

**MOUNT RAINIER
ELECTIONS
PROCEDURES**

Adopted
By the Mayor and City Council
Adopted January 18, 2005 and Amended 2011

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Glossary of Terms

Candidate - any person who has knowingly and willingly taken affirmative action, including solicitation of funds, for the purpose of seeking nomination for or election to any City office.

Candidate, Issue Labels, and Materials - the cards, paper, booklet, pages, or other material containing the names of offices and candidates, and statements of measures to be voted on.

Canvassing – Candidates or other supporters visiting and knocking on doors of potential voters to solicit their vote prior to the actual day of the election.

Certification - examining and counting the returns of votes cast at a public election to determine authenticity.

Councilmember – A resident elected by residents from either Ward 1 or Ward 2 to represent them on the Mount Rainier City Council.

Counting Location - a location selected by the City's board of election with respect to all elections for the automatic processing and/or counting of votes.

Election - an election held by the City in a manner provided by law for the purpose of selecting the mayor and city councilmembers of the City of Mount Rainier for certification as candidates for election at any general or special election of the City.

Election Official or Election Officer - a person who is a member of the City's board of election or a person who having been designated by the Mayor and Council to be an election clerk, election judge, or alternate.

First-time Voter - any registered voter who has not previously voted in a City or State election in the state of Maryland.

Ordinance – an enactment having general application throughout the City enacted by the Mount Rainier City Council

Polling Site - a location selected by the city board of election and approved by the Mayor and City Council where votes are cast.

Qualified Voter - a person who holds the qualifications of a voter and is registered pursuant to the Maryland Constitution:

- 1) Must be a U.S. citizen,
- 2) Must be a Mount Rainier resident,
- 3) Must be a minimum of 18 years of age,
- 4) Must not presently be adjudged mentally incompetent by a court of competent jurisdiction,
- 5) Must not have been convicted of a felony without the sentence having been discharged or pardoned, and
- 6) Must not claim the right to vote in another City or state.

Vacancy in Election - the vacancy in an elective office created by death, resignation, or other good and legal cause, arising prior to election to the office at a general or special election, but arising subsequent to the certification of the ballot.

Vacancy in Office - the vacancy in an elective office created by death, resignation, or other good and legal cause arising subsequent to election to the office at a general or special election or arising subsequent to taking office and prior to the expiration of the term of office in those circumstances wherein the vacancy must be filled by a special election rather than by appointment.

Ward - the geographical districts dividing the City for voting purposes; there are currently two.

COMPOSITION OF THE BOARD OF ELECTIONS AND RELATED ACTIVITIES

Composition
Appointment
Oath of Office
Term of Office
Filling of Vacancies
Responsibilities
Compensation
Qualifications
Prohibition on Electioneering
Removal from Office
Meetings
Record Keeping
Legal Assistance

Composition of City Boards of Election

Article V. Registration, Nomination, and Election Procedures, City Charter Section 501. Board of Elections.

Composition of Board Members

The City's Board of Election is comprised of local residents, i.e., persons who reside in the City limits of Mount Rainier, are registered voters as defined in the Mount Rainier City Charter, and have resided in the City for a minimum of three months.

The Board of Elections members are responsible for conducting all City elections during the tenure of their appointment.

There shall be a Board of Elections consisting of a Supervisor of Elections and four (4) members

Appointment

...who shall be appointed by the Mayor and Council on or before the first Monday in March of every odd numbered year.

Oath of Office

At least thirty (30) days prior to the general election, the city manager must send each of the City's Board of Election members, by registered mail, a notice to appear before the Mayor and Council to take the oath of office and affirm their participation in the upcoming election. Before entering on their duties, each member of the Mount Rainier Board of Election must take the following oath of office:

"I, (full name) do swear (or affirm, as the case may be) that I will support the Constitution of the United States; and that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to the State of Maryland, and support the Constitution and laws thereof; and that I will, to the best of my skill and judgment, diligently and faithfully, without partiality or prejudice, execute the office of Board of Elections, according to the constitution and laws of this State and the Charter and laws of this City."

The oath shall be endorsed upon the certificate of the appointment and the certificate filed with the City Manager and a duplicate forwarded to the Prince George's County Board of Elections.

Terms of Office of the Board of Election Members

The terms of the members of the Board of Elections shall begin on the first Monday in March of the year in which they are appointed and run for two years.

