

Submitted by: Assembly Member Sulte

Assembly Member Myers
Assembly Member Littlefield

Reviewed by: Assembly Counsel's Office

For reading: December 3, 2024

**ANCHORAGE, ALASKA
AO No. 2024-125**

1 **AN ORDINANCE OF THE ANCHORAGE MUNICIPAL ASSEMBLY TO SUBMIT**
2 **A BALLOT PROPOSITION AT THE APRIL 1, 2025 REGULAR ELECTION TO**
3 **QUALIFIED VOTERS OF THE MUNICIPALITY A CHARTER AMENDMENT TO**
4 **CHANGE THE TERM OF ELECTED OFFICIALS (ASSEMBLY, SCHOOL BOARD,**
5 **MAYOR, AND ELECTED SERVICE AREA SUPERVISORY BOARDS) TO FOUR-**
6 **YEARS AND THE QUESTION WHETHER TO HOLD REGULAR MUNICIPAL**
7 **ELECTIONS IN NOVEMBER IN EVEN YEARS ONLY TO ALIGN WITH STATE**
8 **AND FEDERAL GENERAL ELECTIONS BY AMENDING ANCHORAGE**
9 **MUNICIPAL CODE SECTION 28.20.010, AMENDING CERTAIN PROVISIONS OF**
10 **THE ANCHORAGE MUNICIPAL CODE TO CONFORM TO THIS CHANGE IF**
11 **APPROVED BY THE VOTERS, AND PROVIDING FOR TRANSITIONAL**
12 **MEASURES.**

13
14 **WHEREAS**, the financial cost of Vote By Mail Municipal Regular Elections in the
15 Municipality of Anchorage for 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021 is \$857,688, \$659,857,
16 \$578,275 and \$601,005, respectively. (Source: Municipal Clerk's Office, Exhibit A,
17 attached); and

18
19 **WHEREAS**, the average cost for regular elections held between 2018 and 2021 is
20 \$647,206; and

21
22 **WHEREAS**, the cost of the 2024 Municipal Election was approximately \$1,333,244
23 with \$716,374 and \$391,964 attributed to the General Election and Mayoral runoff,
24 respectively. Approximately, \$224,907 in additional expenses was not classified to
25 either election; and

26
27 **WHEREAS**, passage of this ordinance has the potential to reduce Municipal election
28 cost by ~50% by adjusting to a two year cycle, aligned with State and Federal
29 elections, resulting in an estimated savings of \$341,319 per year or \$1,365,279 over
30 a four year period,

31
32 **WHEREAS**, this ordinance does not change from Vote By Mail elections,

33
34 **WHEREAS**, combining Municipal elections with Statewide and Federal elections on
35 a two-year cycle by altering future Assembly terms from three to four years and
36 extending the current and future Mayoral terms to four years to synchronize with a
37 two-year Municipal, State, and Federal election cycle has the potential to increase
38 Municipal voter turnout by ~24.19%, using historical averages; and

39
40 **WHEREAS**, adoption of this ordinance will not affect any current Assembly

1 Member's term, only subsequent terms beginning with those seated after
2 certification of the April 1, 2025 regular municipal election; and

3
4 **WHEREAS**, adoption of this ordinance will extend the current Mayoral term from
5 April of 2027 to November of 2028; and

6
7 **WHEREAS**, to realize the full benefit of improved voter turnout and reduced
8 Municipal election cost, elected service area board terms will also need to be
9 aligned, and accomplished through adoption of this ordinance; and

10
11 **WHEREAS**, to realize the full benefit of improved voter turnout and reduced cost
12 the Anchorage School Board terms will need to be aligned, but can only be effective
13 if state law is changed: requiring a modification at a minimum to either AS
14 14.12.050(a) ("The term of office of a member of a borough or city school board is
15 three years and until a successor takes office. ... ") or AS 14.12.100, that applies
16 this rule to home rule municipalities. This proposition authorizes the change to
17 school board terms effective when and if state statute is amended to allow school
18 boards of home rule municipalities to have terms other than three years; and

19
20 **WHEREAS**, coordination with State elections is allowed under AMC section
21 28.10.050, "notwithstanding other provisions of this title, the municipal clerk may
22 enter into agreements to place municipal election matters on a state ballot or allow
23 the state to conduct elections on municipal election issues concurrently with state
24 elections. The municipal clerk may contract with the state to conduct an election
25 which includes municipal election issues under the laws and guidelines governing
26 state elections. The municipal clerk shall ensure, however, that the laws and
27 guidelines to be applied to the municipal election issue will provide protections
28 substantially similar to those provided under municipal law."; now therefore,

29
30 **Section 1.** Pursuant to state law and the Anchorage Municipal Charter, a ballot
31 proposition in substantially the same form as appears in Section 2 below shall be
32 placed on the ballot and submitted to the qualified voters of the Municipality at the
33 regular municipal election held on April 1, 2025.

34
35 **Section 2.** The Municipal Clerk shall prepare the ballot proposition to be
36 submitted to the voters as provided by this ordinance and the Anchorage Municipal
37 Code and shall perform all reasonable and necessary steps in accordance with law
38 to place this proposition before the voters at the election. The ballot proposition
39 shall be presented in substantially the following form:

40
41 PROPOSITION NO. _____

42
43 **NOVEMBER REGULAR ELECTIONS IN EVEN YEARS,**
44 **AND FOUR-YEAR TERMS FOR ALL ELECTED OFFICIALS**

45
46 If approved, the Anchorage Municipal Charter Sections 4.02(a) and
47 5.01(a) will be amended to read as follows, effective for this election:

48
49 Section 4.02(a) The term of an assembly member is **four**
50 **[three]** years.

