)

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt emergency ordinance #20-04.

SUMMARY STATEMENT:

The integrity of our Valdez Municipal elections is important, and the Valdez Municipal Code provides the procedures and rules to protect them. Chapter 7.04 provides the voters, candidates, campaigns, media and the public clear expectations of how elections will be conducted. The reality is, sometimes unforeseen circumstances and public emergencies may disrupt the Municipal Clerk's administration of an election and changes are necessary to protect the voter franchise, security and privacy of the ballots, and integrity of the election.

The current spread of the COVID-19 in Alaska has prompted the Clerk's Office to encourage absentee voting through a public awareness campaign which has successfully resulted in a very high volume of requests for absentee ballots. Due to the number of absentee ballots we are expecting to receive, our ballot canvass board will most likely require an additional day following the close of the election on May 5th to process those ballots. Due to the requirement for social distancing, I am also recommending the closure of Precinct 1 (Valdez Recreation Center) and Precinct 3 (Robe River Fire Station) on Election Day. Precinct #2 (City Council Chambers) will remain open and staffed by a limited number of election officials. All precautions as recommended by the CDC for a polling center will be strictly adhered to. In order to close two precincts, extend time for counting of absentee ballots, limit the number of election Judges and Clerks, and make any other changes to the procedures currently set forth in the Chapter 7.04, I am asking for the authority granted under this ordinance to protect the integrity of the upcoming election on May 5, 2020.