Vacancies on the Board

Vacancies on the Board shall be filled by the Mayor and Council for the remainder of the unexpired term.

In the event of a vacancy in the supervisor of election position on the Board of Elections, the senior sitting election judge shall act as supervisor of election until a new supervisor of election is appointed by the Mayor and Council.

Responsibilities

The Board of Elections shall be responsible for the registration of voters, nominations, preparation of ballots and sample ballots, and supervision of all City elections in accordance with the provisions of the City of Mount Rainier Charter, City of Mount Rainier Code of Ordinances and State and Federal laws.

Compensation

Compensation of the Board of Elections shall be determined by the Mayor and Council.

The city's board of elections members shall receive compensation for election duties within 48 hours of the close of the election polls and the election results being certified and delivered to the Mayor and Council.

Compensation may be mailed to the City's Board of Election members or they may be picked up and distributed by the supervisor of Election, providing all necessary documentation has been submitted for payment to the members.

Qualifications

Members of the Board of Elections shall be qualified to vote in City elections pursuant to Section 502 of this Article and shall not hold or be a candidate for any elective office during their term on the Board.

Prohibition on Electioneering

Members of the City Board of Elections are prohibited from endorsing or campaigning for candidates who are running for a City elected office. City Board of Election members shall not post candidates' election signage on property owned by the board member. This does not prevent another registered voter who lives with an election board member or who lives on a property owned by an election board member from posting a candidate's sign.

Voter Qualifications Every person who meets all the following requirements may vote in City elections:

- A. Is a citizen of the United States;
- B. Is at least eighteen (18) years of age;
- C. Is registered to vote in accordance with the provisions of this Charter;
- D. Has resided in the corporate limits of the city for at least thirty (30) days immediately preceding the next City election; and
- E. Has registered to vote at least thirty (30) days prior to any election. **(Please note that to vote in State elections persons are allowed to register 21 days prior to the election).**

In addition, persons appointed by the Mayor and Council to the City's Board of Elections must not: have been found or pled guilty or nolo contendere to the violation of any election laws of any City, County or the State of Maryland or:

- be a paid employee of any political party;
- be a paid employee of any person running for any office;
- be a candidate for any office to be filled at any election while serving on the City's Board of Election;

- be married to or related within the second degree of consanguinity to any candidate running for office in the current election, if objection is made within ten (10) days after the list of election officials is posted or published; or
- hold at the time of the appointment any office, appointment, or employment in city government.

Training

Since the County and State Board of Elections are available for conducting County and statewide training of election officials including municipal appointed officials, City appointed board of election officials are required to attend at least one annual training. Attendance at such training must be filed with the City's Supervisor of Election and kept on file for the term of the appointment of the board of election official.

At least one (1) election official at the polling site on election-day must have attended election training from the County or State Board of Election during the three months prior to the scheduled general election.

Removal from Office

Any member of the Board of Elections may be removed by the Mayor and Council for inefficiency, malfeasance, misfeasance, nonfeasance, misconduct in office, or insubordination. Before removal, the member of the Board to be removed shall be given a written copy of the charges and shall have a public hearing before the Mayor and Council if requested within ten days after receiving the written copy of the charges.

Meetings

Meetings of the City's Board of Elections may be called by the Supervisor of Elections and held as necessary to conduct the election business of the City.

Minimum meetings of the City Board of Elections

The City board of elections shall meet at City Hall at least thirty (30) days prior to the general and/or special election to review the procedures and process outline in this document for conducting City elections. The City Board of Election may meet as often as needed to ensure that the City's election process is clear, accurately applied, and that residents are thoroughly familiar with and has access to the City's voting rules and regulations.

Notification

The supervisor of the city's Board of Elections shall notify all members of the board of all meetings.

Quorum/Voting

Three (3) members shall constitute a quorum.

Each member of the Board of Elections has one (1) vote, and three (3) concurring votes shall decide any questions before the city Board of Election, unless otherwise provided by law.

Open Meeting Act

When official business (i.e., legislation read or passed, or discussion of criteria requiring council action) is conducted in any meeting of three (3) or more board members, the meeting shall be public and held pursuant to the Open Meetings Act.

Public meetings as defined under the Open Meeting Act of Maryland include:

- drawing of ballot position,
- certification of ballots,
- selection or alteration of location or boundaries of precincts or polling sites,
- designation of election officials,
- correction of errors or omissions of ballots,
- canvassing and certification of election results,
- canvassing and certification of election results due to a recount petition, and
- election day.