Section 5.01(a) The executive and administrative power of Anchorage is vested in the mayor. The mayor is elected at-large for a four-year [~~three-year~~] term.

If approved, the Anchorage Municipal Charter Section 6.02(a) below will be amended to read as follows, effective when state law is modified to allow it:

Section 6.02(a) A candidate for school board shall be a qualified municipal voter. A school board member shall serve a four-year [~~three-year~~] term and shall remain a resident of Anchorage while in office.

If approved, sections of Anchorage Ordinance No. 2024-___ will also become effective and change the terms of elected service area board seats to four years, change the date of the regular municipal election to be held only in even numbered years on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November beginning in 2028, and provide transitional measures to the terms of elected officials.

Shall the Charter be amended as shown above, and the regular municipal election be held on the same day as regular state and federal general elections as described in AO 2024-___?

YES NO

Section 3. Transitional measures. The term of incumbent elected office holders shall not change until the appropriate election cycle. To implement and give effect to the change to four-year terms and a November regular municipal election date as directed in this ordinance and the Charter amendments approved by the voters, the terms of elected officials shall be modified as follows, effective if and only if the proposition in Section 2 of this ordinance is approved by the voters:

1. The term for Assembly seats on the ballot of the April 1, 2025 regular election and commencing upon the Member taking office shall end upon certification of the November 7, 2028 regular election.
2. The term for Assembly seats on the ballot of the April 7, 2026 regular election and commencing upon the Member taking office shall end for a four-year term expiring upon certification of the November 5, 2030 election.
3. The regular four-year term for the Mayor shall apply to the currently seated mayor's term, extending the term for one and a half additional years, which shall end upon certification of the November 7, 2028 regular election or if a successor is elected then when the successor qualifies and takes office in accordance with AMC section 3.20.030 as amended.

- 1 4. The regular term for school board seats shall be determined by ordinance
2 after the condition of state law modification is met in order for their seats
3 to have four-year terms.
4
5 5. The regular term for the seats of elected members to a service area
6 supervisory board that commence upon:
7 i. certification of the April 1, 2025 regular election shall end upon
8 certification of the regular election held on November 7, 2028.
9 ii. certification of the April 7, 2026 regular election shall end upon
10 certification of the regular election held on November 5, 2030; and
11 iii. certification of the April 6, 2027 regular or special election: half the
12 seats shall have their terms end upon certification of the regular
13 election held on November 5, 2030, and the other half shall have their
14 terms end upon certification of the regular election held on November
15 2, 2032. The assembly may determine by ordinance which terms are
16 to be allocated to which seats.
17
18 6. Subsequent to implementation and application of the transitional
19 measures herein, regular terms for all elected officials of the municipality
20 shall be four years or as otherwise directed by ordinance or Charter.
21

22 **Section 4.** Anchorage Municipal Code section 3.20.030 is hereby amended to
23 read as follows, effective if and only if the proposition in Section 2 of this ordinance
24 is approved by the voters (*the remainder of the section is not affected and therefore*
25 *not set out*):
26

27 **3.20.030 - Qualifying of mayor; transition period for mayor-elect.**
28

- 29 A. The mayor shall be deemed qualified and shall take office by taking
30 and subscribing to the oath required by section 17.07 of the Charter
31 on January 2 [JULY 1], or as soon thereafter as practicable, following
32 [HIS] certification as mayor-elect at a regular municipal election or a
33 runoff election held in accordance with the Charter and
34 section 28.20.010. The mayor shall continue to serve and to exercise
35 all powers of [HIS] office until the mayor's [HIS] successor qualifies
36 and takes office in accordance with this section.
37

38 *** *** ***

39 (AO No. 78-45; AO No. 79-27; AO No. 93-137, § 1, 9-21-93)
40
41

42 **Section 5.** Anchorage Municipal Code section 28.20.010 is hereby amended to
43 read as follows, effective if and only if the proposition in Section 2 of this ordinance
44 is approved by the voters (*the remainder of the section is not affected and therefore*
45 *not set out*):
46

47 **28.20.10 Time and method for elections.**
48

- 49 A. Beginning in 2028, a [A] regular election shall be held bi-annually
50 [ANNUALLY] on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November

[IN APRIL] of even numbered years. The intent of this subsection A.
is to hold regular municipal elections on the same date as state and
federal general elections.

*** *** ***

(GAAB 7.05.040.A; AO No. 85-75; AO No. 88-129(S-1); AO No. 91-50; AO
No. 99-113, § 1, 8-10-99; AO No. 2000-167, § 1, 1-9-01)

Section 6. Anchorage Municipal Code section 27.20.030 is hereby amended to
read as follows, effective if and only if the proposition in Section 2 of this ordinance
is approved by the voters:

27.20.030 - Term of office.

The term of each member of a supervisory board established under this
chapter shall be four [THREE] years, provided however, the mayor may
continue the service of members for up to and including 120 days after
expiration of their term to avoid a vacancy until new members are elected or
appointed and confirmed. The terms of members initially appointed or elected
to boards established under this chapter shall be staggered so that as nearly
as possible a pro rata number of members shall be appointed or elected for
each year during the regular term of office established for the members of
the board.

(CAC 2.64.040—2.64.050; AO No. 2001-105, § 2, 6-19-01)

Section 7. The Charter amendments set forth in the proposition in Section 2 and
the transitional measures and Code amendments set forth in Sections 3 through 6
of this ordinance shall become effective upon certification of the election results, if
and only if, said proposition is approved by a majority of the qualified voters of the
Municipality voting on the proposition during the regular Anchorage Municipal
election held on April 1, 2025. The remainder of this ordinance shall be effective
upon passage and approval.

PASSED AND APPROVED by the Anchorage Assembly this _____ day
of _____, 20__.

Chair

ATTEST:

Municipal Clerk