Record Keeping

The city's Board of Elections shall keep minutes of all meetings when official business is conducted and shall file the minutes with the city manager.

Legal Assistance

The city Board of Elections shall call upon Prince George's County's Board of Election for all matters relating to voting in the State of Maryland.

The city's attorney shall represent the city board of election, or any of its members in any civil lawsuit brought against the Board of Election, if sued in regard to any acts or omissions made during the course of carrying out their official duties as members of the Board of Election.

The city Board of Elections members are deemed to be city officials; and, its members are immune from suit pursuant to Mount Rainier's City Charter and the laws of Prince George's County and the State of Maryland.

ELECTIONS, WHAT ELECTIONS?

Types of Elections

When are Elections Held?

Conduct of Elections

Conduct of Recall Elections

ELECTIONS, WHAT ELECTIONS?

ELECTIONS

An election is the process in which qualified voters nominate or elect a candidate to public office, or decide any measure or question submitted to a vote of the people. A general election, general runoff election, and a special election each constitute a separate election.

Types of Elections

A general runoff election occurs when there is a tie in the general city election.

A special election is any specially scheduled election to fill vacancies, to approve any charter amendment or recall question.

When Are Elections Held

General Election:

City Charter, Section 507. Conduct of Elections Generally. The City Board of Elections shall provide suitable sites and ballots for all City elections. City elections shall be conducted on a nonpartisan basis. The name of each candidate nominated for elective office shall be arranged on the ballot by office with no party designation of any kind. The order of candidates' names on the ballot shall be random, determined in a manner prescribed by ordinance or substantive resolution of the Mayor and Council. The City Board of Elections shall keep the polls open from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. on election-day. The general election is held on the first Monday in May in every odd numbered year.

General Runoff Election:

A general runoff election, applicable to only municipal contests within the City of Mount Rainier, is held three (3) weeks following the date of the general election held on the first Monday in May.

City Charter, Section 514. Special Elections

A. Except as provided in Section 514.B below, whenever a special election is required by this Charter, the Council shall establish a date for the special election not less than thirty (30) days and not more than sixty (60) days from:

1. the date of the regular City election in the case of a tie between candidates for any office;
- or
2. the date that a vacancy is declared as provided in Section 513.A, provided that the Council shall give the voters of the City at least thirty (30) days notice of the date of the special election.

B. A special election for a Councilmember office that was filled by appointment, as provided in Section 513, shall be held on the date of the next regular City election.

C. All special elections shall be conducted by the City Board of Elections in the same manner and with the same personnel, as far as practicable, as regular City elections.

D. If a special election to fill a vacancy in office is required by this Charter, then the person elected to such office shall serve for the remainder of the unexpired term of the vacant office being filled.

- E. Following the special election, any Mayor or Councilmember elected pursuant to this section shall take office at the next meeting of the Council.

Conduct of Elections

City Charter, Section 515. Regulation by Council. The Mayor and Council shall adopt all ordinances necessary for the conduct of registration, nomination, and elections not covered by this Charter.

Number:

Each polling site shall have a minimum of four (4) election judges, and one (1) Chief Judge. Election officials may be permitted to work half-day or split shifts at the polls on election-day, if the requisite number of election officials is always present.

Location:

All polling sites shall be fixed at well-known points in the City and easily accessible to all voters entitled to vote.

The city's Board of Elections shall provide voting locations within the facility that are accessible to disabled voters and shall provide reasonable and adequate methods whereby disabled voters may personally and secretly execute their ballots at the polling places.

Restrictions:

The city's Board of Elections shall not change the boundaries of existing Wards, create new wards, or change the polling site for any ward. This is the purview of the Mayor and Council, and shall not occur within 30 days of an election except in the event of an emergency.

Public Notice of Changes in Polling Sites:

Notice to the voters of any changes in polling sites shall be posted at all previous polling sites used in the last election. The city manager and/or his/her designee shall mail the change in site location notice to qualified registered voters at least thirty (30) days before the election, place notice in the City's newsletter, and post the notice on the City's cable access channel.

Assistance:

Persons unable to complete their ballot may bring one or two persons with them into the voting booth to assist them, or they may ask poll workers to provide assistance.

Seated Voting:

The polling place shall have at least one voting booth that allows voters to vote while sitting in a chair of wheelchair.

City Charter, Section 508. Election of Mayor.

A. On the first Monday in May in every fourth year beginning with 1997, at such places in the City that the City Board of Elections shall designate, the registered voters of the City shall vote for one person to serve as Mayor of the City.

B. The candidate receiving the highest number of votes shall be elected Mayor. In the event of a tie preventing any candidate from taking office a Special Election shall be held between the candidates with the highest number of votes as provided in Section 514 of the City Charter.

City Charter, Section 509. Election of Councilmembers

A. On the first Monday in May in odd numbered years, at the same polling places designated for the election of Mayor, registered voters residing in each City ward shall vote for candidates to serve as Councilmembers for that ward.

B. In 1997 only, each registered voter will receive a ballot permitting the voter to cast two votes for candidates to serve as Councilmembers from that voter's ward. No voter may cast more than one vote for a candidate. At the close of balloting, a count of all votes will be made, and the two candidates in each ward receiving the highest number of votes shall be elected from that ward. The Councilmember with the highest number of votes shall serve for four years and the Councilmember with the second highest number of votes shall serve for two years.

C. Beginning in 1999, each registered voter will receive a ballot permitting the voter to cast one vote for a candidate to serve as Councilmember from that voter's ward for the vacant four-year term. At the close of balloting, a count of all votes will be made, and the candidate in each ward receiving the highest number of votes shall be elected from that ward.

D. In the event of a tie preventing any candidate from taking office, a Special Election shall be held between the tied candidates as provided in Section 514 of the City Charter.

Candidates' Profiles in the City's Newsletter

Each candidate certified by the Mount Rainier Board of Elections may have a picture, brief profile that includes information on their position or reason for running for office, and other information that will help the voter to make an intelligent decision about their candidacy.

All candidate information must conform to the rules and regulations of the City's Newsletter, and must be kept within the guidelines provided in order to be included in the Newsletter. Information exceeding the guidelines provided will be placed in the Newsletter in the space designated and the Editor will not be responsible for information that may be lost due to the candidate's information exceeding the space allowed.

Conduct of Recall Elections

City Charter, Section 512. Recall of Elected Officials

The Mayor or a Councilmember may be recalled from office in accordance with the following procedure:

Percent of Voters Required to Recall the Mayor

To recall the Mayor, a petition shall be signed by not less than 25% of the registered voters in the City.

Percent of Voters Required in order to Recall a Councilmember

To recall a Councilmember a petition shall be signed by not less than 25% of the registered voters in the ward which the Councilmember represents. **Note: State law permits petitioning for referenda of charter amendments and annexation resolutions and states that 20% of registered voters must sign a petition for referendum on a charter amendment or an annexation.**

The Recall Petition

The petition shall be presented to the Mayor and Council at a regular Mayor and Council meeting.

The petition shall state the name and office of the official to be recalled and that its purpose is to require a recall referendum to vote on whether that elected official should be removed from office. A recall petition must state a reason or reasons for the recall.

A separate petition shall be required for each official for whom recall is sought.

City Board of Election Verification of Petition within 21 Days

Upon receipt of the petition, the Mayor and Council shall refer the petition to the City Board of Elections for verification of the signatures. Upon verification of the signatures on the petition, the City Board of Elections shall immediately report its findings to the Mayor and Council, but no later than 21 days from the date the petition was referred to the City Board of Elections. If the City Board of Elections has determined that a valid recall petition containing a sufficient number of signatures from qualified voters has been submitted,

Setting the Date for a Recall Election

...the Mayor and Council shall set a date for a referendum to be held within sixty days of the petition verification.

Who Can Vote In the Recall Election?

If the official subject to the recall was elected from a ward, only the registered voters from that ward may vote in the recall election; otherwise all qualified voters of the City may participate in the recall election.

If the majority of the votes cast at the referendum are for the recall, the office shall be declared vacant, and be filled pursuant to Section 513 of this Article

BECOMING A CANDIDATE

Nomination Procedure

Nomination Petition

Ward Boundaries

Availability of Nomination Form

Submission of Nomination Petition

Deadline for Petitions

Financial Disclosure Statement

Campaign Signs

City Charter, Section 505. Nomination Procedures

A. Any person desiring to have his or her name placed upon the official ballot for Mayor or Councilmember at any City election shall present to the Supervisor of Elections a petition setting forth his or her name and residence, and the office sought, and such petition shall be signed by at least twenty (20) qualified voters. In the case of a petitioner for Councilmember only signatures of qualified voters residing within the ward from which the petitioner is running shall be counted. No person may file for nomination to more than one elective public office or hold more than one elective public office at one time. Any person nominated as a candidate for elective office must meet the qualifications of the office for which he or she is nominated. The Council shall develop such rules and procedures as are necessary relating to nomination procedures consistent with the provisions of this Charter.

B. If the term of office of a Councilmember expires at the same biennial election as a Special Election for a Council ward seat that was filled by appointment following a vacancy in office, then any person desiring to have his or her name placed on the official ballot for Councilmember shall present a nominating petition to the Supervisor of Elections for either a four year or a two year term of office. The nomination procedures shall be as set forth in this section, except that the nominating petition shall state that the candidacy is for a four year or a two year term of office. No person shall file for nomination as a candidate for Councilmember for both the four year and the two year term of office.

C. Nominating petitions shall be submitted on forms developed by the City and shall be available from City Hall, from the Supervisor of Elections, and such other places as the Council or the City Board of Elections may deem appropriate.

D. Nominating petitions must be presented by the petitioner to the Supervisor of Elections sitting at City Hall between the hours of 6:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. on the first Monday in April of every odd-numbered year. On that date and at that time, the Supervisor of Elections, with whatever assistance he or she deems appropriate, shall meet in open session at City Hall to certify nominating petitions. No nominating petition shall be accepted by the Supervisor of Elections after the deadline set forth herein, except that in the event of a vacancy occurring between said date and the date of the election, the Supervisor of Elections shall be permitted to accept additional nominating petitions for those positions in which such a vacancy occurs.

Nomination Petition

CERTIFICATE OF NOMINATION

To the Supervisor of Elections of Mount Rainier, Maryland:

I hereby request that you print my name on the official ballot to be used in the City election to be held _____ as a candidate for _____ and I hereby certify that my name is _____ and that I am a resident of the _____ Ward of the City of Mount Rainier, Maryland.

Signature

Date

We, the undersigned qualified voters of Mount Rainier, Maryland, request the candidacy of _____ for the office of _____.

NAME

ADDRESS

WARD

CERTIFICATE OF NOMINATION
4-year term – Councilmember Ward ____

To the Supervisor of Elections of Mount Rainier, Maryland:

I hereby request that you print my name on the official ballot to be used in the City election to be held on _____ as a candidate for a 4-year term for Councilmember, Ward _____. I hereby certify that my name is _____ and that I am a resident of Ward _____ of the City of Mount Rainier, Maryland.

Signature

Date

We, the undersigned qualified voters of the City of Mount Rainier, Maryland, request the candidacy of _____ (insert name) for a 4-year term for the office of Councilmember, Ward _____.

NAME

ADDRESS

WARD

CERTIFICATE OF NOMINATION
2-year term – Councilmember Ward ____

To the Supervisor of Elections of Mount Rainier, Maryland:

I hereby request that you print my name on the official ballot to be used in the City election to be held on _____ as a candidate for a 2-year term for Councilmember, Ward _____. I hereby certify that my name is _____ and that I am a resident of Ward _____ of the City of Mount Rainier, Maryland.

Signature

Date

We, the undersigned qualified voters of the City of Mount Rainier, Maryland, request the candidacy of _____ (insert name) for a 2-year term for the office of Councilmember, Ward _____.

NAME

ADDRESS

WARD

City Charter, Section 506. Establishment of Wards and Ward Boundaries

A. Two Council wards are hereby established within the City. The boundaries of the wards shall be as follows:

The dividing line between the two wards shall be a line North on 34th Street from the City limits at Eastern Avenue to the intersection with Shepherd Street, then West along the middle of Shepherd Street to its intersection with 31st Street, then North along the middle of 31st Street till its intersection with Arundel Road, then West along the middle of Arundel Road to 30th Street, then North along the middle of 30th Street to the City limits. All other boundaries are defined by the City limits.

B. The boundaries of the two wards shall be reviewed and adjusted as necessary after each census in accordance with any applicable State and Federal laws. The Council may review and adjust the ward boundaries on a more frequent basis if deemed necessary.

C. In addition to the decennial review of ward boundaries required by this section, the Mayor and council shall review the boundaries of the wards after each annexation and may adjust the boundaries if it is deemed necessary by the Mayor and Council.

Availability of Nomination Form

Nominating forms shall be available from City Hall, from the Supervisor of Elections, and such other places as the Mayor and Council or the City Board of Elections may deem appropriate.

Deadline for Petitions

Nominating petitions must be presented by the petitioner to the Supervisor of Elections sitting at City Hall between the hours of 6:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. on the first Monday in April of every odd-numbered year. On that date and at that time, the Supervisor of Elections, with whatever assistance he or she deems appropriate, shall meet in open session at City Hall to certify nominating petitions.

No nominating petition shall be accepted by the Supervisor of Elections after the deadline set forth herein, except that in the event of a vacancy occurring between said date and the date of the election, the Supervisor of Elections shall be permitted to accept additional nominating petitions for those positions in which such vacancy occurs.

Financial Disclosure Statement

All candidates for public office in the City or Mount Rainier Maryland must file a financial disclosure statement as provided by the City Charter of Mount Rainier. Financial disclosure statements may be picked up from the city manager at city hall.

Candidates for office must submit their preliminary financial disclosure statements to the Supervisor of Elections prior to their names being placed on the ballot.

All persons elected must submit a financial disclosure statement by January 31 of each year.

Limitations on Financial Contributions

Candidates may raise moneys for their campaigns

Campaign contribution limits for City elections are set at \$300 for businesses and \$150 for individuals. Contributions of \$50 or more must be itemized and disclosed on the financial statement of each candidate. All candidates for elected office in the City of Mount Rainier must file final financial statements with the Supervisor of Elections within two weeks following a City's election.

Campaign Signs

Election campaign signs shall not be placed in any public park, recreation area, highway median, public right-of-way, or other grounds owned by the City, county, or state. Signs placed in such areas will be removed and destroyed by Public Works staff. Candidates may put up yard signs or other campaign information in residents' yards with the permission of the residents. For purposes of these rules, a resident's yard includes the contiguous property along the street which is owned by the resident but is under an easement by the city (commonly called a tree box or tree lawn). Campaign signs shall not obstruct traffic signs, sidewalks, streets, or cause danger to public safety. The Supervisor of Elections with the advice of the Chief of Police will determine if a sign is a danger to public safety. Signs shall not be attached to utility poles nor street trees.

VOTING IN CITY ELECTIONS

Voter Qualifications

Registration of Voters

Where to Register or Get More Information

Absentee Voting

Provisional Voting

Election Results

Voter Qualifications

Every person who meets all the following requirements may vote in City elections:

Eligibility to vote. Except as otherwise provided by law, to be eligible to vote in an election in this state, a Person must:

- A. be a qualified voter on the day the person offers to vote;
- B. be a resident of the territory covered by the election for the office or measure on which the person desires to vote; and
- C. satisfy all other requirements for voting prescribed by law for the particular election.

Qualified voter. A qualified voter means a person who:

- A. is 18 years of age or older;
- B. is a United States citizen;
- C. has not been determined mentally incompetent by a final judgment of a court;
- D. has not been finally convicted of a felony, or, if so convicted, has:
 - 1. been issued discharge papers by the pardons and paroles division or institutional division of the Maryland Department of Criminal Justice, or by a federal or other state correctional institution or parole board, or completed a period of probation ordered by any court and at least two years have elapsed from the date of the issuance or completion; or
 - 2. been pardoned or otherwise released from the resulting disability to vote;
- E is a resident of this state; and
- F. is a registered voter. **Note: State law permits petitioning for referenda of charter amendments and annexation resolutions and states that 20% of registered voters must sign a petition for referendum on a charter amendment or an annexation.**

Registration of Voters

City Charter, Section 503. Registration of Voters

Registration by the Prince George's County Board of Elections shall be deemed the only registration for City elections, provided that the person so registered meets the voter qualifications enumerated in this Charter.

- A. The Mount Rainier Board of Elections shall accept the list of registered voters provided by the Prince George's County Board of Elections as a valid registration list for the City.
- B. County registration forms shall be made available to any citizen of Mount Rainier at City government offices.

Where to Register or Get More Information

Voter registration may also be done at any Maryland Motor Vehicles Administration office or residents may go online at http://www.elections.state.md.us/citizens/how_to_vote.html for further options and information.

Absentee Voting

City Charter, Section 504. Absentee Voting

A. Any qualified voters registered to vote in the elections of the City of Mount Rainier may vote by absentee ballot if they are unable to cast a ballot during the regularly scheduled polling hours on election-day by reason of physical condition or necessary absence.

B. A qualified voter desiring to vote at a City election as an absentee voter shall make application to the City Board of Elections in writing, which application must be received no later than the Monday preceding the election. The application must be signed by the applicant or, if he or she is unable to sign, must bear the mark of the applicant and the signature of two (2) witnesses.

C. To be counted, the absentee ballot must be (i) returned to the City Board of Elections, appropriately signed and sealed, by the close of the polls on election day or (ii) if mailed, postmarked on or before election day and delivered no later than the close of business on the day following election day.

D. Candidates are prohibited from delivering absentee ballots or returning them back to the Election Board, except in the case where a candidate is using the absentee ballot for his/her own voting.

E. Absentee ballots already received will be opened and counted as part of the tally of all votes at close of the polls.

F. Absentee ballots must be returned in envelopes provided with the Absentee Ballot Application addressed to the Board of Elections, City of Mount Rainier, One Municipal Place, Mount Rainier, Maryland 20712.

G. All absentee ballots are placed in a locked box at City Hall once received. The locked box is submitted to the Supervisor of Elections on election-day.

F. Absentee ballots already received will be opened and counted as part of the tally of all votes at close of the polls.

Provisional Voting

What is a Provisional Ballot?

The provisional ballot is a safeguard that ensures that no individual who asserts that he or she is registered and eligible to vote will be prevented from casting a ballot on election-day. The provisional ballot will only be counted after the Mount Rainier Board of Elections has reviewed the provisional ballot application and made a determination that the individual is registered and eligible to vote.

Reasons a provisional ballot may be required

Not on the voter register.

The most common reason that an individual's name is not on the register is that the individual moved, but did not update his or her voter registration.

Provisional ballots will be counted if the Mount Rainier Board of Elections determines that the voter is a registered voter, and the voter submits one of the following forms of identification before the date the Mount Rainier Board of Elections meets to review provisional ballots:

A copy of a current and valid photo identification; or

A copy of a current utility bill, bank statement, government check, paycheck, or other government document with your name and current address (the same address you provided on your provisional ballot application).

Voters ineligible to vote a regular ballot.

If the voter register indicates that the voter received an absentee ballot for the current election, he/she is ineligible to use a regular ballot. In such cases, the voter may cast a provisional ballot, provided the voter has not already cast an absentee ballot. Attempting to vote more than one time is against the law. The provisional ballot will be counted if the Mount Rainier Board of Elections determines that the absentee ballot issued was not returned.

Your right to vote was challenged.

Maryland law authorizes a poll watcher to challenge the identity of a voter at the polling place. If someone's identity is challenged, the challenger must fill out an affidavit indicating the basis for the challenge. Then the voter will be required to fill out an affidavit to confirm his/her identity and will then be issued a provisional ballot. The provisional ballot will be counted if the Mount Rainier Board of Elections determines that the voter is the registered voter he/she claim to be and is otherwise eligible to vote.

You voted during extended election hours.

All voters who vote during extended election hours (i.e. a court ordered extension) are required to vote by provisional ballot. Your vote will be counted if the Mount Rainier Board of Elections confirms that the order extending the election was valid.

What You Have to Do

To cast a provisional ballot, the voter must completely fill out the provisional ballot application (instructions will be provided) and then vote the paper ballot provided by the election judge. Once completed the paper ballot must be sealed inside the provisional ballot application envelope and deposited into the provisional ballot bag.

Your Right to Secrecy

Provisional ballots will remain sealed in the provisional ballot application envelopes until the Mount Rainier Board of Elections has completed its review of the application. If the Board concludes that the ballot should be counted, it will be removed and separated from the application so that the vote will be kept secret.

Notification of Your Vote Being Counted or Rejected

The Mount Rainier Board of Elections will not notify you regarding the final results of your vote, however, you may contact the Supervisor of Elections to find out if your provisional ballot was counted and, if not, the reason why not. This information will be available 10 days after the election.

Using the City's Call-A-Bus

As part of the City's effort to ensure that all residents are able to participate in the election process, the City's Call-A-Bus will be available to pick up and bring citizens to the polls to cast their votes.

Candidates are not allowed to campaign on the City's Call-A-Bus. This includes no posting of literature, no campaign speeches or in any way influencing candidates to vote while on the City's Call-A-Bus.

Candidates are not allowed to travel on the Call-a-Bus on election-day except for one trip if the candidate is going to the poll to vote.

The unavailability of the Call-a-Bus does not make the city liable in any way and the election cannot be contested on those grounds.

Write In Candidates

Residents may write in a candidate for a particular office. Write In candidates must meet the same qualifications as all other the candidates for the position for which they are being voted on as a write in candidate, i.e., they must live in the Ward for which there is a vacancy, and they must meet all other qualifications as specified in the Charter for eligibility to hold office in the City of Mount Rainier.

Votes for Write In candidates that do not meet the stated criteria for the office will not be counted. However, such write in votes will be noted in the total number of votes cast in the City.

Counting of the Votes

Votes will be counted by the City of Mount Rainier Board of Elections immediately following the close of the polls. All but provisional ballots and any absentee ballots received by close of business the following day per City Charter Section 504 will be included in a preliminary vote total and shall be posted at City Hall in a public space. The preliminary totals must be clearly marked as uncertified and the number of provisional ballots outstanding shall be indicated. Absentee ballots already received will be opened and counted.

The date, time, and place of the Board's meeting to evaluate provisional ballots and tally absentee ballots received by mail the day following the election must be posted in compliance with the Open Meetings Act. The public has the right to witness this count.

Once provisional ballots and additional absentee ballots are decided, a new total shall be posted at City Hall.

Poll Watchers and/or persons entering the Vote Counting Area

All citizens are eligible to watch the votes being counted, however, each citizen interested in being inside the vote counting area must take the following actions:

- Arrive inside the voting area 10 minutes prior to the poll closing
- Present Poll Watchers form to Member of the Board of Elections
- Take a seat in the Poll watchers' area
- Remain seated while the votes are being counted
- Refrain from talking, except to ask to have a number or name repeated during the counting process
- Present concerns to Board of Election Supervisor after the vote counting process has been completed
- If unsatisfied with the process or have other concerns, present them to a current elected official.

Get Election Results

At 8:00 p.m. on Election Day, the polls close.

The unofficial results are announced to those individuals present at the polling place, and the news media, (if present) immediately following the final tally.

The unofficial results are also to be posted on the City's website on election night, and posted on the door of City Hall.

In addition, these results, along with absentee ballots and provisional ballots, constitute the "official" count and are to be presented to the Mayor and Council for approval as provided by the City Charter.

Citizens Voting Bill of Rights

1. You have the right to cast a ballot if you are a valid registered voter in accordance with the Maryland State Board of Elections, the Board of Elections for Prince George's County, and the Mount Rainier City Charter.

A valid registered voter means a United States citizen who is a resident in the city, who is at least 18 years of age, has registered to vote with the Prince George's County Board of Elections, and not in prison or on parole for conviction of a felony, and who is registered to vote at his or her current resident address.

2. You have the right to cast a provisional ballot if your name is not listed on the voting rolls.

Your vote will be taken, sealed and counted with the other ballots at the appropriate time.

3. You have the right to cast a ballot if you are present and in line at the polling place prior to the close of the polls.

4. You have the right to cast a secret ballot free from intimidation.

5. You have the right to receive a new ballot if, prior to casting your ballot, you believe you made a mistake.

If, at any time before you cast your ballot – that is placed it in the voting box -- you feel you have made a mistake, you have the right to exchange the spoiled ballot for a new ballot. The spoiled ballot **MUST** be destroyed prior to your receiving a placement ballot.

6. You have the right to receive assistance in casting your ballot, if you are unable to vote without assistance.

7. You have the right to ask questions about election procedures and observe the elections process so long as you do not interfere with the election process in any way.

8. You have the right to ask questions of the Supervisor of Elections regarding election procedures and to receive an answer or be directed to the appropriate official for an answer.

However, if persistent questioning disrupts the execution of the duties of the supervisor of election, those voting, the board or other election officials you will be asked to leave the voting area and to put your concerns in writing for a future response.

9. You have the right to report any illegal or fraudulent activity to the supervisor of election or City elected official.

If you believe you have been denied any of these rights, or if you are aware of any elections fraud or misconduct, please call the Prince George's County Board of Election.